STUDIES IN BROWNSVILLE & MATAMOROS HISTORY

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The University of Texas at Brownsville
Texas Southmost College
Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the people who helped to make this continuing series a reality: to Dr. Juliet García, President of the University of Texas at Brownsville, for her sponsorship and encouragement; to Dr. Homer J. Peña, ex-President of The University of Texas at Brownsville, for his support of the series in earlier editions; to Dr. Peter Gawenda, Assistant to the President of the University of Texas at Brownsville for Research and Planning; to Ms. Yolanda González of the Texas Southmost College Library Hunter Room for her invaluable help and suggestions; to the administrators at the Instituto Tecnológico, including the President, Ing. Javier Alonso Banda, the Sub-Director Ing. Leonardo Vargas, the Jefe del Depto. de Ciencias Administrativas Licenciada Patricia García Lerma, and the Librarian Patricia Ortega; to Roberto Cortina and Eddie Andres for their assistance with the Spanish text; to Gabriela Sosa for her many patient hours of computer typing, and to Vivian Kearney, Kathleen Kearney, and especially for his many hours of help to Sean Kearney.

The present edition of this series grew out of a Fulbright grant held by Milo Kearney in the 1992-1993 academic year for teaching classes in the history of the border at the Instituto Tecnológico of Matamoros. The bulk of the papers included in this series are the result of research by a selection of the participants in these classes. Some of the papers are of value more as primary sources of information that might otherwise have been lost; others are more traditional research papers, including those by various outside scholars. The articles are published in the language in which they were submitted, whether in English or Spanish, as a reflection of the bilingual nature of our twin cities.
Illustration of the Stillman House
East Washington Street 1305
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
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Cruzan serenos cien canales pródigos
que fertilizan con sus linfas próvidas
áridas tierras, la llanura agreste
de Matamoros.

Abren los surcos los arados múltiples
con los tractores a la mano dóciles,
la dura mano de los hombres recios
de Matamoros.

Siembran los surcos con semilla fértal
que algodonales fructarán ubérrimas,
los tractoristas de segura mano
de Matamoros.

Pizcan capullos de algodón albeante
al sol ardiente del agosto cálido,
hombres que cantan de sudor cubiertos
de Matamoros.

En cien industrias con obreros hábiles
que despepan el capullo níveo,
mueven sus ruedas con canción sonora
en Matamoros.

Y aquí que fuera abandonado páramo,
lo transformaron en emporio exclso
los hombres fuertes, los robustos hombres
de Matamoros.
THE PERIOD BEFORE 1900

Illustration of the William Neale Home
230 Neale Road
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
In the 1740s and 1750s Spain began new missionary and settlement enterprises on her northern frontier. In the province of Texas the endeavors on the San Gabriel River near present-day Rockport, on the lower Trinity River near modern Anahuac, and on the San Saba River near contemporary Menard were all failures. A fourth effort directed from Mexico and headed by José de Escandón, however, was a success. This paper will examine Escandón's role in the exploration, colonization, and development of the area along the lower Rio Grande and in northeastern Mexico that came to be known as the province of Nuevo Santander.

Stretching for thousands of square miles from Matagorda Bay in the north to Tampico in the south, the Costa del Seno Mexicano was described by an eighteenth century chronicler as "desierta de gente española y cristiana y solamente poblada de bárbaros indios y algunos pastores..." The need for increased attention to this area was dramatically stated in 1735 by Governor José Antonio Fernández de Jáuregui Urrutia of Nuevo León, who complained of raids on his province by these hostile natives. Governor Fernandez asked the viceroy of New Spain for "blanket permission and financial support" to take action against the troublesome natives. When he did not receive permission or support, he subsequently communicated directly with the crown, but King Ferdinand VI also seemed disinclined to take immediate action.1

By 1738-39 Governor Fernandez was one of three aspirants who had applied for permission to settle the northern province of the Costa. Aware of the need to pacify the natives and also of rich salines and reputed mineral deposits in the area, the crown created a special junta in Mexico City to determine the best method for settling the Costa, estimate the cost of such an enterprise, and select a worthy petitioner. Years of delay discouraged two of the applicants, but even then authorization did not go automatically to the third, Antonio Ladron de Guevara of Nuevo Leon. Holding out for a more satisfactory candidate, the junta procrastinated.2

Ironically, Jose de Escandón, who finally was named to "pacify, settle, and populate" the area did not actively seek the appointment. His candidacy was promoted by the Marques de Altamira, the Auditor de Guerra (a legal expert on military matters), who was impressed by Escandón's exploits in the Sierra Gorda, a region between Queretaro and southern Tamaulipas. The auditor viewed Escandón as "a man well known for his integrity, and particularly for the pacification of the Sierra Gorda, which he had carried out successfully in a short time at his own expense." The junta concurred, and in September 1746 Viceroy Revilla Gigedo commissioned Escandón as his personal representative and governor of the new province of Nuevo Santander--named for Escandón's birthplace.3
Born in 1700 in Soto la Marina in Santander, Spain, Escandón had immigrated to New Spain when he was fifteen and subsequently acquired wide experience on the frontier. After joining the militia, he was commissioned in 1734 to pacify the difficult Sierra Gorda region. Noted for being humane but effective, Escandón engaged in three campaigns at his own expense, as already mentioned, and earned the respect of both settlers and Indians. This success and prominence gained Altamira's attention, and the rest, as they say, is history.

Typical of Escandón's foresight, he recognized the need to explore Nuevo Santander, ascertain its nature, and select suitable sites prior to any attempts at colonization. Willing to invest much of his personal fortune in this undertaking, he initially declined financial support from the royal treasury but accepted the viceroy's offer to order cooperation from officials in provinces surrounding Nuevo Santander. Escandón's expedition was considered a high priority, and men and resources intended for the other missionary activities being directed from San Antonio during this same time period were often diverted. This possibly contributed to the failure of those enterprises. Regular soldiers and militiamen from bordering provinces actually flocked to Escandón's cause in greater numbers than he could use.

Escandón acted with impressive efficiency and speed, especially considering the length of time other Spaniards often spent preparing for far less complicated enterprises. He organized for the task at hand a series of seven divisions with a total of 765 men. Each group was to leave from a different point, to reconnoiter an assigned area of the province, and to rendezvous in approximately thirty days. The plan had the proposed advantages of limiting the distance that each band had to travel, reducing the amount of time in the field, allowing for careful observation and mapping, and peacefully intimidating the Indians with multiple entries into their land.

The main body, headed by Escandón, included two priests, a captain, two non-commissioned officers, and fewer than a dozen soldiers. It left Querétaro on January 7, 1747. During that same month, related expeditions left the provinces of Texas, Coahuila, and Nuevo Leon, as well as the towns of Valles and Tampico. All were to rendezvous at the mouth of the Rio Grande in late February. Along the way, Escandón received dispatches that kept him informed of the progress of his subordinates.

From Querétaro Escandón proceeded to San Luis Potosí, where he selected forty soldiers from among many who wanted to join his troop. As he marched along the northwest slope of the Sierra Gorda, he accepted more men eager to join the enterprise, and he acquired a sizable Indian contingent as he skirted the Tamaulipas range. They then marched toward the coast along the course of a river known in colonial times as the Río de las Palmas. From a ford, he marched northeastward toward the Río Conchos in order to meet the military divisions from Nuevo Leon, Coahuila, and Texas.

After contacting the force from Nuevo Leon, Escandón encountered friendly Indians known as the "Comecrudos." Neither Spaniards nor the Indians were familiar with the country toward the Rio Grande, so Escandón decided to leave the main camp and proceed with a smaller group to that river. Reaching the Rio Grande not far from the sea,
Escandón discovered that the division led by Blas María de la Garza Falcón had arrived a few days earlier. Garza Falcón's force, which had followed the course of the San Juan to its confluence with the Rio Grande, provided Escandón with valuable information about the adjoining terrain.9

With two dozen men, Escandón explored the surrounding area, ascertaining the breadth of the Rio Grande and reconnoitering the adjoining marshes and lakes. When he returned to camp on the first day of March, many Indians had gathered there. With the help of interpreters, Escandón acquired more information about the region and its indigenous peoples, who seemed willing to accept the Spanish presence among them.10

Despite Escandón's careful planning the seven divisions, for a number of reasons, were not all able to rendezvous. Miguel de la Garza Falcón, Blas's brother, for example, had marched down the Rio Grande from San Juan Bautista. Hampered by bad weather and other difficulties, he failed to make contact with Escandón and returned to Monclova in late March of 1747.11

The longest trek was made by soldiers from Presidio de los Adaes, who were sent to join Captain Joaquín de Orobio Basterra at La Bahía. This combined command then explored along the lower reaches of the San Antonio River, a stream which Escandón hoped to secure as the northern boundary of his province. Orobio Basterra subsequently marched to the Nueces River and was the first European to discover its mouth. After additional exploration, Orobio Basterra received orders from Escandón to return to his presidio at La Bahía.12 Escandón himself eventually returned to the upper reaches of the Rio de las Palmas, where he had previously encamped. Having been disappointed by the Rio Grande, he hoped that the Río de las Palmas would offer good possibilities for a port. The area where this river entered the bay reminded Escandón of his homeland in Spain, so he gave the estuary the name La Ría del Nuevo Santander.13

Escandón explored additional land in Nuevo Leon en route to the Sierra Gorda. After dismissing his troops in mid-March, he proceeded to Querétaro to compile a map and reports of his multiple explorations. According to Carlos de Castañeda, "This preliminary expedition stands unsurpassed in the history of American colonization. In three months a virgin area of twelve thousand square miles, inhabited by...barbarous Indians...criss-crossed by forbidding ranges...and numerous streams...had been thoroughly and completely explored, surveyed, and mapped." And, Escandón did not lose a single man during the endeavor.14

Based on this preliminary entrada, Escandón sent to Mexico City his recommendations for the establishment of fourteen initial settlements and accompanying missions in Nuevo Santander at an estimated cost to the crown of fifty-eight thousand pesos for the first year. Proposed locations took into consideration factors ranging from safety for the settlers, to productivity of the area, to conversion of the natives. His approach to colonization was influenced by his earlier experience in Sierra Gorda. Intending to rely more heavily on civilian rather than military establishments, he did not propose the founding of presidios. To provide security, soldiers would be stationed in the new towns only for the first few years, but in the long term civilians would be responsible for their own
protection. He requested that the men who had made the initial reconnaissance with him be given lands and privileges of first settlers. They and others would be attracted by one-time cash-inducements of one hundred to two hundred pesos, remission of taxes for ten years, generous land grants, fertile soil, agreeable climate, and the opportunities of developing a new country. Each town would be established autonomously and remain independent of other frontier units. Nearby missions would meet the spiritual needs of the Indians and Spanish settlers. A captain-general with headquarters at Soto la Marina would have general supervision over the province.\textsuperscript{15}

In 1748 a junta in New Spain approved of almost every detail of Escandón's plan, and he was authorized to carry it out with the same titles and privileges as before. Again Escandón lost little time in acting. Working with his lieutenants to conduct an effective publicity campaign along the frontier, he had no trouble recruiting. More than an adequate number of families responded to the opportunity to relocate to the new province in "the first great land rush within the present limits of the United States." Many were from Coahuila and Nuevo Leon with large herds of livestock needing more grazing land.\textsuperscript{16}

Within six months of leaving Querétaro in December 1748, Escandón had founded thirteen settlements with eight hundred families, along with thirteen missions and necessary military support. He permitted his lieutenants to select within Nuevo Santander the locations that they wished to colonize. Blas María de la Garza Falcon chose a site near the junction of the San Juan and Rio Grande rivers, where Santa Ana de Camargo was founded on March 5, 1749. Approximately twelve leagues east of this site, land on the south bank of the Rio Grande was given to Carlos Cantu. This became the villa of Reynosa with 43 families. On the lower Rio Grande, José Florencio Chapa selected a place called Mier, near a ford that would be used extensively for transporting salt from the nearby mines at present-day Raymondville. And, so it went.\textsuperscript{17}

As part of Escandón's continuing enterprise, which far surpassed his initial recommendations, two settlements were established on the north bank of the Rio Grande, albeit several years apart. José Vásquez Borrego of Nuevo Leon needed more land and offered to settle himself and his kinsmen across the river from Revilla at no cost to the crown. With Escandón's authorization and a generous land grant, he established Nuestra Señora de los Dolores in 1750. In 1754 when Escandón visited Revilla on one of his periodic inspection tours, Vásquez Borrego proposed another colonization project to be headed by Tomás Sánchez. Escandón conferred military and political authority on Sánchez who in 1755 founded Villa Laredo between the Jacinto and Garza fords on the Rio Grande. The founding of Laredo signaled the end of Escandón's formal colonizing efforts.\textsuperscript{18}

In October 1755 Escandón reported that Nuevo Santander had twenty-four settlements of which twenty-three had been planted under his personal supervision—with 1,481 families and 3,000 missionized Indians. He had not only devoted years of his life to these colonization efforts but also had personally borne about half of the expense incurred.\textsuperscript{19} Impressed by Escandón's multiple accomplishments, Auditor Altamira felt his judgment vindicated. He declared that Escandón with his method of colonization had
accomplished more in one year at less cost than could have been done in one hundred years following "usual procedures." Not everyone was equally impressed. Escándon's success aroused envy among would-be competitors, and there was eventual conflict with the missionary College of San Fernando. These factors may, in part, have been responsible for the visita or official inspection of Nuevo Santander ordered by the new viceroy, the Marqués de los Amarillas.  

Arriving in the frontier province in mid-1757, Visitador José Tienda de Cuervo visited the Rio Grande settlements. He and his assistants reviewed the colonization process, interviewed heads of households, and entertained complaints and suggestions. After accumulating data, they reported that Dolores had 122 inhabitants, while Laredo had 85. Within these settlements, and the significantly larger town of Revilla, the social structure was based on family units, with few single-adult households. In the entire province there were about eight thousand colonists in two dozen communities, along with eighty thousand head of cattle, horses, and mules; and several hundred thousand sheep. Based on his inspection, the visitador determined that land distribution represented a major problem in the Rio Grande communities. Under Escándon's original colonization plan, land was held in common to attract settlers, assure a sense of community, avoid petty disputes, and prevent land monopolies. But, this system was never intended to be permanent. The colonists informed Cuervo that the existing arrangement was unsatisfactory and discouraged them from making improvements on the land. They specifically asked the visitador to recommend that land titles be granted in fee simple. 

Significantly, Escándon in 1755 had also recognized the need for individual ownership of land and had recommended it to Mexico City. Influenced by this recommendation and by Cuervo's report, the Spanish government established a Royal Commission, which was sent to Nuevo Santander in 1767 to appoint surveyors and prepare for the partition of common lands on the basis of merit and seniority with attention to access to water. 

Grants in the lower Rio Grande Valley fell into three distinct groups. First were the porciones (specific grants in fee simple) made for agricultural and grazing purposes by the crown in 1767. Situated on both sides of the Rio Grande, these lands lay in the jurisdiction of Laredo, Revilla, Mier, Camargo, and Reynosa. The second group of grants, made between 1767 and 1810, were for much larger tracts to be used exclusively for grazing. These fell within present-day Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy Counties. A third category consisted of vacant lands that reverted to the crown and were reassigned between 1770 and 1810. These fell within the jurisdiction of Revilla (Zapata County). 

The significance of these grants, then and now, can be illustrated by a brief case study of the Potrero de Espíritu Santo grant in present-day Cameron County. An original settler at Camargo, José Salvador de la Garza married María Gertrudis de la Garza Falcón, daughter of Blas María. Because his wife owned large numbers of livestock, José Salvador in 1772 petitioned the officials of Nuevo Santander for title to ranch lands on the lower Rio Grande, which he was already using at the time. 

Conflicting claims and bureaucratic delays prevented the land being surveyed until 1779. In that same year, Salvador de la Garza was able to acquire the land at public
auction in Camargo. Nevertheless, disagreements over the purchase price and a boundary dispute with an adjacent landowner further delayed the transaction. It was not until September 26, 1781, that Salvador de la Garza officially received the fifty-nine square league Espíritu Santo grant. (Fifty-nine square leagues, incidentally, is a mere 261,252 acres or 408 square miles!)  

This enormous grant passed to Salvador de la Garza's wife, María, upon his death. In her will she left it to her daughter, her son, and her grandchildren. These heirs divided the estate into three shares, each of approximately twenty leagues. Those holdings remained in the family and were honored by the new Mexican nation in 1821. The Espíritu Santo grant was affirmed by the Mexican state of Tamaulipas in 1834 and by the Texas State legislature in 1852. This one grant symbolizes and encapsulates the importance of José de Escandón in the settlement of the lower Rio Grande valley. Today, Brownsville, Texas, the seat of Cameron County, occupies a substantial portion of the Espíritu Santo grant. Fort Brown, important during the Mexican and Civil Wars, was also carved from lands that were part of this ranch.

In summary, at a time when Spain experienced so much failure in its efforts to expand beyond San Antonio—on the San Gabriel River, the San Saba River, and the lower Trinity—Jose de Escandón stands out as a remarkably able servant of the crown. He earned the titles of Conde de Sierra Gorda and Knight of Santiago, which the king bestowed upon him. His thoroughness and attention to detail set him apart from a host of other frontier captains in northern Mexico and Texas. The results speak for themselves. He and his lieutenants founded a total of twenty-three towns and fifteen missions. By 1755, as my colleague Dr. Donald Chipman wrote in his book *Spanish Texas*, they "had helped relocate more than six thousand Spaniards and congregate nearly three thousand Indians, and...lay the foundations of the cattle industry in the lower Rio Grande valley." Similarly, Robert S. Weddle in *French Thorn* declared that "Escandón, for all intents and purposes, wrote the final chapter in the Mexican conquest. The colony he established had perhaps more far-reaching consequences than any such enterprise along the entire United States--Mexican border."

As someone who lives in Brownsville, Texas, and teaches at a university campus on land that was once part of the Espíritu Santo grant, I second Weddle's assessment. Jose de Escandón—in his multiple roles as officer, explorer, colonizer, and administrator—was indeed an exceptional man.

The University of Texas at Brownsville

ENDNOTES


7 Weddle, *French Thorn*, pp. 264-265; Wilkinson, *Laredo*, p. 15. Weddle's book offers a recent, clear presentation of information on the activities of Escandón and his lieutenants during this "entrada" into Nuevo Santander, and it is the primary source cited in the following paragraphs for that topic. However, the Hackett Transcripts at the Center for American History offer coverage of these explorations, as do numerous published sources including Hill's *Escandón* and Castañeda's *Mission Era*.


13 Hackett Transcripts, UTA, Box 2Q211, November 7, 1752; Weddle, *French Thorn*, pp. 273-274.


17 Hackett Transcripts, UTA, Box 2Q211, December 31, 1755; Wooldridge, "Land Grants," p. 16; Hill, *Escándón*, pp. 70-87, passim.


25 Wooldridge, "Land Grants," p. 41; Jackson, *Los Mestéños*, p. 447. It is important to note that Escándón had died by the time that José Salvador de la Garza petitioned for this grant. At the time of Escándón's death, he was involved in litigation which complicated settling his estate; however, his son later became governor of Nuevo Santander.


27 Wooldridge, "Land Grants," p. 43. Wooldridge's thesis provides information on later litigation involving this land grant and its eventual resolution.

29 Chipman, Spanish Texas, pp. 168-169, quotation; Weddle, French Thorn, p. 285, quotation. For information on development of ranching in Spanish Texas, see Jack Jackson, Los Mestefos.
Illustration of the Tijerina House
333 East Adams
Unique because of the buttresses on the sides
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
La Poesía de Arte Menor en la Crónica de Sánchez García

por

Jorge Green Huie

En la crónica más antigua de nuestra región que se conoce, José Hermenegildo Sánchez García (Linares 1756 - Villagrán 1815) narra una serie de campañas de milicianos durante casi tres generaciones, entre las cuales recuerda haber hecho el campamento a orilla del Río Grande cerca de Refugio (hoy Matamoros) en persecución de los insurgentes en 1813.1 Los temas principales de esta obra histórica, editada por la Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas en 1977 con un prólogo de Candelario Reyes Flores, suelen ser el "transitar" la sierra en búsqueda de indios hostiles y la descripción del paisaje de la región montañosa al norte de San Fernando.

La prosa de Sánchez García refleja el interés del autor por la naturaleza y su gran amor por el terruño que llama "bella provincia...fértil y abundosa de aguas".2 El cronista describe infinidad de detalles geográficos de su patria chica, especialmente la sierra y sus desfiladeros. También recuerda los muchos compañeros muertos en las guerras interminables con los indios, y da a entender que el miliciano valiente de la época observaba el mundo colonial desde detrás de su adarga a través de los agujeros en el cuero resultantes de los flechazos de innumerables escaramuzas.3

Dentro de la prosa de esta crónica se intercalan unas diez poesías de ocasión, todas de arte menor: principalmente compuestas de octosílabos con algunos pentasílabos, hexasílabos y heptasílabos. Como nota el autor del prólogo, las estrofas empleadas por Sánchez García incluyen las tres que probablemente hubiéramos esperado: el corrido (todavía hoy muy generalizado entre las formas de la poesía popular de México hasta el punto de considerarse la poesía popular por antonomasia), la décima (la estrofa folklórica más común en Veracruz, Cuba y el Caribe) y la seguidilla (la estrofa popular más típica de Andalucía, que ejercía una influencia cultural muy especial sobre las colonias españolas en América por la seda de la administración colonial en Sevilla y el puerto principal de comercio con América en Cádiz).4 No obstante, la examinación cuidadosa de esta poesía intercalada revela la existencia de una variedad sorprendente de otras estrofas: perqué, romance, copla real, redondilla y sextilla.
Quizás aun más interesante que la gran variedad de estrofas de arte menor, que no se esperaría en un poeta provincial del siglo de las luces, ha de ser la adaptación por Sánchez García de cada estrofa intercalada a un tema específico, lo que representa esencialmente el mismo principio establecido en el teatro nacional de España y codificado en parte por Lope de Vega en *El arte nuevo de escribir comedias*:

> Acomode los versos con prudencia
> a los sujetos de que va tratando.
> Las décimas son buenas para quejas;
> el soneto está bien en los que aguardan;
> las relaciones piden romances,
> aunque en octavas lucen por extremo.
> Son los tercetos para cosas graves,
> y para las de amor las redondillas.°

El corrido (estrofa de cuatro versos de arte menor con una sola rima en segundo y cuarto verso, sin rima en los versos impares y con cambio de rima en cada estrofa nueva) representa una variante hoy principalmente mexicana y chilena del romance (largà tirada de versos de arte menor con monorrima asonante en los versos pares y sin rima en los impares). Ramón Menéndez Pidal, el gran folclorista español, consideraba el romance una modernización de la epopeya medieval de España y una síntesis de los subgéneros épico y lírico. En el "proemio" de su *Flor nueva de romances viejos*, Menéndez Pidal comenta brevemente las diferencias entre el romance y el estribote (subcategoría del corrido), que él encuentra más lírico y menos épico que el romance.° El corrido también puede definirse en la historia de la métrica española como un conjunto de cuartetas, estrofas de cuatro octosílabos con asonancia en los pares, que se emplean como estribillos de canciones populares en España desde las jarchas del siglo XI y las cuales guardan desde entonces cierto parentesco en su forma y sus temas con las seguidillas andalucés.

En la crónica de Sánchez García el corrido de heptasílabos se emplea dos veces en el primer capítulo. En cada caso parece ser la letra de una canción popular. En la primera poesía los milicianos se llaman a las armas, y se expresa implícitamente el orgullo por la provincia de Nuevo Santander:
Soldados milicianos
del Nuevo Santander,
los indios que se han alzado
los hemos de ir aver.
Todos se han remontado
y han ganado la sierra...
soldados milicianos,
¡a guerra, a guerra,
a guerra!  

Aqui en el ultimo verso se modifica levemente la forma del corrido con la adicion del pie quebrado trisilabico, "a guerra!" Siguen tres estrofas regulares.

En el segundo corrido de heptasilabos a fin del primer capitulo surgen los mismos temas y tambien la idea de apoyo divino para los milicianos en la forma de las enfermedades que aniquilaban a los aborigenes:

Las tropas celestiales
ya estan a nuestro auxilio.
Sarampion y viruelas
contagio el mas nocivo.

La seguidilla, estrofa de versos de arte menor con alternancia de distintos metros, tambien data de la alta edad media y tambien se utiliza tradicionalmente en canciones liricas de indole popular. La seguidilla simple, cuarteta de heptasilabos sueltos en primero y tercer verso y pentasilabos asonantados en los versos pares, data de las jarchas del siglo XI. Se hizo muy popular en el renacimiento y modernamente tambien se utilizo por Nájera, Dario y Lorca. Sánchez García emplea la seguidilla simple en el capitulo XX para cantar las hermosuras de la sierra:

Si quieren oir los cantos
que hay en mi tierra,
veran las seguidillas
de marcha en sierra.

Nuestro autor novosantanderino limita el empleo de la seguidilla a las campañas de los milicianos en que no hubo grandes hostilidades con los indios. En el capitulo XXI encontramos una seguidilla compuesta, tambien estrofa de origen medieval, para el mismo tema de la seguidilla simple antes citada:
Si quieren que les cante,
será a la moda
de una marcha en la sierra
y andarla toda.
Sierra cerrada,
y en verdad que no tiene más de una entrada.¹⁰

La seguidilla compuesta empieza con una seguidilla simple a la que se añaden tres versos: el quinto y el séptimo son pentasílabos asonantados y el sexto es un heptasílabo suelto.

La décima, diez octosílabos en forma de dos redondillas con dos versos de enlace y con cuatro rimas consonantes organizadas simétricamente en el esquema abbaaccddc, tuvo su origen al comienzo del siglo XVII y suele atribuirse a Vicente Espinel, por lo que a veces se conoce como espinela. En el teatro de Lope ("Las décimas son buenas para quejas;") se utiliza para temas solemnes y tristes, exactamente lo que se nota en la poesía de Sánchez García. Por ejemplo, en el capítulo X la elegía por la muerte de Domingo de Unzaga consiste de ocho décimas regulares. El primero introduce el tema:

Años de mil setecientos
sesenta y seis que numero,
e inter el caso refiero
pido que me estén atentos
para que hagan sentimientos
los que atendiéndome están
de un famoso Capitán
que la colonia ha perdido:
Don Domingo y de apellido
Unzaga, aquel dulce imán.¹¹

Esta estrofa larga pero de forma complicada y simétrica se presta al tema serio y de gran importancia. En el capítulo XIII Sánchez García utiliza una serie de ocho décimas, después de una introducción en otras estrofas, para cantar una victoria definitiva de los milicianos sobre los indios en 1780. Representa la culminación de una campaña de pacificación del nuevo gobernador, el conde de la Sierra Gorda, Manuel Escandón:
Vistos los graves excesos
que esta mala gente hacía
dió trazas como podía
sin matar ponerlos presos;
mas como en estos sucesos
hay mucha dificultad
logró más de la mitad
de unas cinco rancherías
que rodeó con compañías
a un tiempo y con gravedad.\textsuperscript{12}

Para el tema de otras matanzas de colonos por los indios en 1781 y 1785, en los capítulos XIV y XVII se emplean décimas en combinación con otras estrofas.

Uno de los aspectos más curiosos de la utilización por Sánchez García de una gran variedad de formas métricas estriba en el empleo, además de la décima, de la copla real, la estrofa prerrenacentista española de la cual la décima puede considerarse una variante: la copla real consiste en diez versos de arte menor con cualquier combinación de dos a cuatro rimas. Esta estrofa se encuentra en el capítulo XVII de la crónica que se refiere a las batallas con los indios en el año 1785. En tema, la muerte de un miliciano, es serio pero no tratado con solemnidad, quizás por no ser el muerto persona de importancia en la colonia o por no ser amigo o pariente del autor:

Salió un lunes de mañana
el inocente cordero
¡quién le hubiera dicho: hoy vas
al paseo más verdadero!
como el pájaro ligero
fue a dar la cuenta sutil
en el día cuatro de abril
que trazó el tiempo traidor.
¡con qué lástima y dolor
Murió Lorenzo Martín!\textsuperscript{13}

Por otra parte, para temas satíricos o burlescos Sánchez García emplea una estrofa española introducida en esta forma por Lope de Vega para precisamente esta temática: el perqué, que consiste en un número no determinado de versos pareados de arte menor con un solo verso suelto al comienzo y otro verso suelto al final. Por ejemplo, en el primer capítulo que se refiere a la fundación de nuevas poblaciones en 1749 se satiriza el mucho tiempo que los colonos dedican a los juegos y la borrachera escandalosa:
Dicen que sacan el agua
adonde van a poblar;
ya se comienzan a aviar
con mucho gusto y contento;
nunca les faltó el aliento;
y aunque tenían sus despegos
arman poderosos juegos
y hasta los pobres chillaban
y muy contentos andaban
bebiendo mucho aguardiente.¹⁴

El perquén figura en unas poesías que el cronista llama "ensaladillas", probablemente por ser mezcla de varios temas y formas poéticas, en los capítulos I, X, XVII y XXV.

El romance se encuentra una sola vez, entre las mezclas de estrofas, en el capítulo X, donde se enumeran de manera sencilla los nombres de las tribus en la provincia de Nuevo Santander al fin de un perqué, sin interrupción estrófica:

Hay come-crudos, Janambres,
boca-prietas y pelones,
chivatos, piedras, mezquites,
lumbres, pintos, salinerios,
aracates, no paraneres,
tamaulipas, malincheños
cadimas y pajaritos...¹⁵

Esta tirada de octosílabos regulares con monorríma asonante (o-e) continúa por 26 versos. Otra vez la estrofa se ajusta al tema, la larga enumeración en este caso. Lope en su Arte nuevo de escribir comedias nos dice que "las relaciones piden romances" y la palabra "relación" entre sus significaciones nos ofrece la idea de la enumeración.

La redondilla, estrofa de cuatro octosílabos con una rima consonante en primero y cuarto y otra rima consonante en segundo y tercero, se emplea por Sánchez García principalmente para introducciones y transiciones. Por ejemplo, en los capítulos XIII y XIV los poemas comienzan con una invocación de Dios y la Virgen, respectivamente, en forma de una redondilla:

Señora de Zapopán
de Coahuila milagrosa
con intensión fervorosa
a ti mis afectos van.¹⁶
Indudablemente, la forma métrica más interesante de todas las utilizadas por Sánchez García ha de ser la sextilla hernandina, llamada así por no conocerse hasta su empleo en la primera parte de Martín Fierro de José Hernandez en 1872. Hernández la usa para temas serios tratados con ironía y con cierta inferencia de protesta sobreentendida. Esta estrofa, que se encuentra solo en el capítulo XIII de la crónica en combinación con redondillas y décimas, consiste en seis octosílabos con dos rimas en los restantes cinco versos. En las solamente cuatro sextillas hernandinas de Sánchez García el segundo rima con tercero y el sexto y el cuatro con el quinto, por lo que su forma se acerca un tanto a la del perqué con sus apareados interiores:

Es hombre que en sí le aborda
millón de disposiciones;
animó los corazones
su brazo fuerte y del rey
para hacer guardar la ley
en todas sus poblaciones.\(^\text{17}\)

Idénticamente la misma estrofa se utilizó en la primera parte de Martín Fierro para el mismo tema, la guerra entre milicianos e indios:

Daban entonces las armas
Pa defender los cantones,
Que eran lanzas y latones
Con ataduras de tiento...
Las de juego no las cuenta
Porque no había municiones.\(^\text{18}\)

Esta curiosidad métrica sugiere una pregunta para los críticos: ¿Cuál ha sido la historia de la sextilla hernandina en la poesía de Hispanoamérica?

La gran variedad de formas métricas en esta crónica también nos despertiza una curiosidad respecto a la poco estudiada poesía mexicana del siglo XVIII y comienzos del siglo XIX: mientras que se ha publicado y estudiado no poca poesía mexicana de épocas anteriores y posteriores, la lirica de este periodo se conoce demasiado poco.

The University of Texas at Brownsville.
NOTAS

2 Ibidem, p. 53.
3 Ibidem, p. 68.
5 Ibidem, p. 17.
9 Ibidem, p. 169.
11 Ibidem, p. 105.
12 Ibidem, p. 129.
14 Ibidem, p. 60.
15 Ibidem, p. 113.
17 Ibidem, p. 129.
The Battle of Palo Alto: A Preliminary Gathering of Primary Sources Arranged by Selected Headings

by

Thomas B. and Marie J. Carroll

I. Introduction

This paper represents a preliminary gathering of primary and a few secondary sources on a variety of topics regarding the May 8, 1846 battle between Mexican and U.S. forces in the Palo Alto Plain and Resaca located just north of Brownsville, Texas. This was the first battle of the 1846-1848 Mexican-American War. Unfortunately, there are a number of key references that are not readily available at this time for inclusion in the report. In addition, many important references have almost certainly not been located as yet on this engagement. However, the documentation that is provided in this report and its organization in specific headings may prove to be helpful to others studying the Battle of Palo Alto.

It should also be noted that a major shortcoming of organizing references according to specific subjects is that the continuity of the original document is obscured. There is always the problem that the classification of a reference according to a specific topic may be in error, or that a reference, to be meaningful, really should be included in two or more subject areas. Another problem with using specific subjects for organizing the references is that different subjects and different arrangements of these headings may ultimately prove to be more appropriate. Usually, it is only through intensive analysis and comparison of documents that these issues may be addressed.

Examples of key documents that the compilers did not have copies of for this report are the following: José María Roa Barcena's *Recuerdos de la Invasión Norteamericana*, Jean Luis Berlandier's *Itinerario: Campaña de Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma*, and Pedro de Ampudia's *Conciudadanos*.

The paper is divided into three major parts: background information covering some of the general subjects related to the battle, the battle, and the evening and morning at Palo Alto after the battle on May 8. Each of these sections is subdivided into a number of subtopics.

The compilation of the material contained in this report has helped to expand our awareness of what took place on May 8, 1846, at the Palo Alto Battlefield. We look forward to the time, hopefully in the near future, when an exhaustive study—including a full presentation and comparative analysis of all available documents, the archeological findings at the site, and other pertinent information on the Battle of Palo Alto will be available.
The following persons were most gracious in providing copies of some of the sources contained in this report: Dr. Jeffrey R. Mauck, Dr. Joseph P. Sanchez, Dr. Joseph E. Chance, Henry and Rita Krausse, Charles Haecker, Neil Mangum, Walter E. Plitt, Yolanda Z. Gonzalez, Bruce Aiken, and Mrs. Amali Perkins. To these persons and to the reference libraries from which these sources were gathered, by the compilers of this report and others, we would like to express our appreciation.

II. Background Information

Familiarity of the opposing forces with the terrain

It is evident from the available documentation that both armies were familiar with the terrain where the battle occurred. [See Exhibit A] However, the Mexican forces almost certainly possessed greater knowledge of the area than did the American forces.

The American army camped at Palo Alto from March 24 to March 28 (Bauer 39-40) and passed through the site the afternoon of May 1 (Bauer 49). Men traveling between Fort Texas and Port Isabel would have also crossed through the site. First Lieutenant Jeremiah Mason Scarritt, a military engineer on General Taylor's staff, writing on May 12, referred to "Worth's Camp" at the Palo Alto Battlefield, a name probably given when the U.S. Army camped there from March 24 to March 28. A map of "Camp Worth," located "12 miles north of Matamoros," is included in the March 24 orders from General Worth (1).

General Mariano Arista had sent 1,600 men under General Anastacio Torrejon to cut the road between Taylor's men at Fort Texas and Port Isabel by stationing them at Palo Alto. However, fearing an attempt by Taylor to hinder his army crossing the Rio Grande, Arista ordered Generals Torrejon and Canales to leave Palo Alto to help protect the Mexican army at the Longoreño crossing of the Rio Grande or Bravo (Campaña 5). Arista's army camped at Palo Alto from May 2 to May 4 (Apuntes 37), probably where the American army camped from March 24-28 (Campaña 10-11). Mexican forces regularly traveled over this terrain because it was on the main road between Matamoros and Port Isabel. There is a possibility that some of the officers and men in the Mexican forces had participated in the August 1839 engagement at Palo Alto between Centralist, under Valentin Canalizo, and Federalist forces. The Centralists captured six cannons in the 1839 encounter (Nance 170). The 1839 battle could have taken place in the same location as the 1846 Battle of Palo Alto.
Description of the battlefield

The annotated maps of the battlefield perhaps provide the best description of the terrain. [See Exhibit B-G] A number of features are shown on some of these maps. The directional arrows on these maps appear to indicate magnetic north rather than true north. The plain around which the battle centered is covered with a high grass called zacahuistle. Lower portions of the plain had boggy areas. The plain is surrounded on the north, west, and south by resacas, deserted remnants of the Rio Grande. These resacas would have had some water in them due to rains that fell prior to the battle. The resaca on the western side is called the "Resaca de Palo Alto." Slightly higher ground along the resacas represents the former banks of the Rio Grande. Those just to the south of the Mexican lines are designated "motitas." The low rises to the east of the Mexican right flank are described as "lomas muy baxas y muy tendidas." These rises are covered with mesquite and other brush and cactus. There were two main roads paralleling the western portion of the resaca. The road to the west of the resaca was known as the wet weather road to Point Isabel. The road to the east of the resaca was designated as the dry weather road to Point Isabel. The road to the southeast of the Palo Alto Battlefield went to los Tanques del Ramireño and then on to the Longoreño crossing. It appears evident that flanking movements to the west and east of the plain would be hindered by the resaca and the marshy areas in the prairie.

In the following selection from his Memoirs, Ulysses S. Grant described the sacahistle covering much of the battlefield: "Where we were the grass was tall, reaching to the shoulders of the men, very stiff, and each stock was pointed at the top, and hard and almost as sharp as a darning needle." (quoted in Sanchez 15)

In March 1848, Helen Chapman visited Palo Alto Battlefield and wrote that

Palo Alto...is an extensive level plain stretching as far as the eye can reach and unbroken by tree or shrub. It is said to to be one of the finest battle grounds in the world, and looks as if it might be a fine theatre for trials of skill. There could be no chance of dodging, no advantage of ground to either party. Almost every trace of the battle had been removed. Only occasionally you see the bleaching bones of horses on the grass, and probably some of men, but I rode on and [did] not enquire. The Mexican lines are still distinguishable by the broken appearance of the grass. I could imagine that men might meet in deadly contest in this field.... (28)

William Neale, an early resident in the region, provides another description of the location of the Palo Alto Battlefield:

The Tulares Lakes, where the battle of Palo Alto took place, are situated about 12 miles from Point Isabel, and about two miles north of
what is now called Loma Alta going from Brownsville to Point Isabel. These two lakes named by the Mexicans as El Tular Grande and El Tular Chico, that is in English the big Tular and the small Tular, are really not lakes but what we would call marshes being filled with bullrush weeds impossible for an army to penetrate. The road from Brownsville to Point Isabel ran between these two lakes. (Rayburn 40-41)

**Objectives of the opposing forces**

According to the *Fallo Definitivo*, the Mexican army at Palo Alto were as follow:

...las operaciones no solo buscaba el triunfo, sino también evitar, conforme á las instrucciones del gobierno, la reunión de las fuerzas americanas que estaban divididas en el Fronton de Santa Isabel y en el punto de Brownsville, frente á Matamoros. (3)

The Mexican forces failed to defeat the American army and suffered heavy losses. However, the Mexican forces were successful, at least on May 8, in keeping the two sections of the American army separated. According to K. Jack Bauer, although the Americans had won a tactical victory at Palo Alto, they failed to achieve their strategic objective: they "had not reopened the road to Fort Texas" (57).

**Planned tactics of the opposing forces**

The battle plan of the American forces is shown in General Taylor's marching orders of May 7. In reviewing these orders, it is clear that Taylor, like most generals of his day, had little confidence in artillery:

The army will march today at three o'clock, in the direction of Matamoros. It is known the enemy has recently occupied the route in force. If still in possession, the general will give him battle. The commanding general has every confidence in his officers and men. If his orders and instructions are carried out, he has no doubt of the result, let the enemy meet him in what numbers they may. He wishes to enjoin upon the battalions of infantry, that their main dependence must be in the bayonet. (quoted in Brooks 125)

In the following passage, Justin H. Smith provides what appears to be a reasonable analysis of the Mexican battle plan:
Arista, a bold and experienced officer, expecting Taylor to act on such a plan as Taylor actually seems to have formed, intended to charge both flanks of the advancing American with cavalry supported by infantry; but the American artillery surprised him.... (166)

William Emory, in his early 1853 boundary survey, describes the natural obstacles of the battlefield and their possible influence on the 1846 battle:

It is well known that the Mexicans selected their own ground for the first two battles; but if General Taylor had had in his hand the correct map now presented of that country, as will be seen by a glance, he could not have selected, in the neighborhood, a better field than Palo Alto to fight a small force against a larger one. This fact may have been known to others, but was not developed to my mind until the completion of this map. It will be seen that both flanks of the American army were protected, and the Mexicans were prevented by the ground from using the advantage due to a much superior force to extend their flanks and envelope the American forces. The country is almost a dead level, and presents to the view of a horseman one unbounded plain, relieved by clusters of mezquite trees (chapparal,) and the existence of the morasses to the right and left of the American position was probably not known to the Mexicans until they attempted to outflank their adversaries...I trust some of those who will now take advantage of the map now furnished, to figure for the military student the position and manoeuvres of the troops on both sides, in those battles, so unique in their execution and results. (54)

It is conceivable that Arista planned to utilize the obstacles to the right and left of the center of the battlefield to better corner the American army. Faced with superior artillery that hindered his planned attack--as outlined by Smith --Arista instead found that the obstacles on either side of the battlefield proved to be major hinderances--as indicated by Emory--to the Mexican forces in their attempts to flank the American army and avoid the superior American artillery.

**Number and size of cannons used by the opposing forces**

The exact number and type of cannons used by the Mexican forces has not been fully determined. J.M. Scarritt reported that the Mexican forces had "10 pieces of artillery...of which these were eight 4 pdrs and two 9 pdrs..." (2). Captain Philip Nourbourne Barbour,
of the 3rd Regiment of Infantry, wrote that the Mexican army had nine cannons (168). In 1880, Don Niceto de Zamacois recounts that the Mexican artillery was composed of twelve pieces of 8 and 12 pounders (59). The map of the Battle of Palo Alto [See Exhibit D] in *Apuntes Para la Historia de la Guerra Entre México y los Estados Unidos* shows twelve cannons, two of which were initially towards the rear, with General Ampudia's fast arriving forces, where they may not have been seen before the battle. The description of the Mexican battle line in *Apuntes* gives a total of thirteen cannons, two of which are "piezas ligeras" (38). On October 14, 1992, National Park Service's Southwest Regional Historian Neil Mangum visited the first floor of Cullum Hall at the West Point Military Academy and described seven Mexican cannons captured at the May 9 Battle of Resaca de la Palmas that were on display. All seven cannons are made of bronze. Five of the cannons are four-pounders, one cannon is an eight pounder, and the size of one cannon is unknown. The years can be seen on these cannons: 176(?), 1767, and 1774. At least six of the cannons had names: El Esparbel, La Paloma, Elentucismo, El Toro, La Vivora, and El Note. Mr. Mangum's memorandum of November 2, 1992, contains additional data on each tube. It is likely that these cannons were at Palo Alto on May 8.

There is somewhat less conjecture about the American artillery. Scarritt reports that "two batteries of 4 guns each and the two 18 pdrs which was [were brought] into the line" (2). On May 11, U.S. Grant, of the 4th Regiment of Infantry, wrote "Our Artillery amounted to 8 guns of six pound calibre and 2 Eighteen pounders" (Simon 84). In his 1885 Memoirs, Grant said that the Americans, in additions to the 18-pounders, had "three or four" 12-pounder howitzers, and "four or five" 6-pounder howitzers (94). Mr. Mangum provides the following information on the American guns:

On the walls along the stairways leading to the second floor are the guns belonging to the batteries of Captain James Duncan and Major Samuel Ringgold. Duncan's guns consist of 3 6pdrs and 1 12-pd howitzer. Ringgold's guns [four] were 6pdrs.

**Type of cannon shot used by the opposing forces**

In addition to the solid shot in the Mexican-American War, American guns used "fragmentation shot, grape, cannister, and spherical case" (Houston 273). U.S. Grant, in a letter dated June 26, noted that Mexican "9 lb. shots were whistling all around" (96). J.M. Scarritt reported that "Mr. Ringgold received a 4 pdr shot through both thighs..." (4). T.B. Thorpe, writing in 1846, reports that it was a "six-pound shot" that hit Major Ringgold (81). Thorpe noted that the battle began when "the batteries on the right of the American line opened, throwing their ball and grape over the heads of the Americans..." (76).

In his letter of May 12, J.M. Scarritt reports on shot used by the American forces:
The 18 pdr opened upon the cavalry on their left with round shot. Duncan advanced some fifty yards and Ringgold some short distance in front and opened upon different points of the line—the distance was so great that solid shot was used... An assault was also attempted by the cavalry...but a couple of discharges of grape from the 18 and of musketry from the square stopped them. (2 and 4)

In his report of May 12, Captain James Duncan of the 2nd Regiment of Artillery notes the type of shot one section of his battery used to repulse a charge by the Mexican forces on the American left: "one section of the battery opened upon them, with round shot, shells, and spherical case (314). Barbour, describing the shot used in this instance by Duncan, says it was "a destructive fire of grape and shrapnel shot and shells" (171).

Improvements in American artillery tactics

The primary innovation in the use of artillery is seen in Ringgold and Duncan's flying artillery, as it was called in Barbour's letter of May 12. In "The Role of Artillery in the Mexican War," Donald E. Houston states that the American Army studied the Napolconic Wars with special attention to the use of artillerymen riding horses and using light, highly mobile cannons. In 1838, Brevet Major Samuel Ringgold received new, lightweight guns and demonstrated their effectiveness. The Secretary of War then ordered one light-mounted battery for each regiment. Houston notes that these mobile batteries proved their worth under General Zachary Taylor (273).

The following paragraphs, written by General Cadmus M. Wilcox, in his 1892 History of the Mexican War, provide a general overview of the American artillery and its use at Palo Alto:

The action of May 8th on the plains of Palo Alto was, on the part of the United States forces, defensive and mainly of artillery against Mexican artillery and cavalry, supported by infantry. The two light batteries of Ringgold and Duncan, although not thoroughly equipped, were well disciplined and instructed and officered by men of quick perception and of courage, even to audacity. The field was favorable to celerity of movement; they seemed to be ubiquitous, changing from one position to another, according to the various exigencies of the strife, and moved at full speed, going into battery; unlimbering, loading and firing was an affair of an instant; they delivered seven or eight shots per minute, and in general with effect...The two 18-pounders under Lieutenants Churchill and Thomas J. Wood, the latter of the Topographical Engineers, were well served; their superior weight and greater range outmatched any guns of the Mexicans and were a complete surprise to
them, carrying havoc into their ranks, even to the reserves and train in the rear. As might have been anticipated, the enemy's cavalry made several ineffectual efforts to capture them. (57-58)

**Effectiveness of the cannons of the opposing forces**

Colonel Don Manuel Balbontín wrote the following statement on the poor performance of the Mexican cannons in comparison with the American cannons:

> En la batalia de Palo Alto, mientras nuestros proyectiles no llegaban a la línea enemiga, pasaban, y con mucho de la retaguardia de la nuestra los contrarios. (quoted in Carreno CXCI)

An unnamed infantry officer who fought in the Mexican army at Palo Alto writes, in *Campaña Contra America del Norte*, 6, Estado no. 1, that

> Nuestras piezas de mayor calibre se les tenia que dar elevacion para que alcanzaran, y las pequenas era una ridiculeza disparalas. (Quoted in Bancroft 361)

From the following quote in *Henry's Campaign* Sketches, it appears that the targets selected by the opposing forces also had a great deal to do with the heavy losses suffered by the Mexican forces as contrasted with the American forces:

> The great disproportion in the loss of the two armies arose from this fact: we fired at their masses; they at our batteries! (Quoted in Bancroft 362)

Another element in the relative effectiveness of the artillery of the two armies is seen in the statement by Mexican army Captain Jean Luis Berlandier that the Mexican forces "fired only 850 cannon shots, while the enemy had let off more than 3000" (quoted in Sanchez 19). These figures are generally repeated in the following selection from Arista's report of May 8th:

> The Combat was long and bloody, which may be estimated from the calculations made by the commandant-general of artillery, General D. Thomas Requena, who assures me that the enemy threw about three thousand cannon-shots from two in the afternoon, when the battle commenced, until seven at night, when it terminated,—six hundred and fifty being fired on our side. (quoted in Brooks 136)
However, the cannons of both forces appeared to be able to withstand advances; J.M. Scarritt makes this observation in his letter of May 12:

I felt perfectly satisfied that if either army had attempted an advance it would have been defeated. The interval that separated us was half a mile of prairie covered with long grass making it very difficult to move through. The artillery was so numerous and so well served on both sides that no column could have survived an attempt to advance. The only chance of victory that rested with them was to detach their numerous Cavalry from their infantry to move by a wide circuit in our rear—to approach under cover of the wood to a near point and by an energetic charge to take some of our batteries and spike our guns.... (5)

The following lines from Campaña Contra los Americanos describe the disparity in battle losses of the opposing forces:

"Nuestra pérdida fué de consideración, pues hubo cuerpos, como el 4.° regimiento de infantería, diezmados por solo sus muertos. Del enemigo se sabe que tuvieron once muertos ó heridos, que hace un tres por ciento de nuestra pérdida." (15)

**Number of men in the opposing forces**

Writing three miles from Matamoros, on May 9, Captain William Wallace Bliss, assistant adjutant general, reported that

For the information of Major Genl. Gaines I am directed by the Commanding General to say that on his march hither from Point Isabel he encountered at 'Palo Alto' on the 8th inst the Mexican forces consisting of 3,800 regular troops and perhaps 2000 irregular Cavalry, with 9 pieces of artillery. Our own force including officers did not exceed 2300.

In his letter of May 12, Barbour said that

The whole force of the enemy was a little upwards of six thousand, while ours did not exceed 2300. This has been acknowledged by themselves. (169)

General Arista, writing on May 8 to the Mexican Ministry of War and Marine, reported that
The forces under my orders amounted to three thousand men, and twelve pieces of artillery; those of the invaders were three thousand, rather less than more, and were superior in artillery, since they had twenty pieces of the calibre of sixteen and eighteen pounds (quoted in Brooks 135)

Using José María Roa Barcena's *Recuerdos de la Invasión Norteamericana* and the *Campaña Contra los Americanos* as his sources, Joseph Sanchez wrote that

Together Ampudia's and Torrejon's personnel added 2200 soldiers to the army at Matamoros under Mejia. Arista assumed supreme command of all of these troops totalling 5200 men and 26 pieces of artillery. (10)

In his report entitled *General Mariano Arista at the Battle of Palo Alto, Texas, 1846: Military Realist or Failure?* Sanchez refers to Arista's "3300-man battle line" at Palo Alto (15).

*Campaña Contra los Americanos* reports that Arista's force on May 1 at Los Tanques was "compuesta de cosa de 3,461 (estado núm. 1)," (6). The same report says that on the 5th Ampudia's force of 1230 men were dispatched to aid in the siege of Fort Brown (7); these forces rejoined Arista at Palo Alto on May 8.

General Cadmus M. Wilcox, commenting on the difference between the 3,000 men Arista said he had at Palo Alto, of the total force of 5,200 men available to him, writes

If the number given here be correct [3,000 fighting men] there was a very great depletion of ranks during the few days preceding the 8th and 9th, or Arista committed an indiscretion disparaging to him as a commander in dividing his army into two nearly equal parts and having but one of these factions engaged on May 8th and 9th. (65)

One indication that there may have been a large number of Mexican troops left to continue the siege of Fort Texas, along with those stationed at other locations, is seen in Arista's order of May 8 to Ampudia. Arista orders Ampudia to assist the Mexican army at Palo Alto, "after having covered the points which might serve to besiege the enemy in the forts opposite Matamoros" (quoted in Brooks 135).

Justin Smith said that the Mexican forces at Palo Alto may have "seemed to number 6000, though [there were] probably not more than two thirds as many...," or 4,000 men (165).
III. The Battle

Arrival of the opposing forces on the battlefield

There are a number of descriptions of the arrival of the two armies on the battlefield. Taylor's official report of May 10 describes the American forces entry upon the battlefield:

About noon, when our advance of cavalry had reached the water-hole of 'Palo Alto,' the Mexican troops were reported in our front, and were soon discovered occupying the road in force. I ordered a halt upon reaching the water, with a view to rest and refresh the men, and form deliberately our line of battle. The Mexican line was now plainly visible across the prairie, and about three-quarters of a mile distant. Their left, which was composed of a heavy force of cavalry, occupied the road resting upon a thicket of chapparal, while masses of infantry were discovered in succession on the right--greatly outnumbering our own force. (2)

The following lines from Lieutenant Colonel Belknap's report of May 15 also record the American entry on the battlefield:

On first meeting the enemy, I received your order to form on the left, with instructions to move into the chapparal and allow the men to refresh themselves by getting water. Perceiving in a few moments that the enemy was advancing, and not knowing precisely--being on the left of the line--where water was to be obtained, I directed the men to remain in the ranks. The enemy shortly after having halted, and your instructions for the refreshment of the men having been repeated, they proceeded to get water, and immediately fell in prepared and eager for action. The brigade was then ordered to advance in column on the left of the army; the battalion of artillery, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Childs, on the right; the 8th regiment of infantry, commanded by Captain Montgomery, on the left; and Captain Duncan's battery in the centre. (Taylor 23)

J.M. Scarritt, U.S. Army, states that

On the 8th when about 15 miles from Pt Isabel and one mile this side of the position called 'Worth's Camp' our line of battle was formed--the command was halted and the train closed--this was done in consequence of the report of our advance that the enemy was seen in
front and appeared to be advancing. In this order the force advanced until it came to the water hole at Gen. Worth's camp. There it was halted the men refreshed with rest and water and the train parked. From this position the enemy were distinctly seen distant about two miles and his long black lines at times fringing the horizon and these projected upon the wood seemed an overwhelming force for our small army. When the men were well refreshed the line was again formed and we advanced until our right flank came within one half mile of their left. Their batteries then opened upon us—we halted—formed square—laid down in the grass—and put our guns to work in reply. (1-2)

Probably describing the American battle line in the position where Taylor had stopped the men so they could get water, the *Campaña Contra los Americanos* notes that the American forces were stopped where the Mexican forces had been encamped from May 2 to May 4 (Sanchez 14). Berlandier, in his *Itinerario*, said that the American troops on the right were on a low rise along a resaca (Sanchez 14). On Taylor's left, with his spy-glass, Arista could see a low brushy area with more American forces behind the brush (Sanchez 14). His letter of May 12, Scarritt drew two sketches, one when the American battle line was first formed and another when the fighting commenced (see Exhibit F). Barbour, also writing on May 12, describes the arrival of the American army on the battlefield:

Capt. May sent back a man from the advance guard, which he commanded, to report that the enemy had shown himself in front. Our column was halted, the train, consisting of more than 200 wagons, brought up and parked, and the Army resumed the march. Another report was received at this moment that the enemy had withdrawn his advance. Our train was put in motion again and the whole marched on about a mile. On our right was a thick chaparral and a pond of water extended through it, and a mile off to the left was a similar thicket and a large pond between the two. In front, about three miles distant, we saw the forest of mesquite that extends nine miles out from the Rio Grande, and between our position and that forest the enemy had formed his line of battle—which was reported by May as soon as discovered. Our columns moved on slowly and steadily until we came in sight of the enemy about a mile distant from us and half a mile in front of the forest above mentioned. The General then ordered a halt and directed the train to be parked for defense—during which our men were ordered to fall out of the ranks and refresh themselves with water. In about half an hour we were in motion again and moved on half a mile. The enemy was now in full view of us; a broad level prairie, without a shrub showing upon its surface, lay between the two armies.
General Taylor ordered now his line of battle to be formed....In this order we advanced upon the enemy whose line was formed on a curve parallel to the wood in his rear....Having formed our line of battle the advance was sounded and we moved on again, slowly and steadily. May was now ordered to the left flank to oppose any demonstration from that quarter on the train. When our line had arrived within 700 yards of the enemy, his right battery opened upon us, we still moved on—not a man faltered—but the line continued to advance 100 yards under the combined fire of all their batteries. At 600 yards distance our line was halted....  (168-169)

General Mariano Arista's report of May 8 to the Mexican Minister of War and Marine provides an overview of the movement of his forces prior to the Battle of Palo Alto:
Constant in my purpose of preventing General Taylor from uniting the forces which he brought from the Fronton of Santa Isabel, with those which he left opposite Matamoros, I moved this day from the Fanques del Raminero, whence I dispatched my last extraordinary courier, and took the direction of Palo Alto, as soon as my spies informed me that the enemy had left Fronton, with the determination of introducing into his fort wagons loaded with provisions and heavy artillery...I arrived opposite Palo Alto about one o'clock, and observed that the enemy was entering that position...With all my forces, I established the line of battle in a great plain, my right resting upon an elevation, and my left on a slough of difficult passage...Scarcely was the first cannon fired, when there arrived General D. Pedro de Ampudia, second in command, whom I had ordered to join me... (Quoted in Brooks 134-135)

The following selection from *Apuntes*, published in 1848, describes the movement of the Mexican forces prior to the Battle of Palo Alto:

El 4, nuestro ejército cambió de posición [from Palo Alto] por falta de agua, acampando en los Tanques del Ramireño. El 5, dispuso Arista que el general Ampudia marchara sobre el campamento y fuerte de los enemigos para hostizarlos....Hasta el 8 fué cuando se supo de una manera positiva por los exploradores, que el enemigo en numero de cerca de 3.000 hombres, con abundante artillería, é infinitos carros, se dirigía del Fronton de Santa Isabel para su campo retrincherado de enfrente de Matamoros. El general en jefe, en cuanto se cercioró de que se verificaba este movimiento, se dispuso á presentar la batalla, que hacia tantos días andaba buscando. Nuestra caballería salió á las diez de la mañana para el espacioso llano de Palo-Alto: hízolo á las doce la infantería, la que encontró ya á aquella á la vista del enemigo...El
General Arista mandó formar inmediatamente en batalia...A la derecha, que se apoyaba en una colina de 18 á 20 pies de altura, y desde la que se prolongaba nuestra línea sobre la llanura...Nuestro ejército, formado en batalia, permaneció observando al enemigo, sin romper el fuego, hasta las dos y media de la tarde, á cuya hora se avistaron las fuerzas que Ampudia traía al combate por disposición del general en jefe...Nuestras baterías rompen el fuego, que es al punto contestado por la artillería superior del enemigo, situada á seiscientas varas de distancia de nuestra línea... (37-39)

The following passage from *Campana Contra los Americanos* records the arrival and disposition of the American and Mexican armies on the battlefield (for better comprehension by the reader this passage continues until the first cannon fire):

El día 8, por unos exploradores, supo S.E. el Sr. Arista, que los americanos salían del Fronton por el camino de Palo-Alto, y puso las fuerzas de los Tanques en movimiento, disponiendo que el Sr. General Ampudia se le incorporase con el 4. regimiento de infantería, 200 caballos de Canales, dos piezas y una compañía de zapadores, cuyas fuerzas emprendieron su marcha para Palo-Alto, á las doce y cuarto del día. El enemigo llegó a Palo-Alto, y tomó posición en el mismo lugar en que las tropas mexicanas habían estado acampados: encadenó sus carros; apoyó su derecha en una mota bastante espesa y una resaca; su izquierda y retaguardia en un bosque, en cuya orilla permanecieron sus carros: avanzó una columna, y situó su artillería mas a vanguardia, y de este modo en una estricta defensiva se preparó a combatir. Su orden de batalla era si no precisamente cóncava, su paralela excusaba un centro. El nuestro no era masque una línea estensa y débil, a dos de fondo, sin segundas líneas ni reserva ni masa alguna: nuestra artillería estaba situada entre las brigadas, y la caballería en dos secciones: una pequeña á las órdenes del Sr. coronel Noriega, apoyaba nuestra derecha, y otra mas fuerte, a las del Sr. Torrejon, estaba a la izquierda, y cubría en batalla este costado: a nuestra espalda estaba una loma de muy suave pendiente y algunos charcos de agua. El camino de Matamoros, que debía seguir el enemigo, y por donde desembocó la sección del Sr. Ampudía, quedaba a la izquierda de nuestra línea...La primera brigada y centro estaban ya situadas en el orden dicho, cuando el 4. regimiento de infantería se avistó por el camino de Matamoros para entrar en línea. En este momento S.E. el general en jefe mandó romper el fuego, y un cañonazo del centro anunció que empezaba el combate...Para mayor inteligencia, añadimos el piano del combate con su primera y segunda posición y los caminos principales, dando la situación debida a las
fuerzas del Sr. Canales, que formando completamente un martillo á la izquierda de nuestra línea, estuvieron en toda la batalla sin acción, y libres absoltunente del fuego enemigo. (9-10)

Don Niceto de Zamacois, in his 1880 *Historia de México*, adds a few details to the above accounts:

[After hearing that Taylor was moving from Port Isabel toward Matamoros, Arista,] levantando su cuartel general de los Estanques del Ramireño, se dirigió a Palo-Alto, a donde llegó a la una de la tarde, hora precisamente en que los invasores entraban al mismo sitio. Con todas las fuerzas que llevaba estableció la batalla en un gran llano, apoyando su derecha en una elevación montuosa, y la izquierda en una ciénega de difícil tránsito. Desde aquella elevación, que tendría veinte pies de altura, se extendía la línea de las tropas mexicanas sobre la espaciosa llanura...Eran poco más de las dos y media de la tarde. A los pocos instantes de haberse disparado los primeros cañonazos, se presentó el general Ampudia en el campo de batalla.... (464-465)

According to William Peter Neale, who settled in the area in 1834, Don Rafael Moscorro was holding three hundred head of cattle behind the hill called Loma Alta, located two miles from Palo Alto, for the use of the Mexican army (Rayburn 42).

**Initial lines of battle of the opposing forces**

A. Mexican Battle Line

*Apuntes* contains a description of the Mexican battle line:

El general Arista mandó formar inmediatamente en batalla: los cuerpos se colocaron en el órden siguiente. A la derecha, que se apoyaba en una colina de 18 a 20 pies de altura, y desde la que se prolongaba nuestra línea sobre la llanura, se situó un escuadrón del regimiento Ligero de México: seguía una pieza de artillería, el batallón de Zapadores, el 2.° regimiento ligero, el batallón y Compañía Guarda-Costa de Tampico, una batería de 8 piezas, y luego el 1.°, 6.° y 10 de línea. La infantería estaba a las órdenes de los generales Díaz de la Vega y García...A cuartocientas varas de distancia se veían cuatro escuadrones formados de los cuerpos de caballería 7, 8, Ligero de México y de las Compañías Presidiales; y en el intervalo del primero al segundo dos piezas ligeras. Mandaba esta fuerza el general Torrejón...Nuestro ejército, formado en batalla, permaneció observando al enemigo, sin romper el fuego, hasta las dos y media de la tarde, a
cuya hora se avistaron las fuerzas que Ampudia traía al combate por disposición del general en jefe. Se componían de una compañía de Zapadores, el 4. regimiento de línea, dos piezas de artillería, y los doscientos hombres de Auxiliares de las villas del Norte; estos últimos se situaron a bastante distancia, sobre nuestro flanco izquierdo, amparados del bosque. Con el resfuerzo recibido, nuestro ejército contó con 3.000 combatientes, número igual, con muy corta diferencia, al que tenían los enemigos. (38-39)

Arista's verbal testimony at the inquiry into his actions at the Battle of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma describes his battle line:

Ours was no more than an extended...line, two men deep, without secondary lines, nor reserves, nor any concentration of troops whatsoever. Our artillery was situated between the brigades and the cavalry was in two sections. The smaller cavalry unit, under Colonel Noriega, held the extreme right flank, while the other much larger unit under General Torrejon was on the left. (quoted in Sanchez 15)

In the Campaña Contra los Americanos, Mayo de 1846, it is noted that the Mexican baggage train was parked 800 yards to the rear of the Mexican left flank, and the hospital was also behind the Mexican left flank at a distance of 1500 varas (Sanchez 15). This location differs with that marked on one of the Jean Luis Berlandier maps of the battlefield, which shows the baggage train and the hospital both 500 varas behind the Mexican right flank. Perhaps these position were changed later in the day. Captain Jean Luis Berlandier provided additional eyewitness testimony on the Mexican battle line:

While these movements were taking place, General Arista gave the orders to his successively arriving troops, to converge on the right and to form the battle line, which extended on the right from a little rise in a succession of extremely flat hills, behind which was a little pool of water with one to two feet of water...Our left extended from the other side of the plain against the woods and marches, difficult to overcome, near the road by which the enemy had to pass. A battery of four pieces of artillery occupied the center, and the other pieces of smaller caliber were set out on the right and left wings. A small squadron of light cavalry was situated on the right wing at the foot of the hill, while the rest of the cavalry occupied the left where the squadrons of volunteers watched the road and the vicinity of the chaparral by which the enemy would have been able to advance. The artillery park was situated behind the center of the line, and farther back, near the edge of the wood, was the ambulance. Behind the right wing, slightly sheltered by
the hill of Motitas, the provision carts were positioned for the duration of the battle, retreating only a little into the chapparal.(quoted in Sanchez 15)

General Pedro de Ampudia describes in the following passage his departure from Fort Texas and his position in the battle line at Palo Alto:

I made my movement [from Fort Texas] within one-half hour and, within the hour, I was part of the battle line along with the 4th Regiment, one company of sappers, 200 auxiliaries and two 8-pounders. (quoted in Sanchez 15)

Some accounts are provided by Americans of what they perceived of the Mexican battle line. In his letter of May 12, J.M. Scarritt said that

The Mexicans had about 800 cavalry on each flank, 10 pieces of artillery disposed as represented of which these were eight 4 pdrs and two 9 pdrs--he had also about 4000 regular infantry and Artillery and 2000 rancheros who did not appear being in the wood.... (2)

In his letter of May 12, Barbour reports that

In this order [after the troops filled their canteens] we advanced upon the enemy whose line was formed on a curve parallel to the woods at his rear--as follows-Ranchero cavalry on his right (opposite our left), then a battery of artillery (three pieces), then a brigade of infantry supported by heavy masses in the rear--then another battery of three pieces--next another brigade of infantry supported as the first, then a third battery of three pieces and on their extreme left all their regular cavalry. (168-169)

B. American Battle Line

In his official report of May 10, Taylor provides the following description of the American battle line:

Our line of battle was formed in the following order, commencing on the extreme right: 5th infantry, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel McIntosh; Major Ringgold's artillery; 3d infantry, commanded by Captain L.M. Morris; two 18-pounders, commanded by Lieutenant Churchill, 3d artillery; 4th infantry, commanded by Major G.W. Allen. The 3d and 4th regiments composed the 3d brigade, under command of
Lieutenant Colonel Garland; and all the above corps, together with two squadrons of dragoons under captains Ker and May, composed the right wing, under the orders of Colonel Twiggs. The left was formed by the battalion of artillery, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Childs, Captain Duncan's light artillery, and the 8th infantry, under Captain Montgomery—all formed the 1st brigade, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Belknap. The train was parked near the water, under direction of Captains Crosman and Myers, and protected by Captain Ker's squadron...About 2 o'clock we took up the march by heads of columns, in the direction of the enemy, the 18-pounder battery following the road. While the columns were advancing, Lieutenant Blake, topographical engineers, volunteered a reconnoissance of the enemy's line, which was handsomely performed, and resulted in the discovery of at least two batteries of artillery in the intervals of their cavalry and infantry. (2)

Barbour, writing on May 12, describes the American battle line:

General Taylor ordered now his line of battle to be formed, as follows, May's squadron of Dragoons on the right—the 5th Infantry next—Ringgold's flying artillery next—3d and 4th Infantry next—this constituted the right wing—then came two 18 pounders commanded by Lieut. Churchill—next Child's battalion of artillery serving as infantry—then Duncan's flying artillery—and on the extreme left the 8th Infantry formed in column to form square if the left flank should be threatened by the enemy's cavalry. (168)

J.M. Scarritt's sketch of May 12 also provides the following battle alignment, from west to east: 5th Infantry, Ringgold's flying artillery, 3rd Infantry, 2 18 pounders, 4th Infantry, 8th Infantry, Duncan's flying artillery and [?]. Two units are also shown behind the American battle line, the parked train is shown farther to the north, and farther yet to the north is "Worth's Camp." In Scarritt's sketch of the first battle line, the waterhole would be to the west rather than to the east, indicating north to be at the top of the sketch. The sketch of the second battle line appears to have south at the top of the map.

Both armies are encouraged by their officers before the battle

The following selection from Apuntes describes Arista rousing his men to a fighting pitch:

Momentos antes de comenzar el combate, el general en gefe recorre la linea: arenga á los cuerpos uno por uno: les representa la gloria que
alcanzarán con el triunfo, y el agradecimiento que deben esperar de sus conciudadanos. Sus palabras son recibidos con entusiasmo: las banderas flotan al viento: los soldados preparan sus armas: acarician sus corceles: las músicas tocan piezas alegres y bélicas; y se elevan ante el trono del Dios justiciero, el clamor de venganza de una nación ofendida!... (39)

According to Berlandier, the Mexican troops heard the American troops also making demonstrations of their enthusiasm and patriotism (Sanchez 16).

First shots of the battle

Sanchez, citing Campaña Contra los Americanos, Grant's Memoirs, and Jose Luis Berlandier, writes that the Mexican forces were to wait until the American forces advanced to within range. At about 800 yards, the Mexican cannons fired, hitting an artillery caisson and killing the driver. However, most of the Mexican shot fell short and proved to be primarily solid shot, not the explosive shells the American would be using in response (16).

The American artillery responds and the cannonade rages

The following passage from Taylor's May 10 report describes the opening of the battle:

These batteries were soon opened upon us, when I ordered the columns halted and deployed into line, and the fire to be returned by all our artillery. The 8th infantry, on our extreme left, was thrown back to secure that flank. The first fires of the enemy did little execution, while our 18-pounders and Major Ringgold's artillery soon dispersed the cavalry which formed his left. Captain Duncan's battery, thrown forward in advance of the line, was doing good execution at this time. Captain May's squadron was now detached to support that battery and the left of our position. (2)

Lieutenant Colonel Belknap, in the following lines from his report of May 15, describes the movement forward and the first actions of the left flank of the American battle line:

The army having then been ordered to advance, the brigade moved in this order [Child's artillery on the right, the 8th regiment of infantry on the left, and Duncan's battery in the center] until the enemy opened his batteries; when the brigade was halted, Captain Duncan's battery advanced about two hundred yards, and commenced a most destructive
fire upon the enemy. This disposition was maintained for about two hours, when the enemy's fire slackened and finally ceased. (Taylor 23)

J.M. Scarritt's report provides an overview of the first series of exchanges of cannon fire:

Their batteries then opened upon us--we halted--formed square--laid down in the grass--and put our guns to work in reply...250 cavalry, two batteries of 4 guns each, and the two 18 pdrs were brought into line. The 18 pdr opened upon the cavalry on their left with round shot. Duncan advanced some 50 yards and Ringgold some short distance in front and opened upon different points of the line--the distance was so great that solid shot was used at first.(2)

Captain James Duncan's report of May 12 gives additional details on the activities of his battery during the first two hours of the battle:

After the first fire from the enemy's artillery had been drawn by the advance of our line of battle, in obedience to instructions of the general commanding, the battery under my command was moved 200 yards to the front of the line, and its fire opened. The battery being the most conspicuous and nearest point of our line, the principal part of the fire of the enemy's batteries was at once concentrated upon it, and kept up briskly, and incessantly, for nearly two hours; during this time, the battery under my command was not idle, but the gallant officers, and brave men, who directed and worked it, returned the enemy's shot, for shot, with interest. The fire of our battery was well directed, yet the enemy's line from right to left, was steady and unshaken. (313)

The following lines from Campaña Contra los Americanos point out the fierceness of the artillery duel during the first two hours of the combat:

Las baterías contrarias por espacio de dos horas, en 10 general, batieron solo nuestra izquierda, y nuestros valientes soldados volaban por los aires sin haber disparado su arma, pues permanecían formados, cual una muralla, inmóviles, y contestando á las balas y granadas que aclaraban nuestras filas, solo con los gritos de 'viva México, viva la Independencia.' Los toques de diana en toda la línea apenas se oían por el fuego de cañón; pero las bandas de los cuerpos cesaron como por encanto, porque casi a un tiempo fueron destruidas por el cañón a la Paixhan del enemigo. (10)
General Ampudia joins the Mexican line

The following passage in *Apuntes* records the arrival of General Ampudia and his men on the battlefield and their movement into the Mexican battle line:

Nuestras baterías rompen el fuego, que es al punto contestado por la artillería superior del enemigo, situada á seiscientas varas de distancia de nuestra línea: las fuerzas que traia Ampudia siguen acercándose: el 4.° no se desconcierta: sereno en un peligro tan grande como en una parada, continúa su movimiento hasta llegar á la línea, donde desplega en batalla á la izquierda del 10.° (39)

The following lines from *Campana Contra los Americanos* records the arrival of General Ampudia's force on the battlefield:

La primera brigada y centro estaban ya situadas en el órden dicho, cuando el 4.° regimiento de infantería se avistó por el camino de Matamoros para entrar en línea. En este momento S.E. el general en jefe mandó romper el fuego, y un cañonazo del centro anunció que empezaba el combate...El enemigo calculando sin duda, como debía, que la columna que avistaba á su derecha era de ataque á este costado, dirigió sus baterías todas sobre el 4.° regimiento de infantería, el que antes de entrar en línea había ya sembrado de cadáveres su camino, y este cuerpo desplegó formando con tres piezas de á 4 la izquierda de la batalia. (9-10)

The impact of the American artillery on Ampudia's infantry is seen in the loss of his color bearers:

At Palo Alto, not a single color bearer remained alive; the 4th Infantry Batallion alone lost three color bearers in a row. (Soldado 78)

The American artillery catches the prairie on fire

Taylor's report of May 16 describes the prairie catching on fire:

The grass of the prairie had been accidentally fired by our artillery, and the volumes of smoke now partially concealed the armies from each other. (3)

Duncan's report of May 12 records that
In the early part of the engagement, our guns set fire to the prairie grass in front of them, the flames spread rapidly, and the direction of the wind was such as to envelope our line in smoke, and entirely to conceal from us the operations of the enemy. (313)

The following selection from *Apuntes* refers to the prairie fire and the conviction of the authors that the fire was intentionally started in order to hide the American operations from the Mexican forces:

El fuego [de las piezas] sigue destructor y mortífero: el enemigo, cuyo objeto principal era pasar para su campo retrincherado de enfrente de Matamoros, se vale de la estratagemas de incender el pasto que tenía á su frente, para que el denso humo que se levantara ocultase sus operaciones. (39)

In the following lines from *Campaña Contra los Americanos*, the beginning of the prairie fire is described:

La acción había empezado á las dos y minutos de la tarde: a las cuatro, poco mas, apareció á la izquierda de los americanos una humareda ocasionada por las camisas embreadas que incendiaron, con las cuales hicieron arder el pasto para ocultar el movimiento que hacian al tomar el camino de Matamoros. (10)

In the following passage from Don Niceto de Zamacois, the fire started by the American artillery is seen as accidental in origin rather than being intentionally started to hide the American operations:

La yerba que crecia en abundancia delante de la posición norte-americana y que se incendió de repente, levantaba aquella nube de humo que ocultaba sus operaciones. Todos creyeron que Taylor había incendiado expresó la yerba para obrar sin ser visto; pero aquel incendio fué casual, fué producido por el continuo fuego de cañón de sus baterías, como lo refiere el mismo general al dar parte al gobierno de Washington de aquella batalla. (466-467)

T.B. Thorpe, in his *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, provides an idea of how the fire may have been started in the wet, fire-resistant zacahuistle:
So rapid were these discharges [of the American cannons], that the wiry grass of the prairie, that reached nearly up to the muzzle of the pieces, dried before the sheeted flame, and burst into a blaze....(78)

**General Torrejon tries to turn the American right flank**

*Apuntes* describes in the following passage the attempt by General Torrejon to flank the American forces on their right:

Transcurre en esto como una hora, pasada la cual, se manda al general Torrejon que cargue con la caballeria sobre el ala derecha del ejército contrario. Efectuase este movimiento, clue se hizo desfilando pot hileras por la izquierda: á cierta distancia del enemigo, y cuando ya se había introducido alguna confusión por lo largo del espacio que se había tenido que atreverse, una voz detuvo la carga, diciendo que las tropas que estaban al frente nos iban á pasar. Todos los cuerpos se pararon: en aquel instante, las dos piezas que tenían situadas en aquella parte los americanos, hicieron fuego, causando algunos destrozos: el desorden se aumentó; y en vez de darse la carga cejó nuestra caballería...No hubo en realidad obstáculo en su tránsito, pues una ciénega que era necesario atravesar, no obstruía verdaderamente el camino...El enemigo que se ha visto amenazado por esta fuerza, destaca para contenerla un batallón y dos piezas de artillería, que hacen considerables estragos. El general Torrejon tiene que retirarse, dando lugar con su conducta á que se hiciera por primera vez á la caballería un cargo que se ha repetido luego otras varias. (39-40)

General Arista, in his report on May 8 to the Mexican Minister of War and Marine, discusses this same event:

I was anxious for the charge [of the American infantry across the plain], because the fire of cannon did much damage to our ranks; and I instructed General D. Anastacio Torrejon to execute it with the greater part of the cavalry, by our left flank, with some columns of infantry, and the remainder of the cavalry...I was waiting the moment when that general should execute the charge, and the effect of it should begin to be seen, in order to give the impulse on the right; but he was checked by a fire of the enemy, which defended a slough that embarrassed the attack. (quoted in Brooks 135-136)
The following lines from *Campana Contra los Americanos* describe the flanking movement of Torrejon in the first half of the combat:

Desbordaban ya nuestra izquierda por el bosque que los cubría, cuando recibió el Sr. Torrejon órden de cargarles por su derecha, lo que intentó este acreditado general. Pero S.E. el general en jefe no recordaba que por donde mandaba que entrara nuestra caballería, á mas de ser un bosque, había una resaca, de donde cabalmente nos surtimos de agua los días 2 y 3, que habíamos estado acampados en el mismo lugar de la acción: así fué que el Sr. Torrejon se halló contenido por un batallón y dos piezas americanas, que lo recibieron en el bosque, y sumido en un fango en donde no era fácil maniobrar. Avisólo así este Sr. general con el Sr. coronel Sabariego, que había hecho la observación, y S.E. el general en jefe contestó se cargase siempre, lo que al fin, siendo imposible, el Sr. Torrejon se retiró, pasando por retaguardia de la línea de infantería. (10-11)

Don Niceto de Zamacois emphasizes the difficulty the slough represented to Torrejon's flanking movement:

Viendo el general Arista que los contrarios no avanzaban, previno al general Torrejon que diese una carga con la mayor parte de su caballería, por el flanco izquierdo, para darla él á la vez por la derecha con sus columnas de infantería y el resto de la caballería. El general Arista aguardaba el instante de que Torrejon ejecutase la carga, y que esta comenzara á surtir sus efectos, para dar el impulso por la derecha. El general Torrejon ejecutó el movimiento desfilando por hileras; pero fué contenido por un batallón de los Estados-Unidos que, con dos piezas de artillería, defendía un atascadero que embarazaba á la caballería el ataque. Torrejon intentó penetrar; pero la confusión que se había introducido durante la larga distancia que habían tenido que cruzar sus soldados, sufriendo un fuego vivísimo, se aumentó al encontrarse con aquel nuevo obstáculo que les presentaba un terreno fangoso, y los escuadrones se detuvieron allí. En aquel crítico instante, las dos piezas de artillería que tenían los que defendían aquel punto, dejaron escuchar su estampido, sembrando la muerte; y la caballería, sin ejecutar la órden de carga, se replegó precipitadamente. Este inesperado accidente impidió al general Arista ejecutar el movimiento que tenía dispuesto y del que esperaba alcanzar brillantes resultados. (467-468)
Taylor, in his report of May 10, describes the flanking movement by General Torrejon against the American right flank:

The Mexican cavalry, with two pieces of artillery, were now reported to be moving through the chapparal to our right, to threaten that flank or make a demonstration against the train. The 5th infantry was immediately detached to check this movement, and, supported by Lieutenant Ridgely, with a section of Major Ringgold's battery and Captain Walker's company of volunteers, effectively repulsed the enemy--the 5th infantry repelling a charge of lancers, and the artillery doing great execution in their ranks. The 3rd infantry was now detached to the right as a still further ac'curity to that flank yet threatened by the enemy. Major Ringgold, with the remaining section, kept up his fire from an advanced position, and was supported by the 4th infantry. (2-3)

Lieutenant John Garland, in his report of May 11, describes the flanking movement against the American right:

A regiment of the enemy's lancers was observed to move to our right, apparently to gain possession of our wagon-train, a few hundred yards in rear. The 5th infantry and two pieces of Major Ringgold's artillery, under the command of Lieut. R. Ridgely, were ordered to check this movement. Having gained ground to the right some four or five hundred yards, the 5th was formed in square, to receive a charge from the lancers, who advanced to within fifty yards, when the opposing side of the square fired into and repulsed them; having received, in the mean time, several irregular discharges from the enemy. The lancers re-formed, and continued their movement to get in rear of our right flank, when I ordered the 3d to move to the right and rear, around a pond of water, and prevent their progress in that direction. Seeing their movement frustrated in this point, the lancers commenced a retreat in good order, marching apparently by squadrons, when First Lieutenant R. Ridgely, of Major Ringgold's battery, assisted by Brevet Second Lieutenant French, opened a fire on them, and scattered them in all directions. In this affair the enemy lost some twenty-eight or thirty men. This portion of the right wing served in about this position until the close of the action, Major Ringgold, with the two remaining pieces of his battery, continued to play on the enemy with great success. (Taylor 14)
Lieutenant Colonel J.S. McIntosh, in his report of December 2 to General Taylor, also describes the flanking movement made by General Torrejon:

On the 8th of May the 5th Infantry on the right flank of the Army advanced in obedience to your orders in line of battle in the direction of the enemy until our batteries were thrown forward to answer his fire. This fire was received with great firmness by my command for about half an hour when it was discovered that there was a movement of a large body of the enemy's cavalry from his left passing around a skirt of woods towards our right flank, apparently with the intention of turning it. I received orders to march the regiment in that direction and intercept them. In obedience to which we moved promptly to the right and rear until we gained a position which would cover our waggon train and where I supposed the enemy must pass. A moment afterwards they were seen approaching along the border of the chaparral about three hundred yards from us and numbering at the least estimate over one thousand of his choicest troops. I immediately caused the regiment to form square to receive them, as soon as they observed this disposition on our part they formed for a charge and came at a rapid speed along a small morass some two hundred yards distant from the first front of our square, here they turned to the right and towards our second front, advancing within about eighty yards and delivered their fire. I was much gratified at this crisis to observe the cool and determined courage of my officers and the encouragement they gave their men to stand firm in their places impressing upon them the importance of maintaining the square. This was one of those moments which try the discipline and courage of the true soldier. After delivering his fire the enemy continued to advance with energy and determination until within forty or fifty yards of our second front, when I ordered this front to fire, most fatal and decisive was the effect, many of the enemy fell, the charging column was thrown into disorder and retreated, while on the retreat and about four hundred yards from and opposite to our first front, they met two guns of their horse artillery advancing to their support, here they halted to protect and to give their artillery an opportunity to fire into our square, at the opportune moment Lieut Ridgely who had been ordered to report to me with two pieces of artillery was seen approaching with the guns, his horse at full speed, he opened his fire so promptly and with such effect that the enemy's artillery was completely routed and retreated precipitately under the protection of their cavalry without discharging a gun. (1-3)
This same flanking movement is referred to in J.M. Scarritt's report of May 12 to Colonel J.G. Tolten:

The enemies cavalry on the left soon found this position too uncomfortable to maintain long so that he moved off by the left flank followed by the two pieces of artillery nearest the head of this column was seen through the wood demonstrating an attack either on our right flank or on the train. Their cavalry followed the broken line [on the sketch]. The 5th Inf. were moved into the wood for the purpose of protecting our right and the 3rd withdrawn so as to cover more effectively the train. The 5th was a square by the time the lancers reached the wood. The battery charged the square but were repelled with the loss of ten killed--they then withdrew out of musquetry range and continued the march toward our train. The appearance of the 3rd checked this demonstration and their retreat commenced. In the meantime two of Ringgold's guns had been ordered into the wood on the left of the 5th. They reached their position just as the long line of cavalry had commenced their retreat--their guns did great damage to their pieces of artillery which they never opened and hastened the retreat of the horsemen.(2-3)

The May 12 letter of Barbour provides additional information on the attempted flanking movement by General Torrejon:

...a heavy cannonading from both sides now commenced and was kept up for 30 minutes when our 18 pounders and Ringgold's battery made such havoc among their cavalry that it moved off and made a demonstration against our right flank. Gen. Taylor seeing this threw the 5th Infantry to the right to meet it--it took position in a point of woods 300 yards to the right and forward square. The cavalry was now seen moving rapidly round our flank when the 3rd Regiment was also thrown to the right and ordered to support the 5th. In the meantime Ringgold's battery was pouring in a destructive fire upon them and continued it until they were entirely protected by an intervening rise in the prairie. Lieut. Ridgley then moved off rapidly with two pieces towards the 5th Infantry but before he reached the position he desired, the 5th had been charged by the cavalry and repulsed it. Just as Ridgely came up he discovered two pieces of the enemy's artillery in the act of being planted to break the square of the 5th—but he was too quick for them and poured in such a shower of grapeshot and shells upon the battery and the cavalry that the whole conclave retreated in haste with a severe loss of men and horses. (169-170)
Lieutenant Randolph Ridgely, in his report of May 10, describes the flanking action by General Torrejon:

...in consequence of their making a flanking movement to our right, I was detached, with two pieces, to operate with the 5th infantry, who had been sent forward to oppose the movement. My section had already lost one man, and two horses badly wounded. As I was taking position on the right of the 5th, who were in square, they fired a volley from one of its faces on the enemy, whose cavalry had charged. I at once unlimbered and commenced firing. Very shortly I saw their artillery and cavalry, which latter was in large force, retiring. I am happy to state our fire proved effective, and the movement was frustrated. Brevet 2d Lieut. French had the immediate charge of one of the pieces. We continued changing position from point to point until dark, when we encamped. (Taylor 20)

Major T. Staniford, 5th infantry, records the action on the American right flank in his report of May 10:

...the 5th infantry was placed on the extreme right of our line. After sustaining the cannonade of the enemy for about three-quarters of an hour, the regiment was ordered to turn the left flank of the enemy, and was detached for that purpose, advancing nearly half a mile to the right and front--the cavalry of the Mexicans, with two pieces in view, extending themselves, apparently for the purpose of outflanking us. On the near approach of the enemy's cavalry the regiment was thrown into square, with Captain Walker, of the Texas rangers, and twenty mounted men, on our right. The enemy commenced an irregular fire upon our square, as they advanced--wounding three or four of our men--and continued to do so until within about fifty yards, when our fire was delivered from one front of the square, killing several men and horses, and causing the enemy to retire. Our fire was followed by the rifles of the mounted men. At this moment, Lieut. Ridgely, with two pieces of his battery, came to our support, and poured in a destructive fire of grape and cannister on the enemy, now in full retreat toward his left. The regiment remained on this ground for about half an hour... (Taylor 19)

General Cadmus M. Wilcox, writing in 1892, refers to the squares made by the 3rd and 5th Infantries in repelling Torrejon's flanking movement:
These were the first two cases in which the United States Infantry resorted to the square for motion, for protection against cavalry. The opinion prevails at present that the infantry square belongs to the past, and will never be revived. (58)

Ringgold advances to the original position in the Mexican line once occupied by General Torrejon

Barbour, in the following passage from his letter of May 12, relates how Ringgold moved forward at the same time that Torrejon was continuing to try to flank the American right:

Major Ringgold in the meantime had continued to advance with the other two pieces of his battery until he occupied the ground originally taken by the enemy's cavalry on the left of their line and gave them and their battery a galling fire as they retreated by line, and forced them [Torrejon's men] to form in rear of their own infantry. (170)

The following lines in the Campaña Contra los Americanos describes the pressure the American army was exerting on the Mexican left following the repulse of Torrejon's men:

Naturalmente las fuerzas americanas que habian contenido al Sr. Torrejon, flanquearon nuestra izquierda, y de enfilada empezaron á batirla. Nuestra artilleria de este flanco era un estorbo en lugar de ausilio, pues sus balas no recorrian la mitad espacio que nos separaba del enemigo, cuando las de este cruzando nuestras filas, alcanzaban al parque, que estaba á 800 varas á retaguardia, y aun al hospital, que se hallaba en un bosquesillo á 1.500 varas de nuestra izquierda, y en donde le llevaron el brazo derecho á un herido á quien le estaban amputando el izquierdo...El Sr. coronel Uraga dió conocimiento al Sr. general Vega, comandante de la brigada, del modo que estaba batido; pero este Sr. general no se atrevió por sí á tomar una disposicion, é hizo se comunicarse al general en gefe que en estos momentos se hallaba á la derecha de la linea. El teniente del primer batallon activo de Mexico, D. José María Andrade, trajo órden de S.E. en contestacion, como ayudante que era de la brigada, para que el Sr. Uraga hiciese con su regimiento flanco derecho y paso veloz, cuya órden no comprendida por este gefe, pues de ejecutarla abandonaba las dos piezas y venia á formar á retaguardia de la linea sin objeto y dejando descubierta la izquierda, pidió se le esplicase el movimiento que se le prevenia. (11)
Realignment of the battle lines

Taylor's May 10 report describes the change in the battle lines after the repelling of General Torrejon's cavalry charge and the advance made by a section of Ringgold's battery against the Mexican left flank:

As the enemy's left had evidently been driven back and left the road free, and as the cannonade had been suspended, I ordered forward the 18-pounders on the road nearly to the position first occupied by the Mexican cavalry, and ordered the 1st brigade to take up a new position still on the left of the 18-pounder battery. The 5th was advanced from its former position, and occupied a point on the extreme right of the new line. The enemy made a change of position corresponding to our own, and, after a suspension of nearly an hour, the action was resumed. (3)

In the following statement in his letter of May 12, Barbour describes the turning movement of the American and Mexican forces:

Seeing Ringgold had gained the enemy's flank the general ordered an oblique change of fronts to support him--throwing his whole left wing to the right. The enemy perceived this and made a corresponding change of their line to their right. This movement required some 3/4 of an hour, during which the firing was suspended on both sides--but it opened again with redoubled fury and continued until near sunset... (170)

J.S. McIntosh's report of December 3 describes the movement forward of the 5th Infantry into the new battle line:

Towards the close of the day the 5th Infantry retaining its position upon the right, was thrown forward under the direction of Co1 Triggs on the prolongation of the new line of battle, prepared to protect our right flank from a repetition of the enemy's charge. During a portion of this time the enemy's artillery poured a galling fire into us from which the men were in a measure sheltered by being made to sit down thus allowing many of their balls to pass over them. (3)

J.M. Scarrit's report of May 12 to Colonel J.G. Totten tells of the advance of the American army:
Such was the situation of things until the close of the first part of the fight, when the smoke of the guns and of the burning prairie which had been fired by the burning wads created a cloud so dense that it was impossible to see each other. The fight had commenced at 2 o'clock and it now was about 4. The firing on both sides ceased and we had an intermission of about an hour. As their Cavalry had not returned to their position after their repulse we advanced the 5th to the place occupied by their left - brought up the 2 18 pdr - advanced the artillery detail as represented. We then recommenced the fire, which they immediately answered... (3)

T.B. Thorpe's *Our Army on the Rio Grande* describes the location of the realigned Mexican battle line:

The Mexicans arranged their line parallel with our own, but better protected than at first by the chaparral at their rear. (80)

The following selection from *Apuntes* describes the turning movement of the two armies:

Favorecidos los norte-americanos por el humo de) incendio, que era entonces espesísimo, se preparan á pasar por nuestra izquierda que quedaba flanqueada con este movimiento: el general en jefe que lo nora lo evita diestramente mandando un cambio de frente á vanguardia sobre nuestra a la izquierda. El ejército practica esta operación con un órden y disciplina admirables, sin que el horroso fuego que se le hace desordene un solo momento á aquellos intrépidos soldados, siendo muy de notarse la serenidad y bizarria con que marcaron la nueva dirección los guías, las banderas y los ayudantes. A consecuencia del cambio, nuestra ala derecha quedó á poco menos de tiro de fusil de los enemigos. (40)

The following lines from *Campaña Contra los Americanos* describe the realignment of the battle lines:

Las circumstancias eran ya críticas, pues suspenso el fuego en toda la línea, solo quedaba en aquel costado que abrazaba; y al fin al 4.° regimiento se le previno hiciese un cambio diagonal á retaguardia sobre la primera mitad de la primera compañía, y presentó el frente al enemigo. S.E. á este tiempo dispuso se rompiese el fuego por mirades de compañías, y es necesario decirlo en justicia, ni en sus ejercicios doctrinales manifestó este cuerpo tanta serenidad, tanta exactitud para
sus maniobras y fuegos como en aquel momento, en que ya dos veces le habían derribado su bandera, perdiendo en la segunda hasta la escolta. Serean las cinco de la tarde cuando esto sucedió en la izquierda, y cuando toda la línea, sirviéndole de base el 4.° regimiento de infantería, tomó la nueva dirección de la batalía. Hubo no solo precisión por los cuerpos en todo este cambio, sino ostentación de valor y desprecio a la muerte, pues tomaba ya la nueva línea, que ponía nuestra derecha sobre el enemigo, que no había hecho masque prolongarse, mandó S.E. se alinease la batalía veinte pasos á vanguardia, yen medio de un redoble de cañonazos aparecieron nuestras banderas y guías generales, á demarcar la línea, y ésta avanzó tranquilamente á su nueva posición. ¡Soldados de este temple son héroes! porque no importaba el morir peleando; pero escaspera el morir sin defensa, sin venganza y sin fruto para el país y para la independencia, porque se combaría. (12)

Demonstration of Captain May and his squadron

Taylor, in his report of May 10, describes the heavy artillery exchanges, after the change in the battle lines, and Captain May's demonstration on the Mexican left flank:

The fire of artillery was now most destructive; openings were constantly made through the enemy's ranks by our fire, and the constancy with which the Mexican infantry sustained this severe cannonade was a theme of universal remark and admiration. Capt. May's squadron was detached to make a demonstration on the left of the enemy's position, and suffered severely from the fire of artillery to which it was some time exposed. (3)

J.M. Scarritt's report of May 12 describes Captain May's demonstration on the Mexican left flank:

While this [Torrejon's flanking movement] was going on Capt May with his squadron made a demonstration on their lines but he found their batteries so strongly supported by infantry and Cavalry that he considered it hopeless to expect success from an attack of 65 dragoons. (3)

Captain C.A. May, in his report of May 10, describes the movement on the Mexican left:
You are aware that my first orders, on the 8th instant, were to strengthen the left flank of the army and sustain Lieutenant Duncan's battery. In this position I lost four horses killed and two wounded...About half an hour before sunset I received orders to proceed to the enemy's left flank, and drive in his cavalry. In execution of these orders, and while passing the general and his staff, the enemy concentrated the fire from his batteries upon us, killing six of my horses and wounding five men. I succeeded in gaining a position on the enemy's left, with a view of charging his cavalry, but found him in such force as to render ineffectual a charge from my small command; and therefore returned, in obedience to my instructions, to my first position, where I remained until the close of the action, which terminated very shortly afterwards. (Taylor 21-22)

It is probably May's demonstration that is referred to in J. S. McIntosh's report of December 3:

While in this position [the 5th Infantry had been moved forward into the new battle line] a cannon shot struck into a squadron of Dragoons moving through a marsh in front of us, killing some horses and disabling one man, soon afterwards Capt Martin Scott attracted by his groans to observe his situation advanced with aid under a severe fire, and withdrew him from the mud and water under his horse and sent him to the surgeons by whom his life was saved.... (3-4)

Lieutenant Colonel John Garland's report of May 11 describes May's demonstration on the Mexican left flank:

The 2d squadron of dragoons, commanded by Captain May, who, during the day was under the immediate orders of the general commanding, being ordered to turn, if possible, the left flank of the enemy, the 4th infantry was ordered to support him. Having advanced in our right and front some four hundred yards, under a very severe fire from two of the enemy's batteries, it was found the force he had to oppose was eight or nine hundred cavalry. He retired, agreeably to his orders; and the 4th infantry was accordingly withdrawn. In this operation Captain May's squadron had five men wounded and six horses killed, and the 4th infantry one man killed, one officer (Captain Page) mortally, and one man severely wounded. (Taylor 14)

The following passage in Apuntes probably refers to this demonstration by May; however, it may also refer to May's earlier move toward the Mexican right flank:
También había hecho avanzar Taylor parte de su caballería sobre nuestra derecha [izquierda?] Recibida por dos piezas ligeras, se rio obligada á retroceder, y los fuegos se suspendieron por ambas partes, durante mas de un cuarto de hora, al cabo de cuyo tiempo se renovó el cañoneo con mas actividad y continuación que antes. (40)

Based on Roa Barcena's Recuerdos, Sanchez writes that (this could also refer to Duncan's movement on the Mexican right flank)

The right wing of the Mexican army was clear of smoke, and from behind the smoke screen they saw a contingent of enemy cavalry supported by light artillery attempt a flanking maneuver. The Mexicans turned their cannons on the horsemen, who retreated after having lost some men. (16)

On this movement (which could also refer to Duncan's movement on the Mexican right flank or to May's earlier effort against the Mexican right flank), Don Niceto de Zamacois writes that

El general Taylor hizo entonces [after the repulse of Torrejon on the American right in the first part of the battle] que avanzase su caballería sobre la derecha de la línea mejicana. La órden fue ejecutado con arrojo; pero los dragones norte-americanos fueron recibidos por dos piezas ligeras de artillería, y se vieron obligados a volver y a retroceder á todo escape. Después de estos dos incidentes, los fuegos se suspendieron en uno y otro campo por espacio de veinte minutos, volviendo á renovarse en sequida el de canon con mas actividad que al principio. (468)

Duncan's battery advances on the Mexican right flank

Captain James Duncan's May 12 letter to Lieutenant Colonel W.G. Belknap records Duncan's discovery of the realignment of the Mexican army's right wing closer to the American left wing and the movement of his battery to the extreme end of the American left flank:

About two hours after the enemy's batteries opened, his fire slackened, and soon after ceased entirely. This cessation of fire was taken advantage of to replenish our ammunition chests, which were nearly exhausted, and to repair such damage, to the battery and horses, as had been rendered necessary...We were actively engaged at this work, when the reopening of the enemy's batteries showed us, that his
artillery had changed its position, and all its fire, was concentrated upon our right, which your brigade was ordered to reinforce. The infantry of your brigade moved off immediately, and instructions were given by you to the field artillery, to follow as soon as the necessary repairs were made, and the chests replenished with ammunition: whilst these preparations were being made, a lucky breeze rolled aside the smoke, that had hitherto concealed from us the movements of the enemy, when it was discovered that he was rapidly moving the entire cavalry and infantry force of his right wing upon our train, which was in rear of the left of our line of battle. My battery at once followed your brigade to the right, where this important fact was communicated to you, when dispositions were promptly made, to check this daring move of the enemy. The battery under my command was ordered to proceed with all possible dispatch to the threatened point, and hold the enemy in check, till the infantry could come up to its support; under cover of the smoke, which now, in turn, favored our movement, the battery dashed back again to the left flank beyond the burning prairie, in full view of the enemy, and engaged him within point blank range of our little guns; so sudden, and unexpected, was this movement to the enemy, (who a moment before saw us disappear behind the smoke in the opposite direction,) that his whole column of cavalry pulled up to a halt, before a shot had been fired, or even the guns unlimbered. (313-314)

Lieutenant Colonel Belknap's report of May 15 also records this action:

In a short time after the firing ceased, the army was ordered to advance and take position somewhat nearer to the enemy; the battalion of artillery taking post in rear and to the right of the two 18-pounders, Captain Duncan's artillery on their left, and to the rear of his battery. At this moment Captain Duncan, with his usual quickness of perception, discovered and communicated to me the fact, that the enemy was moving the entire cavalry and infantry force of his right wing upon our train in rear of the left of our line of battle, and that his battery could produce a more destructive effect upon the enemy by taking a position further to the left. I ordered him to proceed to the threatened point with all possible dispatch, and hold the enemy in check till the 8th infantry could come to his support. The battery dashed back to the left flank in full view of the enemy, and engaged him within point blank range of his small guns. So sudden and unexpected was this movement to the enemy--who, a moment before saw this battery disappear in the opposite direction behind the smoke of
the burning prairie—that his whole column of cavalry pulled up to a halt before a shot had been fired, or even the guns unlimbered. (Taylor 23)

**Mexican army attempts double envelopment**

Taylor's report of May 10 describes the Mexican flanking action on the American right:

The 4th infantry, which had been ordered to support the 18-pounder battery, was exposed to a most galling fire of artillery, by which several men were killed, and Capt. Page dangerously wounded. The enemy's fire was directed against our 18-pounder battery, and the guns under Major Ringgold in its vicinity. The Major himself, while coolly directing the fire of his pieces, was struck by a cannon ball and mortally wounded...In the mean time the battalion of artillery under Lieut. Col. Childs had been brought up to support the artillery on our right. A strong demonstration of cavalry was now made by the enemy against this part of our line, and the column continued to advance under a severe fire from the 18-pounders. The battalion was instantly formed in square, and held ready to receive the charge of cavalry; but when the advancing squadrons were within close range, a deadly fire of canister from the 18-pounders dispersed them. A brisk fire of small arms was now opened upon the square, by which one officer, Lieut. Luther, 2nd artillery, was slightly wounded; but a well-directed volley from the front of the square silenced all further firing from the enemy in this quarter. It was now nearly dark, and the action was closed on the right of our line—the enemy having been completely driven back from his position, and foiled in every attempt against our line. (3)

Also contained in Taylor's May 10 report is a description the Mexican flanking movement against the American left flank:

While the above was going forward on our right, and under my own eye, the enemy had made a serious attempt against the left of our line. Capt. Duncan instantly perceived the movement, and, by the bold and brilliant maneuvering of his battery, completely repulsed several successive efforts of the enemy to advance in force upon our left flank. Supported in succession by the 8th infantry and by Capt. Ker's squadron of dragoons, he gallantly held the enemy at bay, and finally drove him with immense loss from the field. The action here, and along the whole line, continued until dark...(3)
The following passage in *Apuntes* describes the Mexican army's frustration at the severe cannonade it was receiving and the attempt of the Mexican forces to flank both ends of the American army:

La artillería de los norte-americanos, muy superior en número á la nuestra, hace estragos horrorosos en las filas del ejército mexicano. Los soldados sucumben, no envueltos en un combate en que pueden devolver la muerte que reciben, no en medio del aturdimiento y arrojo que produce el ardor de la refriega, sino en una situación fatal en que mueren impunemente, y diezmados á sangría fría. Horas enteras se prolonga la batalla bajo tan funestos auspicios: las bajas se aumentan por momentos: las tropas, cansadas por fin de morir tan insultamente, piden á gritos que se les conduzca sobre el enemigo á la bayoneta, porque lo que quieren es batirse de cerca, y sacrificarse como deben hacer los valientes. El general en jefe no se decide de pronto á complacerlas: entonces se introduce algún desorden en los cuerpos de la derecha, que tratan de retroceder: allí acude veloz el general Arista: restablece la disciplina: ordena por fin que se dé la carga tan apetecida. Empezaba ya en aquellos momentos a oscurecer... Para ejecutar esta maniobra, el ejército se apoyaba en la caballería de Torrejon, y por su derecha en el Escuadron Ligero de México y en el regimiento número 7 que se acababa de colocar allí. Esta fuerza, al moverse, se echa sobre nuestra infantería, en la que introduce el desorden: desconcertadas nuestras tropas se atropellan unas á otras y no pueden ya llegar hasta los enemigos, pasando solamente á tiro de pistola de sus baterías, que las desorganizan, las destrozan y las obligan á retirarse por la izquierda de nuestra batalla. Contribuyó también muy eficazmente á producir este mal resultado, el queen vez de formar al ejército en columnas para acercarse al enemigo, se le hizo avanzar en batalia... Afortunadamente los americanos no supieron aprovecharse, ni aun acaso notaron el desorden de nuestras fuerzas porque ya la noche había cerrado completamente, así es que creyendo el ataque mas serio y peligroso, se retiraron al abrigo de sus carros. El ejército mexicano lo verificó igualmente sobre la colina que se apoyó en su primera posición. (40-41)

The following lines from *Campaña Contra los Americanos* also describe the attempted double envelopment by the Mexican army of the American battle line:

Aquí empezó á sufrir nuestra derecha, que había quedado la mas apronsimada al enemigo. Los cuerpos de zapadores y 2.° Ligero, á las órdenes del Sr. coronel Carrasco, veían, como antes la izquierda,
desaparecer sus filas, y clamaban por el combate. S.E. les dió órden que se dispusiesen al ataque, y estas tropas, llenas de entusiasmo, armaron su bayoneta, y suspendiendo su arma por espresa disposición de S.E., esperaban al fin encontrarse con el enemigo. La caballería contraria con sus piezas ligeras empezó a maniobrar sobre aquel flanco, y 10s cuerpos dispuestos para el ataque, recibieron órden de permanecer en la línea. El sufrimiento de nuestros soldados en el costado derecho llegó á su colmo, y á gritos pedían cargar á que los sacasen de los fuegos: el Sr. Carrasco después de haber mandado con un ayudante el parte, vino personalmente á la izquierda, donde se hallaba S.E. y le manifestó lo que pedía la tropa; pero el general le previno permaneciese en su puesto. Este jefe volvió á los cuerpos con la órden, y al recibirla, ya no hubo sujeción: como por instinto desfilaron por hileras á la derecha, y cundía ya el desorden á la Compañía veterana y batallón Guardacosta, que los seguía en la línea, cuando el número 1, por órden del general García, comandante de la brigada, avanzó como diez ó quince pasos hacia el enemigo, y contuvo el movimiento retrógrado. S.E. el general en jefe se dirigió en el acto á las tropas desordenadas, y con sus esfuerzos y los de los señores jefes y oficiales, las volvieron al combate, y en desorden avanzó sobre el enemigo, apoyada por la caballería que cubría el costado derecho, á las órdenes en aquel momento del Sr. coronel Montero, por estar ya herido el Sr. Noriega que la mandaba. Esta masa, sin cargar, recorrió á distancia de doscientos pasos todo el frente del enemigo, saliendo á su derecha. El número 1 era el único cuerpo organizado que los seguía...El Sr. Torrejon avanzó también por la izquierda, pero ni unas ni otras tropas cargaron...Los americanos con paso atrás se replegaron á sus carros, y allí aguardaban el ataque, haciendo algunas descargas, siendo éstos los ultimostros de la función de este día...La izquierda, que no había perdido la línea, formó en columnas, por disposición del señor general segundo en jefe: el 4.° regimiento avanzaba ya, cuando se le mandó hacer alto y volver á la línea, después de oscurecido. (12-14)

General Pedro de Ampudia, in his report (entitled Conciudadanos) before the Board of Inquiry, states that

The sun which set on the horizon and shined in front of our batallions, came to increase the elements of disadvantage by not permitting us to see the enemy well. (quoted in Sanchez 18)
In J.M. Scarritt's May 12 letter to Colonel J.G. Totten is the following reference to Colonel Cayetano Montero's light cavalry, the Guarda-Costa de Tampico, and some light infantry attacking the American left flank and General Torrejon's attack on the American right flank:

...Duncan finding the smoke intercepted his view moved to the left and front and thus obtained a very near and deadly fire upon their line. They made a movement to the right with their cavalry but Duncans fire was too galling for them to endure and they fell back in some confusion. An assault was also attempted by the cavalry on the arty [artillery] but a couple of discharges of grape from the 18 and of musketry from the square dispursed them entirely. Night set in so the firing ceased at 7 o'clock. (3-4)

Barbour's letter of May 12 appears to combine into one incident Duncan's attack on the Mexican right flank and his repelling of the Mexican attack on the American left flank:

...Duncan, under cover of a dense smoke between his position and the enemy's line, moved rapidly to a point only three hundred yards distant from their right flank and poured in upon them such a destructive fire of grape and shrapnel shot and shells that they were cut to pieces and scattered in all directions. This was the closing scene of the day. The enemy left the field and took shelter in the woods in rear of their right flank. (170-171)

Duncan's report to Lieutenant Colonel W.G. Belknap describes his battery's action against the Mexican cavalry and its attack on the American left flank, and his battery's action against the rest of the Mexican right wing:

Now began the important operations of the day, so far as our little battery was concerned...A strong body of the enemy's infantry, supported by two squadrons of cavalry, debouched from the extreme right point of chaparral, and moved steadily forward to attack:--one section of the battery opened upon them with round shot, shells, and spherical case. So well directed, that the whole advance, horse and foot, fell back in disorder to the bushes. The other section played in the meantime upon the masses of cavalry, that had halted at the sight of the guns as before mentioned...Although these shots were well delivered, and each made an opening through an entire squadron, this part of the enemy's line stood unshaken...The column of cavalry and infantry, driven back in the chaparral by the other section, reformed there, and moved forward, a second time, to the attack with great
regularity. After they advanced about one hundred yards from the chaparral, the section, before ordered to drive them back, again opened on them, and drove them, with even greater success than before...They fell back pell-mell to the bushes and commenced the retreat; their supporting cavalry abandoned them, rushed back against the head of the columns, that had hitherto withstood our shot, and a flight of the entire right wing commenced--squadron after squadron took it up, and in less time than it takes to record the fact, the entire right wing of the enemy was in full retreat. Both sections were now brought to bear upon the enemy's broken and flying column, and a brisk and destructive fire kept up, till they disappeared in the chaparral or darkness, that by this time enveloped both friend and foe, and put an end to the Battle of Palo Alto...The hearty cheers of the gallant 8th Infantry, who promptly supported this movement, joined with those of Ker's intrepid dragoons, who had united their destinies with ours, before the infantry came up, announced to our comrades on the right, that on the left too, the field was won. (314)

Lieutenant Colonel W.G. Belknap's report of May 15 describes the response of the U.S. army to the attempted flanking movement on the American left:

A strong body of the enemy's infantry, supported by two squadrons of cavalry, debouched from the extreme right point in the chapparal, and moved steadily forward to the attack. One section of the battery opened upon them with round shot, shells, and spherical case, so well directed that the whole advance, horse and foot, fell back in disorder to the bushes. The other section played in the meantime upon the masses of cavalry that had halted at the sight of the guns before mentioned. Although these shots were well delivered, and each made an opening through an entire squadron, this part of the enemy's line stood unshaken...The column of cavalry and infantry, driven back in the chapparral by the other section, re-formed there, and moved forward a second time to the attack with great regularity. After they advanced about one hundred yards from the chapparral, the section before ordered to drive them back again opened, and drove them with even greater success than before. They fell back pell-mell to the bushes and commenced their retreat; their supporting cavalry abandoned them, rushed back upon the head of the columns that had that had before withstood our shot, and a flight commenced. Squadron after squadron took it up, and the entire right wing of the army was in full retreat. Both sections were now brought to bear upon the enemy's broken and flying columns, and a brisk and destructive fire kept up till they
disappeared in the chapparal or darkness put an end to the battle...When this battery first reached its position on the left, and before the infantry could arrive for its support, Captain Ker, of the 2d dragoons, who had been directed with his squadron to guard the baggage train, with a promptness and eagerness worthy of all praise, offered to repel any attempt of the enemy to assail the battery on its left. (Taylor 23-24)

T.B. Thorpe provides additional information in the following passage on the military band participating in the Mexican attack on the American left flank:

...nothing could exceed the pomp with which the infantry advanced; the grand band of the army was at its head, pouring forth a volume of proud defiance and anticipation of coming victory. Suddenly the right section of Duncan's battery opened with cannister and shell. At the first discharge the musicians were completely annihilated; a shell exploded among them, piling them in one promiscuous heap of frightfully wounded and dead: their instruments were rent as if of paper. (83)

Additional information on the Mexican military band is provided by William Neale in the following passage from Century of Conflict: 1821-1913:

One shell was seen exploding right in the midst of a Mexican band that was playing 'Los Zapaderos de Jalisco.' It killed nearly all, and even those who managed to get out of range were badly wounded. (41)

Movement forward of the American train

In his official report of May 10, Taylor tells of moving the American wagon train forward:

During the afternoon the train had been moved forward about half a mile, and was parked in rear of the new position. (4)

IV. The Evening and Day After the Battle

Both armies spend the night on the battlefield

Taylor's official report of May 16 records that
the enemy retired into the chapparal in rear of his position. Our army bivouacked on the ground it occupied. (3)

Barbour, in his letter of May 12, writes that "The enemy left the field and took shelter in the woods in the rear of their right flank... On the morning of the 9th the enemy was seen filing in front of the woods .... " (171) Duncan, in his letter of May 12, says, "The battery now encamped with the rest of the army on the battle field..." (314). Bliss, in his letter of May 9, says that "...the enemy was driven from his position which we occupied for the night" (1).

The following lines from Campanía Contra los Americanos traces the movement of the Mexican forces to the small rise in their rear where the evening camp was made:

Los cuerpos tomaron posición a retaguardia en la pequeña loma, de que se ha hablado, adonde se incorporaron el 2.º Ligero, Zapaderos, Compañía veterana, batallón Guarda-costa y el número 1, que venían de la derecha del enemigo. El general en jefe había recorrido la línea varias veces: no se había escusado del fuego, y se retiró á esta hora... Se volvió á acampar en el mismo órden favorito de batalia, y las tropas que habían estado sin ranchos en ese día, no los tuvieron tampoco en esa noche, ni el día siguiente 9, de que hablaremos... Se dió la órden de desprender una mitad de cada cuerpo á recoger los heridos y enterrar los muertos; pero se ejecutó lo primero y no lo segundo, porque sin útiles no se podían hacer las sepulturas. De estos cadaveres y de los que murieron en el hospital, y se dejaron insepultos, habla el general Taylor en su comunicación del ló, de haberlos enterrado. (14)

Apuntes contains the following statement on the evening camp of the Mexican army: "El ejército mexicano lo verificó igualmente sobre la colina en que se apoyó en su primera posición" (41).

Don Niceto de Zamacois writes that "El general D. Mariano Arista hizo que la división tomase un campamento mas concentrado en el mismo sitio de la acción." He later adds that "Los dos ejércitos guardaban la misma posición en que habían quedado" (471).

The Mexican army leaves the battlefield the morning of May 9

Don Niceto de Zamacois describes the order of march of the Mexican army leaving the Palo Alto Battlefield on the morning of May 9:

A las seis de la mañana la división empezó su movimiento de retirada, abandonando sus posiciones por la derecha, contramarchando á la izquierda para romar el camino de Matamoros. Emprendió la marcha
la primera brigada; siguió la artillería y todo el material de la división, cerrando la retaguardia el batallón de zapadores, el 4.° y el 6.° regimiento de infantería, cuatro cañones y la caballería, marchando al frente de esta sección el general segundo en jefe. Los norteamericanos al notar aquel movimiento, no trataron de impedirlo, y solo destacaron alguna ligeras partidas de caballería en observación, dejando que se levantase el campo sin disparar un tiro. (471-472)

In his report of May 17, Taylor records the departure of the Mexican army the morning of May 9:

...I have the honor to state that, early on the morning of the 9th instant, the enemy, who had encamped near the field of battle of the day previous, was discovered moving to his left flank, evidently in retreat, and perhaps at the same time to gain a new position on the road to Matamoras, and there again resist our advance (6)

Barbour, in his letter of May 12, says that "On the morning of the 9th the enemy was seen filing in front of the woods..."(172).

The American army parks the wagon train

In his official report of May 17, Taylor describes the parking of the American wagon train on the Palo Alto Battlefield on May 9:

I ordered the supply-train to be strongly parked at its position, and left with it four pieces of artillery--the two 18-pounders which had done such good service on the previous day, and two 12-pounders, which had not been in action. (6)

J.M. Scarritt, in his letter of May 12 to Colonel J.G. Totten, records his actions to provide protection for the train the morning of May 9:

On the morning of the 9th directed me to secure the train in the best manner possible. The two 18 pdrs were left and two 12 pdrs on truck carriages were got out of the waggons and placed at my disposal. By 12 o'clock I had the train so that it could resist any attack of cavalry--come in what direction it might and it would have have required very steady [illegible] to have marched before it. (5)

Lieutenant Colonel John Garland, writing on May 11, reported that

On the morning of the 9th, some of the enemy being discovered in the edge of the chapparal, we advanced; the 5th infantry on the right, with
the 2nd squadron of dragoons in front; Major Ringgold's battery, commanded by Lieut. Ridgely, on the left of the 5th, and the 3d brigade on its left. On advancing, (the enemy having retired,) we entered the chapparal....  

(Taylor 14-15)

The American army leaves the battlefield

Bliss, in his letter of May 9, said that "this morning the army renewed its march, the enemy gradually falling back before it..." (1).

Scarritt, in his letter of May 12, said that "The [American] army had left early in the morning..." (5).

V. Conclusion

The focus of this report has been to present mostly primary references organized according to various headings relevant to the Battle of Palo Alto. Due to the time required on the part of the compilers to gather and organize these sources, there has been almost no effort made in analysis. The first problem that many persons interested in the Battle of Palo Alto have encountered has been to find basic references. Hopefully, this report will assist others in their efforts to gather and analyze both primary and secondary sources on the Battle of Palo Alto. A more comprehensive and detailed study of the battle would help to resolve some of the conflicting accounts presented in this paper and it would undoubtedly clarify the meaning of some of the references. Clearly, the material in this report indicates that a great deal more research needs to be done in order to have a better understanding of the May 8 Battle of Palo Alto. An unpublished manuscript by Dr. Joseph P. Sanchez, entitled The Defeat of the Army of the North in South Texas: An examination of Mexican Military Operations in the First Battles of the Mexican War, represents the type of analysis of primary documents that should be undertaken on the Battle of Palo Alto, the first battle of the Mexican-American War.

Director, Palo Alto National Battlefield.

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Selected Biographical Information on United States Military Academy Graduates Quoted in Paper Prepared by Colonel Bruce Aiken June 30, 1993

Jeremiah Mason Scarritt Born in New Hampshire, appointed to USMA from Illinois. Graduated with class of 1838, 5th in his class. Assigned to Infantry then Engineers. Was Chief of Engineers during the Florida Indian Wars in 1838-39. Received one brevet promotion during the Mexican War. Died at Key West, Florida in 1854, held the rank of captain. Age at death - 37.

Ulysses Simpson Grant Born in Ohio. Graduated with the USMA class of 1843, 21st in his class. Assigned Infantry. Received two brevet promotions during the Mexican War. Resigned from the army in 1854 holding the rank of captain. Became a farmer and merchant. With the onset of the Civil War was commissioned Colonel in the Illinois Volunteers, subsequently Brigadier General in the U.S. Volunteers in 1861, Major General USV in 1862, received the Gold Medal and Thanks of Congress in 1864, Lieutenant General 1864, and General in Chief Armies of the United States 1864-1869. Rank of General in 1866. President of the United States 1869-1877. Reappointed General of the USA (Act of Congress) and retired March 1885. Died McGregor, NY 23 July 1885 at the age of 86. His death invoked tributes from around the world. Hall of Fame for Great Americans 1900.

William Hemsley Emory Born in Maryland. Graduated 14th in the USMA class of 1831. Assigned to Artillery, then Cavalry. Resigned in 1836, reappointed 1838. Received two brevet promotions during the Mexican War. Became Brigade, Division, and Corps Commander during the Civil War. Was Major General of U.S. Volunteers in 1865. Received 5 brevet promotions during the civil War to Major General. Retired in 1876 as a Brigadier General. Died in Washington, D.C. in December 1887 at the age of 76.

Phillip Nordbourne Barbour Born in Kentucky. Graduated 25th in the USMA class of 1834. Was assigned to infantry. Served in the Florida Indian Wars 1840-1842 attaining the rank of brevet captain. Received one brevet promotion in the Mexican War. Was killed at Monterrey 21 September 1846 as a brevet major. Age - 33.

Randolph Ridgley Born in Maryland. Graduated 42nd in his USMA class of 1836. Appointed artillery. Served in Florida Indian Wars 1837-1841. Received one brevet promotion in the Mexican War. Died in an accident in Mexico, 27 October 1846, as a captain, age - 32.

Exhibit "C"
Introduction

This paper represents a preliminary attempt on my part to identify on a modern city map the general location and physical remnants of the historic fortifications of the walled Leal, Invicta y Heroica Ciudad de Matamoros. Those persons wishing to study the broader history of these fortifications and of Matamoros will be well rewarded by referring to Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano's *La Casa Mata y Fortificaciones de la Heroica Matamoros, Tamaulipas*, to Don Jose Raul Canseco Botello's *Historia de Matamoros*, and to Don Florentino Cuellar's papers. I am heavily indebted to these scholars, now deceased, whose historical investigations provided the basis for this paper. In addition, a special note of thanks is due to Librarian Yolanda Z. Gonzalez, of the Hunter Room, Arnulfo L. Oliveira Memorial Library, the University of Texas at Brownsville, for her active assistance in providing research materials, introductions to other investigators of the history of Matamoros, and her collaboration in piecing together the various sections of the Berlandier map of ca. 1846. It should be noted that H. Matamoros' Cronista, Emilio Saenz de los Reyes, has conducted detailed investigations on the fortifications of H. Matamoros; the publication of his study will be of interest to many students of historic fortifications. My work, due to time constraints, was limited to a survey of a few key secondary and primary sources, a review of readily available maps, and two half-day field trips.

I have not translated into English the extensive quotations in Spanish used in the first section of this paper in order to ensure their integrity as references.

I would also like to thank Ray Moore of Ridgeway's Graphic Supplies and Services for providing an improved copy of the ca. 1846 map of H. Matamoros by Berlandier, and Walter Plitt for supplying copies of two of the North American maps used in this paper.

My understanding had been that, except for the Casa Mata, there were no physical remains of the ring of fortifications that make H. Matamoros one of the few walled cities in the Americas. This point is made by Paredes in his admirable study of Matamoros' fortifications:

Las fortificaciones y fosos que circundaban al Matamoros antiguo, ya desaparecieron totalmente por el natural crecimiento de la población y solo nos quedan recuerdos de estas en los mapas de los años de 1845 a 1876. En los años de 1913 y 1915 se reconstruyeron parcialmente y en algunos sectores se mejoraron con casetas de ladrillo, para el uso de
ametralladoras por las fuerzas constitucionalistas que defendieron Matamoros contra las embestidas de los villistas. (11)

Paredes notes in the following statement that some remaining traces of these fortifications once existed south and west of the city:

Durante la época porfirista, se conservó la Casa Mata en más o menos condiciones de servicio así como durante el corto período de Don Francisco León de la Barra y Don Francisco I. Madero. Las demás trincheras y fortificaciones se fueron borrando con el tiempo y solamente se conservaban algunas en ciertos trechos al Sur y Poniente de la población. (64)

Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, in *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville*, record this loss of surficial fabric, in addition to emphasizing the uniqueness of the Matamoros fortifications:

...under the hammer blows of threats from Americans to the north and from Mexican political enemies to the south, Matamoros began to take on something of the appearance of a walled city. This formidable line of defense foreordained decades of epic sieges of the town, as any would-be conqueror could taste victory only after dramatic and bloody attacks past it. Towns ringed by fortifications were not part of the American urban landscape, nor were they usual in Mexico. Matamoros was something of an anachronism, as if transported in both time and space. It is to be regretted that the ring of fortifications and trenches has since been torn down, for Matamoros in the midnineteenth century must have held something of the romantic aura of a European town shaped in the Middle Ages. (62)

It is important to recall that Matamoros was a seaport and, as such, the ring of fortifications that surrounded it was consistent with those surrounding other originally Spanish seaports in the Americas, such as Vera Cruz, San Juan, Havana, Cartagena, and so forth (personal communication with local historian Joseph Linck, October 3, 1992). Also, as an early Spanish Borderlands' settlement under pressure of Indian attack (in addition to the threat of pirates such as Jean Lafitte), the "Plaza de Armas" of Matamoros involved an early period of fortifications based upon the concept of a walled town or a fortified plaza, as is still present around Chimayo, New Mexico, and as once existed around Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Potentially, there may have been five or more periods in which Matamoros existed as a fortified city: as an early "plaza de armas," existing prior to the initiation of construction of the first formal fort in 1832; as a larger city with fortifications developed in response
to threats of internal, political conflicts, the Texas rebellion, and the Mexican-American War; as a well-developed fortified city from 1864 through at least the 1890s, as a minimal restoration in 1913 of the 1864-1890s fortifications; and as an enhanced and modernized refurbishment in 1915 of the 1846, 1863-1890s, and the 1913 fortifications. It is apparent that the later periods of the city fortifications were basically along the 1863-1890s alignment.

This paper primarily deals with the second and third periods described above because documentation, in map form, for these periods was more accessible to me than were maps for the other periods. In order to develop a framework within which to analyze the relationship between the historic maps of Matamoros for these two periods and the current plan of the city, I will quote textual references, primarily from the work of Eliseo Paredes Manzano, José Raúl Canseco Botello, and Florentino Cuellar, on the development and condition of the fortifications; roughly delineate the fortifications illustrated in historic maps onto a current street map of Matamoros; and document the results of my two short field trips following some of the potential alignments of the fortifications. Taken together, this information helps provide a preliminary concept of the relationship of the 1800-1831, 1832-1846, and the 1863-1915 alignments of fortifications surrounding the city to a modern map of Matamoros.

There are four general conclusions reached in this paper that might be of interest: 1) the alignment of the fortifications of the two periods 1832-1846 and 1863-1915 are distinct, except for the northwestern anchoring point at Fort Paredes near the Rio Bravo or Rio Grande, 2) the alignments of the fortifications of these two periods, especially that of the 1863-1915 fortifications, can be seen in a modern map of the city, 3) a few physical remnants, as implied by Paredes, may be left of these fortifications, and 4) there should be additional research undertaken to document on a modern map the location of the city's fortifications and to ascertain if any physical, surficial remnants still exist.

Hopefully, this paper will assist others in gaining a better appreciation of the physical features of the fortifications that once encircled Matamoros, either when looking at a city map or when walking along the streets of H. Matamoros. Historical markers and maps of the ring of fortifications would assist both residents and visitors to better understand and appreciate this significant aspect of the history of H. Matamoros. The street pattern reflecting the eraplacement of the old fortifications will probably be retained through the coming years, thereby preserving the memory of a major fortified city whose unique history is of importance to both Mexico and the United States.

II. Historical References on the Fortifications

The limited selection of secondary sources and a few primary references on the fortifications of Matamoros I have reviewed provide a general idea of the nature and locations of these features and the time periods in which they were evident to mapmakers.
Overview of Early Matamoros History

The following data is contained in Los Municipios de Tamaulipas (103) on the early history of Matamoros. The site of Matamoros was visited on July 12, 1686, and given the name of Esteros Hermosos. In 1749, some small ranches in the area were established by cattlemen from Reynosa and Camargo (Botello 17). Some of these ranch houses were undoubtedly fortified as were other ranch houses and settlements of this period. In 1774, the name of the site was changed to San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos. In 1793, Catholic missionaries designated the site as the Congregación de Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros. The first mayor of the town council was named in 1797. The first elementary school was founded in 1814 (Botello 21); and, the citizens of the town requested that the town be moved a short distance south to avoid the flooding of the river. The town's population was 2320 persons in 1820 (Botello 21). In that year, the first irrigation system was opened. In 1823, a customs house was built and citizens provided additional private land in order to encourage the town's development. In 1825, the site was designated as a Villa. In 1826, the town was renamed Villa Matamoros in honor of the famous Independence fighter Don Mariano Matamoros Guridi (Botello 23-24). In 1829, General Don Manuel de Mier y Terán was named the resident military commander. On May 14, 1834, Matamoros was designated as a city (Botello 32). By 1837, the population of Matamoros had risen to 16,372 (Botello 71).

1800-1831 Plaza de Armas de Matamoros

The following entry appears on this site in volume II of the Catálogo Nacional de Monumentos Históricos Inmuebles: Tamaulipas:

La Plaza de Armas de Matamoros puede decirse que fue construida en el año de 1800, cuando tenía una cerca y puertas, pero para el año de 1831, al iniciarse la construcción del edificio de dos plantas de la Presidencia, también se inició el arreglo de la plaza a la que años después cambió su nombre por el de Plaza de la Constitución y posteriormente Plaza Hidalgo. (530)

Fortifications of the 1832 - 1846 Period

In 1832, Colonel Mariano Paredes y Arrillaga learned of the death of General Mier y Teran, and was ordered by Colonel Jose Mariano Guerra Manzanares to capture Matamoros from Colonel Jose Antonio Mejía. Mejía left Matamoros before the arrival of Paredes, who

...se dedicó inmediatamente a construir un fortín al Poniente de la ciudad, frente al Paso de la Anacuita, embarcadero conocido años...
Work on Fuerte Guerrero was ordered on December 28, 1835, the "Día de los Inocentes" (Botello 70). The order from Mexico City directed "que se levanta una fortificación o ciudadela en el terreno que está a la otra banda del Estero por la parte de Oriente" (quoted in Paredes 17). Owners of private property at this site were to be compensated by the government (Paredes 17).

Historian Eliseo Paredes Manzano provides an excellent description of this work:

Con toda rapidez se iniciaron los trabajos de construcción del fuerte en la banda oriental del Estero Cuarteles, ahora aterrado, en la curva o recodo que hace el Bravo en ese punto a unos cien metros de donde actualmente está la Casa Mata y llamaron el conjunto de fortificaciones, Fuerte Guerrero en honor del héroe insurgente, Don Vicente Guerrero. También se levantaron trincheras hacia el Poniente rumbo al Fortín de Paredes, protegiendo con los cañones de ambos fuertes la población en caso de ataque. (18-19)

Paredes reports that in 1839 the fortifications of Matamoros were useful to the defenders of the city:

...los mil quinientos defensores de Matamoros... protegidas por una línea de trincheras levantadas rápidamente entre los Fuertes Guerrero y Paredes, artillados estos con diez y ocho cañones.... (23)

According to Eliseo Paredes, the fortifications of Matamoros were vastly strengthened in 1840 under the direction of General Mariano Arista:

Arista que mandaba a los centralistas,...terminando así esta aventura en la que el Fortín de Paredes, el Fortín de Guerrero y demás fortificaciones de Matamoros, sirvieron para que el entonces separista General Canales Rosillo y sus aliados no se atrevieran a atacar la ciudad. (23)

In 1845, General Manuel Rodríguez de Sela began the construction of the Casa Mata (Botello 149). Eliseo Paredes Manzano states that in July 1845 the military commander of Matamoros, General Francisco Mejía

reinició con toda actividad la construcción de obras de defensa, reforzando los Fuertes de Guerrero y Paredes, levantando parapetos
entre ambos, uno al pie de la Calle Abasolo y otro entre éste y Santa Cruz...Existían en ese tiempo, dos pasos sobre el río,...él de la Anacuita frente al Fortín de Paredes y el otro llamado Paso Real, al Oriente y terminación de las Calles de Herrera e Iturbide, pasos o embarcaderos a donde llegaban los vapores de Bagdad y que servían a los residentes de Matamoros que tenían laborers al otro lado del Bravo, puesto que no había ninguna población donde ahora está ubicada la Ciudad de Brownsville, Texas. (26)

In another section of his study, Eliseo Paredes Manzano provides additional information on the fortification at the end of Abasolo Street:

...entre Santa Cruz y el Fortín de Guerrero había una batería en un lugar equidistante entre dicho punto y otro fortín que estaba al pie de la Calle Abasolo, en el antiguo embarcadero que allí existió por muchos años, habiéndose construido este fortín y la batería en julio de 1845 previendo la próxima guerra con los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica (12).

Colonel Carrasco, in charge of the work of fortifying Matamoros, reported in July 1844 to General Mejía on the weakness of the fortifications of the city:

Las obras que existen en la plaza y que malamente les han dado ese nombre, se construyeron para detener a los federales (federalistas) y se componían de un foso que rodea la población formando una sección de líneas tiradas sin aplicación al terreno ni al alcance de las armas...El señor Gral. Manuel Rodríguez de Cela construyó bajo su dirección una Casa Mata, en cuya construcción se empleó el presidio, una parte de los ladrillos que se fabrican en la Ladrillera de la Nación; esta Casa Mata no está techada ni concluidos sus muros. Igualmente construyó el presidio, bajo la dirección del señor Gral. Cela y su ayudante el teniente de infantería Don Manuel Ochoa, un reducto cuadrado en su angulo entrante de la línea de defensa, con foso de una vara de profundidad revestido de césped, etc. (quoted in Paredes 26-27)

Eliseo Paredes Manzano gives an overview of the limitation of the resources available to the Mexican forces in the following passage:

Prueba evidente de la pobreza de recursos de nuestros soldados es la de que el Gral. de Cela recibió el mando de la plaza de manos del Gral. Rómulo Diaz de la Vega el 22 de Febrero de 1844 y para Julio 29 fecha del mencionado informe del Coronel Carrasco ya habían transcurrido
más de cinco meses y aun no estaban terminadas las fortificaciones y Casa Mata; en el mismo informe se queja el Coronel Carrasco de no tener suficientes hombres, ni material, ni útiles de zapa suficientes para realizar la obra con la rapidez que ameritan las circunstancias. (27)

Paredes quotes United States author and military officer R.S. Ripley, *The War With Mexico*, 1849, in providing additional information on the 1846 fortifications around Matamoros:

Las fortificaciones mexicanas consistían principalmente en una línea de baterías destacadas entre los embarcaderos. El fuerte principal, denominado Paredes, era un pentágono grande y saliente, sobre el embarcadero de arriba. Las demás fortificaciones eran abiertas por retaguardia y habían sido construidas para impedir el paso directo del río y hostilizar la línea americana; las que venían a quedar frente a esta (la línea y los fortines del Paso Real quedaban frente al enemigo) tenían cañones de diferentes calibres, y las baterías mas bajas, obuses y morteros de escaso calibre en su totalidad. (27)

Another description of the fortifications surrounding H. Matamoros is provided by United States author T.B. Thorpe in his book *Our Army on the Rio Grande*, 1846:

Above the northern ferry stands Fort Paredes, a work constructed with considerable attention to military art; the other "forts" around the city being little else than earth embankments, thrown up to protect the men who were at the pieces used during the bombardment. (130)

Thorpe also provides a description of the Casa Mata and the barracks, just after U.S. troops enter Matamoros in 1846:

A little off the road stands the walls of an unfinished powder magazine...Keeping to the right, you pass through a street lined on either side with half rural looking habitations, some of which are quite pretty, when suddenly the road opens into a large parade ground, one side of which is bounded by spacious and, originally, very handsome barracks. The front is plain, and the pavement being good, and furnished at either end with handsome brick guard houses, the whole has a very military appearance. A few years since a hurricane passes over Matamoros, and on its way unroofed this building; a portion of the roof still lies across the street. Curiosity prompts the passer-by to enter, through the once strongly fortified doorway. The interior has a perfectly Spanish appearance; the walls are terribly thick, and all the
rooms are dungeon-like. This building seemed to have been recently occupied by troops. Passing from the court, you ascend by wide but steep steps to the upper walls; and while engaged in following the range of the loop holes, and observing how perfectly a few soldiers behind the strong breastwork could command the inside of the whole barracks, it suddenly flashes on the mind, that the strongly-built guard house that surmounts this wall, is the red tower...One can stand at the base of this red tower, and overlook the various courts of the barracks. Directly in front is the main one--parade ground. (149-150)

Fortifications of the 1863-1890s Period

Paredes reports that the fortifications of Matamoros began to be strengthened in 1863, due to French intervention in the vicinity of Bagdad and Matamoros:

La escuadra francesa que estaba frente a Bagdad inició movimientos amenazantes y el Coronel Servando Canales que estaba encargado de la defensa del entonces rico puerto, lo puso en estado de defensa construyendo algunos fortines y trincheras, mientras el Gral. [Juan N.] Cortina en estrecha colaboración con el Gobernador Ruiz, trabajada activamente en reconstruir la Casa Mata y Fortificaciones de la H. Matamoros. (36)

In 1864, General Cortina, governor of the state of Tamaulipas, designated municipal funds for the quarters of the soldiers in Matamoros and for the remainder of the fortifications of the city (Paredes 37-38). Despite having vastly strengthened fortifications, Cortina evacuated Matamoros at the end of March 1865 without firing a shot.

Under General Tomás Mejía, these improvements were continued. The December 7 report on municipal funds spent on the fortifications as of that date were $55,643.47 for materials and $16,000 for labor (Paredes 42-43). Expenditures on the intensive development of the fortifications continued during 1865 (Paredes 43).

Eliseo Paredes Manzano provides a graphic overview of the fortifications that now surrounded Matamoros:

Los ingenieros militares belgas y franceses al servicio de Mejía al continuar la construcción de la Casa Mata, lo hicieron porque el terreno escogido por el general mexicano Don Manuel Rodríguez de Cela in 1845, era el más alto contiguo al antiguo Fuerte Guerrero, construyéndola con ladrillo de la Ladrillera de la Nación con sus troneras, torreón y una rampa por donde subían las tropas que, colocadas en la azotea de la misma fortaleza dominaban por todos los
rumbos. Circundaba la Casa Mata un muro de ladrillo y por el exterior
de dicho muro había un foso profundo, quedando a cien metros
aproximadamente la línea de trincheras y fortines que rodeaban la
población. Empezando estas a corta distancia de la orilla del Río Bravo
sobre el camino que conducía al Paso de los Tomates, donde se
construyó el primer fortín que se llamó del Estero, seguía la línea hacia
el Sur hasta llegar al Fortín de Puertas Verdes, también llamado Bravo,
donde existía un puente levadizo comunicando al camino de Bagdad y
ranchos circunvecinos; de allí seguían las trincheras en una línea
oblicua rumbo al Suroeste hasta llegar al Fortín de Matamoros y de este
fuerte en la misma dirección continuando hasta llegar al Fortín y Garita
de San Fernando; donde existía otro puente levadizo comunicando
con el camino de San Fernando, de este fortín seguía la línea de
trincheras rumbo al Noroeste hasta llegar al Fortín Hidalgo,
continuando en la misma dirección hasta llegar al Fortín de Iturbide,
siguiendo la línea hasta llegar al Fortín de Monterrey; de este punto
seguía la línea directamente al Norte cortando el antiguo camino a
Monterrey, lugar de donde partía la línea hasta llegar al antiguo Fortín
de Paredes y de este hasta la orilla del Río Bravo. Total nueve fortines,
la Casa Mata y en el exterior de las trincheras un profundo
foso...Formidable conjunto de fortines... (44-45)

From documents in 1868, it is clear that the wooden fences around the fields in front
of the fortifications were removed at times in order to clear the city defenders' field of
fire. (Paredes 59)

Another informative overview of the fortifications is given by Don Florentino Cuellar,
in his 1970 article "Matamoros Hace 90 Años," in which he noted the location of the
various forts around Matamoros with his comments on the 1873 map of Matamoros,
drawn by Ing. Alejandro Prieto, that appeared in the publication
Historia, Geografía y Estadística del Estado de Tamaulipas:

En el referido Plano, la ciudad se encuentra amurallada apareciendo
allí, aproximadamente en donde está ahora la Aduana, el Fortín de
Paredes construido por el Gral. Mariano Paredes y ocupado por los
norteamericanos en 1846, y base de operaciones del Gral. José Ma.
Carvajal en su ataque a Matamoros en 1851. A corta distancia del
Fuerte aparece el punto conocido como La Anacuita, rumbo al Puente
Viejo Internacional...En el terreno que hoy ocupa la Planta de Aguas,
aparecía el Fortín Independencia y en la esquina de la calle Guerrero y
la hoy Tamaulipas, se encontraba el Fuerte Guerrero así como el Fuerte
Bravo cerca de la Casamata. Cerca de la que hoy es Escuela Benito
Juárez estaba el Fuerte Matamoros; y la Garita de San Fernando era
casi un Fuerte a lo largo de la línea fortificada que seguía aproximadamente el trazo de la que hoy conocemos como Diagonal Cuauhtémoc y frente a la laguna donde se levantó la Colonia San Francisco, se alzaban los Fuertes de Hidalgo e Iturbide. (Quoted in Botello 166)

Don Florentino also noted that

...en la última calle de San Carlos [Calle 17], terminaba la población y que de esta calle para llegar al recinto amurallado, quedaba por cubrir aproximadamente medio kilómetro de terrenos baldíos. (Quoted in Botello 163)

José Raúl Canseco Botello points out in the following passage the relationship in 1889 between the fortified city and the new railroad called the Ferrocarril Matamoros-Linares-Matehuala:

Principiaba la línea a la altura de lo que hoy es el Puente Viejo, continuando por fuera del Fuerte Paredes y siguiendo alrededor de los Fortines Bravo y Monterrey, siempre por la parte de afuera para pasar con rumbo suroeste frente a la Garita de San Fernando en donde seguía en línea recta por el antiguo trazo del ferrocarril a San Luis Potosí en un tramo de 5 kilómetros. (178)

In 1911, the Casa Mata was abandoned along with a brick powder magazine located near the old Garita de San Fernando. (Paredes 62).

Fortifications of the 1913 Period

With the beginning of the revolution of Don Venustiano Carranza against Victoriano Huerta in March 1913, the citizens of Matamoros prepared to defend the town from an attack by General Lucio Blanco Fuentes. Eliseo Paredes Manzano describes the work that was done to prepare the city's defences:

El Mayor Federal Esteban Ramos, sabedor de la importancia de Matamoros y del rumbo que traían los constitucionalistas, con la ayuda del Dr. Barragán organiza la defensa de Matamoros; desentierran un viejo cañón de tiempos del imperio y reconstruyeron las trincheras y fortificaciones que iniciara el Gral. Valentín Canalizo en 1839, reconstruyera el Gral. Juan N. Cortina en 1864 y que terminara el imperialista Gral. Tomás Mejía en 1865. De algunos fortines solamente quedaban huellas, del Fortín de Paredes nada había, puesto que allí existía entonces la planta eléctrica y solamente quedaban en pie la Casa Mata. Sin fosos, el muro exterior casi desaparecido por el vandalismo
de gente sin escrúpulos que se habían robado el ladrillo; colocan el viejo cañón por el rumbo de la planta eléctrica y construyen una serie de trincheras en el interior de la ciudad a corta distancia y circundando la Plaza de Armas y el Mercado Juárez. A las diez de la mañana del día 3 de Junio, se inició el ataque en toda la línea...a pecho descubierto se lanzaron a la captura de las trincheras exteriores...y para las tres de la tarde ya se habían capturado todas las fortificaciones que circundaban a la ciudad...Al amanecer el día 4 había un pequeño grupo de trece voluntarios, no mayores de 18 años, en las trincheras del Mercado Juárez, haciéndole frentes a las huestes constitucionalistas. (66-67)

**Fortifications of the 1915 Period**

In 1915, the constitutionalists, under the leadership of General Emiliano P. Nafarrate, prepared the defences of H. Matamoros for an attack by the villistas commanded by General José Rodríguez and General Absaul Navarro. Paredes, based on Ignacio Muñoz's *Verdad y Mito de la Revolución Mexicana*, describes the improvements made to the fortifications that, along with the efforts and strategy of the defenders, enabled little more than 300 men to withstand the attack of 3,000 men:

Las fortificaciones de Matamoros con su Casa Mata que, dos años antes habían sido reconstruídas por el Mayor Esteban Ramos, fueron nuevamente renovadas, pero ahora con mayores ventajas. Las trincheras fueron levantadas a mayor altura y los fosos para el exterior de las mismas fueron profundizadas, colocando una alambrada de púas para evitar alguna sorpresa por la caballería villista. Se limpió y desenraizó el terreno frente a las fortificaciones y trincheras, preparando compuertas por donde permitir el paso del agua a los fosos, que tendría que salvar el enemigo. Se construyeron "casetas" de ladrillo de trecho en trecho, donde hacían esquina las trincheras, repartiéndose diez y seis de éstas a lo largo de la línea de fortificaciones y en cada una de ellas una ametralladora bien dotada de parque; abiertas las compuertas por el lado de Bravo se inundaron los fosos y parte de la planicie frente alas trincheras, haciendo casi imposible el avance villista por el terreno inundado. En esta forma de defensa el Gral. Nafarrate se anticipó a Hindenburg, en la famosa Batalla de Tannenberg que resolvió la impresionante caída de Nicolás II de Rusia. (69)
1923 Flood Drain Project

In 1923, engineer Pérez Michau oversaw the construction of a major drain to protect Matamoros from the floods of the Rio Bravo. This drain circled the city, from the river's edge to the street that is called today Diagonal Cuauhtémoc, with a large lake catching the overflow in what is today Colonia San Francisco, located just south of Diagonal Cuauhtémoc (Botello 231). It may well be that this drain impacted the city's historic fortifications, possibly following or paralleling the moat just outside the city fortifications.

Preservation of the Casa Mata

During the 1960s, great efforts were expended at the national, state, and local levels to restore and preserve the Casa Mata as a historical museum. In the following statement, Eliseo Paredes Manzano summarizes the culmination of these efforts:

En solemne ceremonia verificada el día 12 de Septiembre de 1969, recibió el Ing. Oscar Guerra Elizondo el terreno e instalaciones de la "Casa Mata", la que puso al cuidado del autor de esta obra quien, con el auxilio de la Sociedad Tamaulipecas de Historia y Geografía se dedicaron a reunir material para el Museo y Hemeroteca la que con la valiosa ayuda del C. Presidente Municipal logramos inaugurar formalmente el día 30 de Diciembre de 1970. (74)

III. Preliminary Analysis of a Modern City Map

In looking at a 1989-1990 map (Exhibit A) of the city of H. Matamoros, focusing on the center of the older portion of the city called "Zona Centro" on the map, it is fairly easy to see the street pattern that essentially defines the historic location of the city and the fortification alignments of the 1863 through the 1880's period. This area called the Zona Centro is also distinguished as a separate unit by its name and by being surrounded by other zones of the city with distinct names. In these different divisions of the city, the historic identity of the older portion of the city is respected.

The north side of the older portion of the historic center of the city is generally along Hidalgo. The area to the north marked "Moderna" and the area marked "Jardin" are more recent portions of the older section of the city. However, the "Aduana Fronteriza" area to the west of the "Moderna" colonia is one of the older portions of the city; this was the location of Fort Paredes, the first fort (1832) in the city. The Rio Grande itself may be considered the northern border of the historic center of the city, but the early city maps sometimes fail to even show the area much to the north of an east-west line through the area marked "Aduana Fronteriza." The most obvious change in street patterns on the northern side of the city is that between the "Jardín" section and the "Zona Centro."
The western boundary of the historic center of the city can be seen in the break between the city streets and the "Lagunetas de Presedimentación" to the west of Avenida Ayuntamiento and Calle 20. This major geographical division should not be ignored, as it would appear reasonable to assume that the water ditch and the artificial lakes are located in proximity to the moat on the exterior of the ring of fortifications. Water from the Rio Grande was used to flood the moat, and the moat would have been easiest to construct in an already low area. Street crossings of the modern lakes and ditches could be where the original crossings of the moat through the fortines were located, or farther to the east. A comparison of a number of early to mid-twentieth century maps could help clarify this relationship, along with a review of early aerial photographs. Another interesting feature is the short, angular street, Calle 21, connecting Calle 20 and Avenida Ayuntamiento, as it is a local deviation within a generally consistent pattern of city streets. An unexplained deviation on the western side of the center of the city is the slight difference in geographical orientation of Calle 10 and Calle 11, in comparison with the adjacent streets.

The southern boundary of the historic center of the city is as dramatic as the western boundary. The "Avenida Diagonal Cuahhtémoc" definitely marks the transition between the Zona Centro and the colonia San Francisco to the south. This alignment could be extended across the extensions of Calle 6, Calle 5, Calle 4, and Calle 3, to where the various diagonally curving streets delineating the southeast side of the Zona Centro are encountered.

The eastern boundary of the historic city is easily seen on its southeastern side in the curving and diagonal streets of Republica de Cuba, Aguilar, Columbia, and Costa Rica. The Rio Grande, which appears to have cut into the city's east side, marks the remainder of the eastern boundary of the Zona Centro, the historic center of H. Matamoros. Some of the alignments of the historic center of Matamoros can also be observed in the 1988 "Map of the Cities of Brownsville and Matamoros" by the Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau (Exhibit B).

Map of the Historic Buildings of Matamoros

The map (Exhibit C) of the historic structures in Matamoros, in volume II of the 1986 publication Catálogo Nacional de Monumentos Históricos Inmuebles: Tamaulipas, del Instituto Nacional de Antropología e Historia, shows that all of the marked historic structures are within the area delineated above as the historic center of H. Matamoros or the Zona Centro.

IV. Maps of the Fortifications

The historic maps contained in this section are divided into two parts: those illustrating the fortifications as they existed during the 1832-1846 period and those illustrating the fortifications as they existed during the 1863-1890s period. I do not have
maps of the fortifications from the 1913-1915 periods. The maps within each of these two periods are briefly discussed, and estimations of the alignments of the recorded features of the fortifications transferred onto a modern map of H. Matamoros.

North American Maps of the 1846 Fortifications of Matamoros

Included in this paper are four North American maps of the 1846 fortifications of H. Matamoros. The first map (Exhibit D) is dated April 25, 1846 and is entitled "Sketch Showing the Position of the Army of Occupation on Left Bank of the Rio Bravo Opposite Matamoros." This map, drawn prior to the American occupation of H. Matamoros, is a sketch and it concentrates on the position of the Army of Occupation, not the fortifications of H. Matamoros. This is a useful sketch but it does not indicate the positions of the fortifications of H. Matamoros except along the Rio Bravo.

The second map (Exhibit E) appears in Thorpe's 1846 Our Army of the Rio Grande. This map illustrates Mexican defences along the Rio Bravo and United States' positions in this same location. It does not illustrate the Mexican fortifications away from the Rio Bravo. Thorpe notes in the book that the "Sand-Bag Battery" contained a few cannons. The sketch may have been made by Thorpe himself.

The origins of the third map (Exhibit F) are presently unknown, but it appears to be a period sketch and is entitled "City of Matamoros 1846." The location of Fort Paredes to the northwest of the city, the alignment of the city blocks, and the sharply defined edges of the city, especially where they transect blocks on the southeast side of the city, are interesting. Although the fortifications around the southern side of the city are not marked, the sharpness of the city boundaries could indicate that a line of encircling fortifications was the basis for drawing such sharp edges. However, alternative explanations of the sharp edges of the city are possible. The similarities between this map and the fourth North American map (Exhibit G) are significant, as are its similarities to the truly detailed Mexican map of the city and its fortifications (Exhibit H-1) by the French botanist Jean Louis Berlandier, who served as an officer with the Mexican Army.

The fourth and final North American map used in this paper is that of M.A. Haynes, Tennesee Regiment of Cavalry, and is dated 1847. This map (Exhibit G) is published in Robert Ryal Miller's 1989 book entitled Shamrock and Sword: The St. Patrick's Battalion in the U.S-Mexican War, published by the University of Oklahoma Press. It shows the fortifications encircling Matamoros. Although the number of blocks between the various known points appear to be low, the overall proportions and details of the map seem accurate. As stated above, there is a great deal of similarity with the "City of Matamoros Map, 1846" (Exhibit F) and the map of Matamoros by Berlandier. An attempt was made to trace the fortifications shown on this map onto a modern map of the city, but the proportions were too far off for any significant correlation. Similarly, an attempt to map this sketch and the sketch in Exhibit F was unsuccessful. This difficulty does not obviate the significant similarity between these three maps and the outline of the town contained in the 1873 map of Matamoros (Exhibit I). Perhaps a researcher skilled
in matching maps will be able to correct the various distortions contained in these sketches.

**Mexican Maps of the 1846 Fortifications**

The French-born botanist Jean Louis Berlandier arrived in Matamoros in 1829 and served as an official of the Mexican government for much of his life, prior to his death in 1851 in Tamaulipas (Zorrilla 58-59). A microfilm of his map of Matamoros was provided by Librarian Yolanda Gonzalez in the Hunter Room at the University of Texas at Brownsville. On this map, Exhibit H (1), is a line marking the city's fortifications that appears to be from the 1846 period. Exhibit H (2) is a transfer of these walls onto a modern map, and is perhaps more accurate than Exhibit H (3) which represents another potential alignment of these fortifications. It is hoped that the original of this detailed, color-coded map will be found, possibly at the Smithsonian Institution. The drawing of the line of fortifications on this map appears to be the work of a person, perhaps Berlandier, adding the fortification alignment over a preexisting map of the city that did not illustrate the exterior fortifications. This could mean that the actual map of the city was prior to 1846, although the Casa Mata, begun in 1844, does appear to be a part of the original map. The streets on the extreme eastern side of the map, inside the line of fortifications, subsequently developed along different alignments than are shown on this map. This change may reflect the influence of the development of the fortifications on this side of the city. I feel that Fuerte Guerrero is shown as the small rectangle and black figure marked on the north side of the Estero de San Juan, to the southwest of Matamoros' Alameda. The Alameda is shown connected to the rest of Matamoros by a bridge between the Estero Nuevo and the Estero de San Juan. Thorpe provides a description of this bridge and of the esteros to the north and south of it:

> Turning up the road [traveling west from the Rio Grande on the east of Matamoros] leading directly into the city, you pass over a very handsomely-constructed bridge, laid in water-proof cement; it was a public work in the better days of the Mexican republic. This bridge was more needed formerly than now. Until a few years since, there annually formed by the rains a lake between the river and the city; it gave a semi-aquatic appearance to Matamoros, and was the common resort of the residents who wished to enjoy a bath. Either the heads of the lake broke away, or the overflowings of the Rio Grande changed the formation of the land, for it dried up, and left in the place of a transparent sheet of water, a little stream, bounded on either side by dank weeds, over which the bridge gracefully arches, looking liberal from the apparent extra breadth of the span. Past the bridge, on either side of the road, rise tall trees, for the country. (139)
Before concluding the section on the maps of the 1846 fortifications of H. Matamoros, it is appropriate to review an 1873 map of the town and its fortifications (Exhibit I). In this map, the outline of the town itself, not the alignment of the 1873 fortifications, bears a strong resemblance to the maps of the city and its fortifications as seen in map exhibits F, G, and H. Perhaps this map illustrates both the fortifications of 1846, as reflected in the general outline of the town, as well recording the fortifications built around the city in 1864 and 1865. This map is entitled "Plano de la Ciudad y Puerto de Matamoros," carries the name of "Lit. de Salazar," and bears the date of 1873. It is printed in historian Eliseo Paredes Manzano's 1974 study La Casa Mata y Fortificaciones de la Heroica Matamoros, Tamaulipas, published by Impresa "Alfa," S.A., Matamoros, Mexico. Exhibit J illustrates, on a modern map of the city, the outline of the town on the 1873 map, the Guerrero and Paredes forts, the Casa Mata, and the two lagoons. An interesting feature shown on the line of fortifications around the town appears to be a portion of the Panteón Viejo, which is shown adjacent to the fortifications. At the Panteón Viejo the wall and ditches extended to the north toward Fort Paredes and to the east in the direction of the rest of the city. The Panteón Viejo was begun in 1832 (Botello 27). This is the corner shown on the 1847 map (Exhibit G) as being composed of ramparts. There is a possibility that a remnant or an alignment of this early portion of the Panteón Viejo can be discerned by closely studying its design; another possibility is that the Panteón Viejo was just to the north of the feature marked by Berlandier.

**Potential Alignment of 1846 Fortifications**

In Exhibit K, I have drawn one of the potential alignments of the ring of fortifications around Matamoros that is based primarily upon the similarities in the maps that have been reviewed. I did not mark the fortifications along the Rio Bravo, except for Forts Paredes and Guerrero.

**Maps of the 1863-1890s Fortifications**

Exhibit L is a transferral to a modern city map of the 1873 map of the fortifications of Matamoros. One problem with the transferral of Fort Paredes is that it appears to be located in the middle of the Rio Bravo. The 1874 map (Exhibit M) appears to have a slightly better alignment of the fortifications with the city walls than the 1873 map. Exhibit N is an enlargement of this map to the scale of the modern city map. Exhibit O is a transferral of the fortifications of the 1873-1874 map onto a modern map of the city. Exhibit P compares the alignments of the two maps, 1873 and 1873-1874. Exhibit Q shows the fortifications in relationship to the railroad, and Exhibit R is an enlargement of this map. Exhibit S is an 1890 map of Matamoros and its fortifications, "'Plano de Matamoros,' memoria presentada al XV Honorable Congreso del Estado Libre y Soberano de Tamaulipas por el Secretario de Gobierno Lic. Carlos María Gil, el 8 de abril de 1890." Exhibit T is an enlargement of this map. Based upon conversations
with residents of Brownsville and Matamoros, the blocks marked to the northeast of Hidalgo were not actually on the ground, as nothing existed there for many years but Santa Cruz and the road connecting Matamoros and Santa Cruz (Personal Communication, October 9, 1992 with Sr. Alfonso Arguelles Gomez and Henry Krausse).

V. Field Trips to Matamoros

October 12 and November 27, 1992, Field Trips

The basic plan for the field trip was to look in the City of Matamoros for any remaining traces of the 1832 - 1846 and the 1863 - 1890s alignments of fortifications around the city. The major problems in identifying structural remains of the fortifications are my limited knowledge of architecture and construction, and the fact that there may indeed be no aboveground physical remains. Exhibit U shows the locations of the potential fabric remains encountered during these field trips.

Casa Mata

The location of the restored Casa Mata is already well known and documented. Other military features within the walls of the city, such as barracks, houses of various generals, headquarters, and so forth are beyond the scope of this paper. For example, the "Casa Ampudia" is located at Abasolo 89A - 91, the "Casa Gral. Manuel González Garza" is located at Uno 78, and the Plaza de Armas de Matamoros is located on Calle Seis between González and Hidalgo.

Fuerte Paredes

As Fort Paredes was common to both of these lines, I walked to the general location shown on the various maps for this site. The two maps that I preferred for Fort Paredes are the 1846+/Berlandier map, Exhibit H (3), and the 1873 map: Exhibits M, N, and O. These two maps locate the fort in the vicinity of the Aduana and the old electric plant. As stated previously, Don Florentino Cueliar noted that Fort Paredes is approximately where the Aduana is located. Eliseo Paredes Manzano states that Fort Paredes is located at the site of the old electric plant for the city, adjacent to and just south of the Aduana. The old electric plant site is easily observable. A work crew still uses the site. It contains the old wall around the plant and the walls of the brick buildings. The building is in ruins, but the walls are still standing. This site appears to be slightly raised above the surrounding tracts of land. This higher elevation extends beyond the wall of the electric plant for about sixty feet to the east and to the south in the railroad lines. This rise in land falls off to the west a short distance past the west wall of the electric plant. Eliseo Paredes Manzano appears to be stating in the quote on this site that Fort Paredes
no longer existed in 1915 and that the defenders of the city may have actually used the electric plant as the fortification to repel the Villistas. This concept of the use of the electric plant as a part of the fortifications is consistent with Jose Raul Conseco Botello's statement that work began on the electric plant in 1906 and that the plant became operational in 1907. "Fosos" or moats were an important part of the fortifications in 1915. I observed a low dip perhaps twenty-five feet across and a few feet deep that extended for about two hundred feet straight east of the higher ground mentioned previously where Fort Paredes may be located. This dip parallels the railroad tracks. According to Paredes, a foso was part of the structure of Fuerte Paredes built in 1832 (16). The location near the Aduana and at the old electric plant, the rise in the ground, and the dip, are all factors that seem to support this site being the right one for Fort Paredes. This site appears to warrant further investigation to definitively determine if it indeed is the site of Fort Paredes, begun in 1832 under Colonel Mariano Paredes Arrillaga. Some sign of the 1913 and 1915 battles may possibly still be seen in the fabric of the electric plant, if this structure was employed in defending the city.

If Fort Paredes were located at the Aduana, heavy land alteration activity would make quite problematic the survival of any surface fabric.

Large Rectangle Shown in Berlandier Map in the Middle of the North-South Fortifications to the South of Fort Paredes

I walked along short portions of calles 13, 14, 15, and 16. Future research should include a systematic inspection of all four of these streets. The rectangle shown on Berlandier's map extends to the west of the line of fortifications. It seems clear that the structure was located between Matamoros and Bravo. However, it was not clear to me which of the north-south streets would be closest to the north-south line of fortifications located on the west side of Matamoros in 1846.

On the southwest corner of Bravo and Calle 16, there is a large, single-story building which the owners and some neighbors said was the oldest building for some blocks around. It measures about 100 feet by 130 feet, has a very high roof, is made of brick, and has an interior patio covering the southwest portion of the property. There is a warehouse on the extreme southwest corner. The owners said that a bisabuelo told them the house was old when it had been bought from some "gachupines," or Spaniards.

Between Matamoros and Bravo, on Calle 14, I found another structure, called the "Cine Latino," that could remotely be considered a candidate. The original building had been adapted and added to for use as a movie theatre. The upper level of the south wall has some large openings that were filled in with bricks.

Round Structure on Southwest Corner of Berlandier Map

Berlandier shows a smaller, round structure south of the site previously mentioned. A round structure could be a fortified tower or torreón. This round feature may have
been located between Morelos and Queretaro on or near Calles 13, 14, or 15. I found a brick and burnt adobe (a worker from Matamoros said this type of adobe block was called an adobón) wall with eight openings that could have been from low roof beams. The structure is between Morelos and Querétaro on the northwest corner of Querétaro and Calle 13. The wall is about seven feet high. It forms an "L" shape with one wall along Queretaro and another wall extending north for about 45 feet. The beam openings are located in the north-south wall. The openings are about five and a half feet above the ground, to the bottom part of the opening. The opening was about six inches high and two inches wide. The wall is composed of alternating layers of two courses of bricks and a course of burnt adobe about as thick as the two courses of brick. This wall formed the back wall of a house fronting on Calle 13. The house used to be owned by a doctor, but no one knows who the new owner is. The house is presently vacant and signs of deterioration are beginning to show (broken windows, for example). The house itself is made of wood. Looking into the back yard, the same type of wall construction can be seen about 80 feet away on the other side of the yard. Exhibit G illustrates a rectangular rampart in this area. While Berlandier's illustration of this feature, as noted above, is reminiscent of a torreón, a round, fortified tower. None of the walls discussed above are curved. This area needs to be looked over much more closely in the future. In the next block to the south, I saw another wall of the same type of brick and adobe construction.

**Panteón Viejo**

The Panteón Viejo may be the rectangle illustrated on Berlandier's map that extends to the south of the east-west line of fortifications. In looking at the Panteón Viejo, I could see that the northeast corner appears to be the older portion and that it is separated from the western half of the cemetery. There is a noticeable change in alignment in the north wall of the Panteón Viejo and in Calle Independencia; this can be seen at a small protrusion in the cemetery wall, located about half way in the length of the wall along Independence. This portion of the Panteón Viejo appears to match the feature shown by Berlandier. The east-west line of fortifications might be on either Independencia or Victoria, or between them. Walking east on Victoria I did not notice anything that appeared to be out of the ordinary. However, there were walls in the back yards of a number of houses on the north side of the street.

**Remainder of Walk Looking for 1846 Fortifications**

The rest of the walk was unevenful, with the exception of a tienda named "San Fernando" near the location marked by Berlandier for the San Fernando site. Walking north on Guatemala, I approached the Casa Mata on its southeast corner. Berlandier's map shows a slight inset to the west here, and an alternative route for the roughly north-south alignment of fortifications could be the next street to the east, Honduras. In 1846, Casa Mata was only one or two years old; it might have been an actual part of the total...
encircling fortifications, rather than a part within the other fortifications, as it was in the 1863 and later fortifications. However, Berlandier's map shows the Casa Mata as a separate structure from the wall.

Fuerte Guerrero

Fort Guerrero appears to me to be located now in the United States. The river has cut to the south and west in this part of Matamoros (see Exhibit J). However, Don Florentino Cueliar stated that Fort Guerrero was located at the junction of Guerrero and Avenida Tamaulipas. Paredes noted that Fuerte Guerrero was a hundred meters from the Casa Mata, thereby placing it today still in Mexico. He also states that Fuerte Guerrero was destroyed by a bend in the river. In addition, Paredes said that all of the fortifications in this area were together called Fuerte Guerrero. The wet road on the U.S. side made it difficult for me to check the potential site marked just north of the Rio Grande. One informant (anonymous, personal communication, December 2, 1992) told me he had found an old-style bugle mouthpiece north of the Rio Grande, at the location marked for Fuerte Guerrero. Berlandier's ca. 1846 map seems to show Fuerte Guerrero just north of the Estero de San Juan. The 1873 map places it just on the northeastern tip of the Estero de los Cuarteles. Both of these locations are in general alignment with an eastward extension of Calle de Morelos, one block north of Calle de Guerrero. The 1873-1874 map illustrates the Rio Grande has eroded to the south and west on this side of Matamoros, probably leaving Fuerte Guerrero on the north side of the river. The two earlier maps clearly show that Fuerte Guerrero is more than 100 meters from the Casa Mata. Given the active erosion of the river in this location, it is likely that the integrity of the site has been strongly impacted. However, this area north of the Rio Grande should be visited in order to attempt to locate the fort and ascertain its actual condition.

ALIGNMENT OF 1863-1915 FORTIFICATIONS AROUND CITY

In returning south along the potential alignment of the 1863-1915 fortifications, I did not see what I felt were fabric remains of the fortifications, until I arrived at the garita and Fortín de San Fernando. However, it seems that the general location of the Fortín del Estero, the Fortín Puertas Verdes, and the Fortín de Matamoros are fairly evident from the maps and the plans of the streets. Paredes indicated that the fosos were deepened and the fortines strengthened with bricks.

Fortín del Estero

This fort, based on the 1873 maps, would be near the junctions of Avenidas Acapulco and Tamaulipas, the Republica del Salvador, and the Republica de Cuba. I did not notice any original fabric in this location.
Fuerte Bravo

This fort should be somewhere near the junctions of Avenida Lauro Villar, República de Cuba, Costa Rica, and División del Norte. I did not notice any original fabric in this location.

Fuerte Matamoros

This fort should be near the junctions of Ocampo, Aguilar, Costa Rica, Honduras, and Mina. I did not notice any original fabric in this location. Don Florentino Cuellar locates Fuerte Matamoros near the Benito Juárez School.

San Fernando

In what is today a school, I found a wall of the same brick and burnt adobe construction that I had seen north of the Panteón Viejo. This wall extended between Calle 3 and Calle 4, about halfway between the extensions of P.J. Mendez and Caballero. This wall is along the south side of a new school. An older man said that this was the location of the old Cuartel Mariano Matamoros. This site is in the general location for the garita and fuerte of San Fernando. Portions of the wall on the east side of the school also appeared to be old. (This informant also said that there had been two fortified locations along the Rio Bravo, the one to the north being called "La Abundancia" and the one to the south "El Morro.")

Small Outset in Fortifications Northwest of San Fernando

Between Calle 5 and Calle 6 and between Carrera Orpes and Canales, I found two walls, one about a hundred feet long of the same, now familiar brick and burnt adobe construction. An older man in a shop behind this site said it was part of what was called the "vieja bodega" or old warehouse. This location is appropriate for the outsets on the 1873-1874 map of Matamoros (Exhibit M).

Fortín de Hidalgo

In about the location of Fortín de Hidalgo, I found a partial, low wall of the same type of construction. This could perhaps be a part of the Fortín de Hidalgo.

Fortín de Iturbide

A possible wall fragment was seen in the general location of Fortín Iturbide.
Fortín de Monterey

The prison of the Policía Judicial del Estado could be about in the location of Fortín Bravo. This is higher ground and is in proximity to the drainage system. The block between Calle 19 and 20 and between Morelos and González, to the east of the Policía Judicial del Estado building, has some older walls at an angle that may have been part of the Fortín Monterey.

Fortín del Bravo

The two 1873 maps vary the most on the location of this site. Both locations appear to be likely ones, along the side of the drainage lakes. Both appear to have had roads going out of the city. There were some brick and burnt adobe walls at the old crossing at about where Hidalgo and Avenida Ayuntamiento would have met.

Fortín Independencia

Fortín Independencia is reported by Paredes to be under the Planta de Agua facility near the old bridge. I did find a number of walls with brick and burnt adobe construction just south and also to the west of the Planta de Agua. Part of the Planta de Agua water holding pond has some of the brick and adobe wall construction.

Brick and Burnt Adobe Construction

This type of wall construction is still in use today. It seems to be fairly consistent with the 1915 strengthening of the old fortifications. I certainly found traces of it along the alignments of the ring of fortifications. The angles of the walls along the Avenida Diagonal Cuauhtemoc caught my attention because, unlike many other walls, they did seem to follow the alignment of the fortifications more than other types of walls. An interesting endeavor would be to correlate this type of construction and the property lines along Avenida Cuauhtémoc with the location of the fortifications.

Sixteen Brick Houses Built Along Line of Fortifications in 1915

The 16 brick houses built along the line of fortifications around the city, each armed with a machine gun, would mean that there were 7 structures in addition to the 9 fortines in the original ring of fortifications. Paredes says that a brick house was placed at certain distances and in every place where the line of ditches changed angles. Some of the brick and adobe fabric I found may be part of these brick houses.
VI. Conclusion

As stated previously, this paper is only a preliminary attempt to locate the remains of the fortifications surrounding H. Matamoros. Although the definitive alignments of the two lines of fortifications were not fully determined, it is evident that the following statements can be made:

- The pattern of the city streets does reflect the alignments of the systems of walls that once surrounded H. Matamoros.
- These general alignments can be fairly closely identified on a modern city map.
- There are a number of walls encountered that might have some relationship to the city fortifications.
- There is a major difference between the alignments of the fortifications in 1846 and those fortifications built in the 1860s.
- Given the significance of the physical fabric of the fortifications of H. Matamoros, a comprehensive study by competent professionals should be conducted to attempt to definitively locate the fortifications and to determine if there are any surface remnants.
- Further research should consult additional primary documentation.
- Information on the fortifications is of wide interest to both residents of the region and to visitors throughout Mexico and the United States.

Director, Palo Alto National Battlefield.


A. Portion of a modern map of Matamoros from the map entitled "H. Matamoros, Tam., Piano General" by Juan Sanchez Osuna, Edición 1989-1990

B. Portion of the "Map of the Cities of Brownsville and Matamoros," Brownsville Convention and Visitors Bureau, 1988

C. Map of the historic structures of Matamoros from the *Catálogo Nacional de Monumentos Históricos-Inmuebles: Tamaulipas. Tomo II. Instituto Nacional de Anthropología e Historia*, 1986.


F. "City of Matamoros, 1846" from A. Oliveira Library and the Brownsville Historical Association


H. (1) Circa 1846 map of Matamoros by Jean Luis Berlandier. From a microfilm provided by the A. Oliveira Library and reproduced by Ray Moore, Ridgeway's Graphic Supplies and Services in 1992. (2) Transfer of line of fortifications on a modern city map. (3) Rough transfer of line of fortifications on a modern city map. This exhibit is included because it was the map used to help trace the alignment of fortifications on the October 12 field trip to Matamoros.


J. Outline of the Exhibit I illustration of the city itself, not the fortifications, onto a modern city map.

K. One potential alignment of the 1846 line of fortifications on a modern city map.

L. Transfer of the city fortifications shown on the map in Exhibit I onto a modern map of the city.

M."Plano de la Ciudad de Matamoros, 1873." "Plano Topográfico de la H. Ciudad de Matamoros, año de 1873-74." This map is in José Raúl Canseco Botello's *Historia de Matamoros*, second edition, 1981.

N. Enlargement of the map in Exhibit M.
O. Transfer of the line of fortifications shown on the map in Exhibit M onto a modern city map.

P. Combination of Exhibits L and O, the outlines of the 1873 and the 1873-1874 maps, onto a modern map for comparative purposes.

Q. "Plano de 1888 en donde aparece el trazo de la vía del ferrocarril Matamoros-Linares-Matehuala." This map is in José Raúl Canseco Botello's *Historia de Matamoros.*

R. Enlargement of map in Exhibit Q.

S. "Plano del Puerto de Matamoros." This map is on page 240 of the "Memoria presentado al XV Honorable Congreso del Estado Libre y Soberano de Tamaulipas por el Secretario de Gobierno Lic. Carlos María Gil el 8 de abril de 1890."

T. Enlargement of map in Exhibit S.

EXHIBIT B: Map of Brownsville/Matamoros, 1983

Exhibit "B"
2. Old Guard House.
3. Fort Brown.
4. Flag.
5. Battery of two howitzers.
6. Ferry.
7. Lower Ferry.
8. Road to Point Isabel.
10. Island.
11. Pond.
15. Fort Paredes.
16. Mortar Battery.
17. Sand-Bag Battery.
18. Mortar Battery.
20. Lower-Fort Mortar Battery.
21. Mortar, or Country Battery.
22. General Taylor's Headquarters after taking Matamoros.

Plan of Matamoros, Fort Brown, and surrounding country.
Exhibit "H"
Exhibit “J”
Exhibit "K"
Exhibit "L"
Plano de la ciudad de Matamoros levantado en el año de 1873 en el que aparece la ciudad fortificada y los esteros del Bravo y de Cuarteles conectados entre sí por un canal.

Exhibit “M”
Exhibit "R"
Exhibit "S"
Exhibit “T”
Exhibit "U"
Illustration of the Villa Maria School
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
What makes an individual successful? It is ingenuity, as well as an ability to adapt to changing environments and circumstances. Don Francisco Yturria, a 19th century businessman of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas exemplifies this. Born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico, in 1830, he grew up to be an international entrepreneur, having businesses in Mexico and the United States, profiting from the unique environment and culture of the Rio Grande Delta. In 1848, he left Matamoros in a quick jump across the river to the newly formed Brownsville townsite. However, using his connections in Matamoros he maintained a business there and was able to turn quite a profit especially during the Civil War, smuggling cotton under the cover of his Mexican holdings. Yturria also went on to amass over a quarter of a million acres of land.

Above all his many business activities was his first calling; this was being a merchant-banker. At a young age, he learned the merchant trade, working for Charles Stillman as a clerk. He later set up his own firm with bases in Matamoros and Brownsville in the 1850s. His bank was set up around 1858 and was the only bank south of San Antonio for many years. Yturria also invested in land following the lead of two of his good friends, Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy. His venture into the cattle business came later in his life, but it proved to be quite profitable. In 1903, Yturria was one of the men that brought the railroad to the Valley. This was a monumental turning point in Valley history which created gain for Yturria.

He was born on October 4, 1830, and was the son of Captain Manuel Maria Yturria, a decorated soldier of the Mexican Army. His mother was Paula Navarro. Francisco's family originated in a small village called Elizondo in the Basque region of Spain. He had two brothers and a sister. Both brothers worked with Francisco in his business. He married Felicitas Trevino, an heir to the San Martin land grant and Porciones in Starr County, in 1853, and adopted two children, Daniel, in November, 1860, and Isabel, in the late 1870s.

The uniqueness of the area is the proximity of Brownsville and Matamoros which, for men like Yturria, under the right circumstances, proved to be an invaluable asset. When the Civil War broke out, Confederate ports including the nearby port of Brazos Santiago, were blockaded by Union ships. The proximity of Mexico allowed Texas and especially Brownsville a way to work around the blockade. Bagdad, a sleepy village on the Mexican coast, became the port of call for Confederate cotton and foreign trade into the Confederacy. A stage coach line connected Matamoros with Bagdad. Yturria was an enterprising speculator. By sending cotton to his Matamoros business and ordering goods through his Mexican cover, Yturria could even acquire guns for the Confederacy.
Steamers flying under the neutral Mexican flag could not be boarded by the Union navy; consequently Yturria was able to get cotton out to the waiting foreign ships off Bagdad without much trouble. Since he had a firm in Mexico, run by his brothers, he was able to register steamboats under a Mexican flag.

After the Civil War ended, Yturria left for France. He not only had supported the Confederacy, but had ardently favored the government of Maximillan in Mexico. Emperor Maximillian was a puppet of France. With both Maximillian and the Confederacy having lost, it was safer for Yturria to leave the area. Eventually, Yturria acquired a pardon from Andrew Johnson and returned home to Brownsville.¹

The years after the Civil War were the setting for a burgeoning cattle industry. Before, during and after the war, Yturria, much like his friends, King and Kenedy, purchased "derechos" to various old Spanish land grants from the heirs of the original grantees.² On February 28, 1893, the Cameron County District Court resolved that in the decree of partition of the San Juan de Carricitos Grant in Richard King v. Heirs of Narciso Cavazos, dated June 2, 1881, Yturria had legal claim to around 78,000 acres.³

He also had proceeded to buy out his brother-in-law's interest in the San Martin Grant and other heirs of the Porciones in Starr County. Including all the properties he would acquire throughout Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo and Starr counties, Yturria amassed over 250,000 acres; however, not all were ranch lands. Although he had participated in small business ventures with livestock, nothing of a large scale took place until the 1890s. The headquarters for his cattle company was the Punta del Monte tract, in present day Kenedy County. It served as a point along the Chisholm trail.⁴

An important contribution to the Rio Grande Valley was his contribution in bringing the Saint Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway to the area. It connected farmers with distant markets. Yturria was one of the incorporators of this line and served as one of its directors towards the end of his life. Yturria helped generate cash and acreage the railroad needed,⁵ and gave the railroad the right of way to go directly through his ranch land. The Yturria railroad station was built on this land, and cattle were shipped from here. The train opened up markets for many of the Valley's agricultural products. Not only could cattle exportation increase, but cotton, citrus fruits, vegetables and grains could be produced at larger capacities for far away markets. With the railroad also came an increase in the Valley's population, doubling it in less than a year.

Francisco Yturria was a self-made man. He worked hard to reach the heights that he did and his value to South Texas history is immeasurable. Although he died on June 15, 1912, to this day, his name is still respected.
Endnotes

1 Interview with Dr. Frank Yturria, great granson of Francisco Yturria, Brownsville, Texas, December, 1991, Presidential Pardon, May 10, 1866, signed by Andrew Johnson, Historic Brownsville Museum, Brownsville, Texas.

2 Yturria Interview.


4 Family Land Heritage Registry V2, (Austin, Texas: Texas Department of Agriculture, 1975), 126.

Illustration of the Alonso Complex
510-514 East St. Charles
Built circa 1890
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
The Start of the Brownsville-Matamoros Telephone Link

by

Bruce Aiken

In 1895, historic Brownsville and Heroic Matamoros established an international impact upon the communications field: a telephone line was strung between the two cities. This was more than a casual incident. It was a long-standing dream of Francisco Yturria. Don Francisco operated a well-established bank in Brownsville and a large mercantile business in Matamoros. This was in addition to ranches in Texas and steamboat operations on the Rio Grande. He recognized that communication was a valuable management tool, and he set forth to implement this endeavor.

Having been involved in international trade for many years, he was well-versed in the red tape involved. Besides tariffs there were regulations, policies, and occasional "fees" that might be appropriate for expediting a transaction. Knowing this he deiced to start at the top. The president of Mexico, Porfirio Diaz, was an old friend of Don Francisco's. When Diaz was living in Brownsville, planning his revolution, he and Don Francisco became good friends. Yturria had given Diaz a great deal of support, both material and financial. It took little more than a letter to his old friend to acquire the proper paper--and powerful authority--to proceed on the Mexican side of the border.

For the United States permits Don Francisco took a different approach. One half of the second floor of the Yturria Mercantile Building housed the United States Consul to Matamoros. These accommodations were said to be second in quality only to the embassy in Mexico City. Knowing the difficulty of moving correspondence between the consulate and military officials in Fort Brown (there was no bridge between the two towns at the time.) Don Francisco apprised the consul of the advantage of being able to talk to U.S. Army officials on a moment's notice. This invitation met with immediate approval from the United States government.

Don Francisco employed Julian Espinosa of the Mexican Telegraph Company to oversee the project. This move ensured not only quality work, but tight security. Don Julian was related to Don Francisco through marriage. Don Julain's daughter, Leonor, was married to Don Francisco's son Daniel. The telephone line was extended from the Yturria Building on 6th and Abasolo to the road used by the mule-drawn trolley to reach the ferry crossing at Santa
Cruz. (Santa Cruz is now the site of the Mexican Customs and Immigration station serving the Gateway Bridge.) From this point it crossed the Rio Grande and Followed the Quartermaster Wall that separated Brownsville from Fort Brown. At the alley between Elizabeth and Washington, the line was extended to the Yturria Bank, located in the 1200 block of Elizabeth Street.

The system was crude compared to telephone of today. The line was powered by dry-cell batteries. A hand crank on the side of the wall-mounted instrument activated a magnet that in turn rang a bell on the other end of the line. There were no amplification stations so the individuals using the telephone were required to speak loudly to ensure proper understanding. Military officials made the trip to the Yturria Bank on a daily basis. Both the military and the consul benefited.

Don Francisco was kept abreast of his commercial transactions. he also reaped an unanticipated windfall. he soon realized as he sat in his office within eight or ten feet of the telephone that he didn't have to perfect auditory ability to the messages being sent back and forth. This provided Don Francisco with privy information that placed him ahead of his competition.

During the siege of Matamoros by Lucio Blanco, the telephone line between the Yturria Store and Yturria Bank proved the only eye-witness accounts of what was going on in Matamoros. This facility, along the with the American flag flying over this mercantile store housing the American consulate was far more valuable than the initial cost of the 1895 project.

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Curator Historic Brownsville Museum.
Illustration of the Southern Pacific Railroad Passenger Depot
6th and 7th Streets and East Madison
Built 1920-1929
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
La Presidencia de Don Salvador Cárdenas

por

Andrés F. Cuellar

Gran orgullo para los matamorenses es su rico archivo municipal, actualmente en proceso de clasificación. Una sección importante es la milagrosa conservación de la casi totalidad de los Libros de Actas de Cabildo que nos permiten una visión insustituible de los grandes y pequeños problemas a los que cada responsable de dirigir a su pueblo se enfrentaba. En ese entonces el período presidencial era de solo un año, y tomando en cuenta la violencia que con toda seguridad originó nuestra Revolución Mexicana, es un milagro el conservar estos maravillosos documentos. El presente trabajo utiliza como fuente casi única a la información contenida en ese magnífico y maltratado libro, escrito con la agil pluma de Don Pedro Sáenz González, quién además hizo el esfuerzo de anotar los acuerdos con tinta roja para facilitar la posterior consulta, y además conservó el archivo durante su larga permanencia como Secretario del ayuntamiento.

No era fácil la tarea que le esperaba a Don Salvador Cárdenas cuando fue electo Presidente Municipal de esta ciudad. Apenas la población intentaba recuperarse de la crisis ocasionada por la Revolución Mexicana. Fuertes lluvias de finales de 1919 provocaron fuertes inundaciones que perjudicaron la mayoría de la población y de los negocios y hasta se suspendió la comunicación por ferrocarril con Monterrey. Sin embargo, lo que más apasionaba a los matamorenses era que desde el 1 de junio de 1919, el general Álvaro Obregón había manifestado su deseo de ser candidato a la Presidencia de la República y recién en noviembre el Partido Liberal Constitucionalista le había declarado su candidato oficial. Esta candidatura contó con la oposición del presidente Venustiano Carranza, que consideraba que sería muy negativo para el país si un militar llegaba a la presidencia, y a finales de año se había decidido por apoyar la candidatura del Ingeniero Ignacio Bonillas.

Los recuerdos de la Revolución estaban muy vivos y casi nadie pensaba que las elecciones presidenciales se fueran a tomar en serio. Presentían que las armas tendrían la última palabra. Después de las terribles batallas y destrucción de la Revolución Mexicana y la Rebelión Caballerista contra la elección de César López de Lara, a partir del 10 de noviembre de 1919, gobernaba el estado el General Francisco González Villarreal. Las Actas del cabildo no reflejan el huracán político que estaba viviendo el país; las sesiones aparentaban una gran normalidad. Sin embargo, una lectura cuidadosa nos permite algunos indicios de que esas tensiones se reflejaban en el cabildo. Por ejemplo, apenas un mes después de haber tomado posesión, el regidor Alejandro López, en largo discurso en el que se esfuerza por aparentar normalidad en su actitud, solicita al ayuntamiento el derecho de decretar la libertad de presos detenidos por delitos menores, a lo que se opone.

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energicamente el Presidente Municipal. Pero en la votación ganan los regidores, y quedan autorizados para hacer uso de sus influencias.  

El 13 de febrero se realizó una sesión extraordinaria para aprovechar la presencia del Licenciado Martín Espinosa, secretario particular del Gobernador del Estado, oportunidad que no quieren desperdiciar el cabildo para desahogarse solicitando la solución de sus principales problemas que eran los siguientes. La comisión de instrucción pública solicita material para construir bancos para las escuelas. La comisión de ornato solicita, sin costo, 500 carros de balastre de Anzaldua para arreglar los caminos y calles principales. La misma comisión solicita con los panteones que dependían del estado pasarán al municipio, prometiendo continuar pagándole al estado sus impuestos y justifica su petición argumentando que más que de ornato la medida es de higiene, que la medida es puramente administrativa y enseña la punta de la cola al afirmar que el municipio no recibe nada de los panteones.

Dieciséis días después, el Presidente arremete contra la policía, de todo lo cual responsabiliza al Inspector, a quien propone sustituirlo por el Sr. Faustino González, quien trabaja como inspector de pieles y del cual asegura tener informes excelentes. El puesto debió ser productivo, porque en la siguiente reunión del cabildo, el Sr. José Torres solicita desempeñarlo, al lo que los representantes del pueblo contestan que "no está vacante." Para fines de marzo, el influyente regidor Conrado Gutiérrez asegura que se informó por el periódico El Surge (sic) que el ayuntamiento nombró Subinspector de Policía el Alcalde Sr. Ernesto Morales, lo que ha acusado gran disgusto entre los gendarmes (como se llamaba a los policías). Se le contesta al Sr. Gutiérrez que ese nombramiento fue hecho por el Presidente Municipal con fundamento en el artículo 56, fracción IV, y acuerdan suspender al Sr. Morales en el puesto por convenir así al bien público.

En este mismo ambiente policiaco la comisión de este ramo informa que está en tratos con la sastrería "La Joffre" de la Ciudad de México, para comprar el vestuario de la policía, y dando a entender que el presidente municipal se trasladará a la Capital, se autoriza para cerrar el trato. Tomando en cuenta que se estaba en plena campaña presidencial, y los acontecimientos indicaban la solución militar, muy probablemente el interés de Don Salvador Cárdenas era participar en la "grilla" política y el vestuario de los policías era solo un pretexto.

A fines de marzo aparece un nuevo problema. Resulta que el Inspector Federal del Timbre, con sede en Nuevo Laredo a cargo del Sr. Adolfo Pohls, asegura que en las cuentas que rindiera su representante en Matamoros, Don Francisco G. Schreck, aparece un fraude por el cobro de este impuesto desde 1914 por $30,953.34 en oro nacional y por $14,00.06 en papel moneda, asegurando que Don Francisco ha violado cinco artículos, y con fundamento en otro tres le impone una multa de $500.00 por falta en el cobro de la primera cantidad y de $281.20 por la segunda cantidad. El tesorero inmediatamente se defendió que estos actos los cometió por órdenes del presidente y que no era justo se le cobrara faltas cometidas por quienes habían ocupado su puesto desde 1914; tampoco podía faltar el argumento de la guerra o Revolución cuando la plaza estaba
constantemente amagada por rebeldes. Es interesante la desproporción entre las multas por el faltante en oro nacional y por el faltante en papel moneda.

Mientras tanto, la esperada rebelión se produjo el 11 de abril. Adolfo de la Huerta, Gobernador de Sonora, inició la esperada revuelta en contra del gobierno del Presidente Venustiano Carranza para evitar el supuesto fraude que se haría en las próximas elecciones. Esa revuelta pronto fue apoyada por los gobernadores de Zacatecas y Michoacán, y la mayoría del ejército de entonces. El Plan de Agua Prieta que justificaría la revuelta y expondría sus primeros objetivos fue publicado hasta el 23 del mismo mes de abril.\(^{13}\) Muy probablemente las dificultades de las comunicaciones impidieron a los tamaulipecos enterarse que el artículo dos declaraba nulas las recientes elecciones efectuadas en los estados de Guanajuato, Querétaro, San Luis Potosí, Nuevo León, y Tamaulipas.\(^{14}\)

Contrariamente a los pronósticos de Venustiano Carranza, fueron tantos los apoyos recibidos por Obregón y sus partidarios que el 7 de mayo decide abandonar la capital en ferrocarril, con el propósito de establecer su gobierno en el puerto de Veracruz, como lo había hecho en 1915 durante la Revolución. Pero los tiempos habían cambiado. El tren especial fue atacado con gran vigor el 13 de mayo en la estación de Aljibes, Puebla, obligando a los ya fugitivos a continuar la marcha por tierra, a caballo, hacia la Sierra de Puebla, donde encontraría la muerte la madrugada del 21.\(^{15}\)

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Como en Tamaulipas no escaseaban los partidarios de Obregón, que eran encabezados por el Licenciado Emilio Portes Gil, el General Francisco González Villarreal consideró prudente abandonar su puesto y durante cuatro días del 4 al 8 de ese candente mes de mayo, el General Rafael Cárdenas se dio el lujo de ingresar a la lista de gobernantes de nuestro estado. Pero como no resultó del agrado de los nuevos vencedores, también debió abandonar su cargo y tuvimos tres días, del nueve al once, sin autoridad, ya que hasta el 12 el eufórico Emilio Portes Gil tomó posición como Gobernador Interino de Tamaulipas.\(^{16}\)

Mientras Carranza efectuaba su trágica peregrinación y el Estado de Tamaulipas se encontraba sin gobernador, el 9 de mayo en Matamoros hubo una extraña junta extraordinaria. En ella estuvo ausente el Presidente Municipal, que se encontraba "en comisión en la ciudad de San Antonio, Texas." A esa junta asistieron las siguientes importantes personalidades: El Comandante de la Guarnición de la Plaza, Gral. Julio R. Colunga; el Administrador de la Aduana, Alfredo Guimbarda; el Comandante del Resguardo Aduanal, José González; y el Jefe de Migración. El Gral. Colunga toma la palabra para expresar que ante el levantamiento del Plan de Agua Prieta espera defender la ciudad hasta donde sea posible y que ya cuenta con el apoyo de los jefes presentes. La única fuerza que le falta es la lealtad de la policía municipal, y que su presencia en ese lugar es solicitar al cabildo colaborar con sus importantes contingentes.

Considerando la época y el poder que tenían los militares en ese entonces, es admirable la actitud del cabildo, que se opusó "enérgicamente a que se haga resistencia que sería infructuosa y de gravesísimas consecuencias para nuestro pueblo." Toma el siguiente acuerdo: "El Ayuntamiento que tengo la honra de presidir, no cooperará de
manera ninguna para la defensa de esta plaza pues el reducido número de gendarmes con que cuenta están siendo utilizados en la vigilancia de la ciudad y no pueden distraerse para el otro objetivo que él desea. Además, esta corporación opina que no debe hacer resistencia a las fuerzas que piden la plaza porque sería infructuosa y de gravisímos perjuicios para la población.  

Otra característica interesante es que no obstante que durante la Revolución hubo cierta estabilidad en el municipio, ya que siempre le fue leal a Carranza, en los Libros de Actas de Cabildo no se consignan los acontecimientos más importantes como la visita de Carranza a Matamoros, la toma de la ciudad por Lucio Blanco, ni siquiera el ataque villista a este puerto, algunas veladas referencias como no se pudo hacer por los acontecimientos militares o simplemente no los mencionan. El 19 de mayo, cuando Don Venustiano se internaba por la Sierra de Puebla, y el Lic. Emilio Portes Gil completaba su primera semana como Gobernador interino del Estado de Tamaulipas. Don Salvador Cárdenas reunía al cabildo de Matamoros para justificar su viaje a San Antonio, Texas. Manifestó que ante el movimiento revolucionario encabezado por el señor De la Huerta consideró conveniente entrevistarse con el representante de los rebeldes en la ciudad texana que lo era el General Alvarado y le explicó la situación de la ciudad. Al regresar, se encontró con que tropas rebeldes amagaban la ciudad, y como era sabida la intención del General Colunga de defender la ciudad, el regidor Conrado Gutiérrez, "con el valor civil que lo caracteriza, desempeñó el papel de mediador, hablando con ambas partes hasta convencer al mencionado General Colunga de no hacer resistencia "porque todo sería infructuoso y de gravisímas consecuencias para el pueblo." Su comisión culminó cuando los amagados aceptaron el Plan de Agua Prieta que leyeron al pueblo de Matamoros, y oradores espontáneos hicieron uso de la palabra para elogiar a los héroes recién fabricados.  

En otras palabras, todo indica que el cabildo apoyó el Plan de Agua Prieta y que, gracias a su actitud enérgica y decidida, logró convencer a última hora al General Colunga de que más valía el sueldo que el honor, y a pesar del pacto que tenía con el Administrador de la Aduana, el Comandante del Resguardo Aduanal y el Jefe de Migración, prefirió adherirse a la mayoría y así continuar su carrera militar. Pero como nadie sabe para quién trabaja, para fines de mes los papeles se invirtieron y es el General Colunga quien envía un comunicado, el que comienza anunciada la larga cadena del nuevo mando, al decir que el Presidente de la República Interino: Gral. Adolfo de la Huerta, ordenó al Jefe del Ejército en el Estado: Gral. Arnulfo R. Serrano y éste al Comandante de la Guarnición de la Plaza: Gral. Julio R. Colunga, que el primero ordenó prohibido las jugadas (de azar), orden que no había sido acatada, y de plazo "hasta mañana" para que estén cerradas "jugadas y cantinas" hasta nueva orden y además que todo el cabildo debe renunciar y entregarle el mando.  

Tal parece que el cabildo fue el más sorprendido y después de larga discusión donde manifestaban los que siempre habían sido obedientes y que el origen de su poder emanaba directa y legítimamente del pueblo, hacenlo alusión velada al origen violento de los poderes estatal y federal, se llegó al largo acuerdo siguiente.
"Dígase al Señor Gobernador Provisional del Estado por la vía más rápida que con bastante sorpresa ha llegado a esta corporación municipal, por conducto del Comandante de la Guarnición de la Plaza que el Ejecutivo Provisional del Estado a su digno cargo, hase dirigido al Jefe de Operaciones en el Estado pidiéndole su apoyo para que sean acatadas algunas disposiciones emanadas de ese gobierno que no han sido confirmadas por el R. Ayuntamiento a mi cargo. Así mismo se ordena sea despuesta esta corporación sin expresar fundamento alguno a la persona que designa esa propia entidad. Con el debido respeto manifiesto a Usted, por acuerdo del R. Ayuntamiento, que esta autoridad nunca ha desobedecido órdenes superiores, las cuales han sido cumplidas inmediatamente. Con respeto a la destitución de nuestro cuerpo consejial, debo manifestarle que lejos de protestar enérgicamente violación al acuerdo del nuevo plan al que nos vemos sometidos que dice que la soberanía reside esencial y originariamente en la voluntad del pueblo y que todo poder público emana exclusivamente de él y se constituye (en gobierno) para su propio beneficio. Estamos dispuestos a la entrega que se nos indica, pero suplicando se nos diga con apoyo en qué disposición. Ceses como en el presente caso le desconocemos competencia al ejecutivo a su cargo. Ya nos dirigimos al C. Presidente provisional en demanda de justicia."\(^{21}\)

La "vía más rápida" mencionada en el acuerdo, resultó ser el tradicional telégrafo y las ansias de poder de Don Emilio debieron ser muy grandes porque solo hubo necesidad de dos días para que el cabildo se enterara de la cruda y amarga realidad al recibir un telegrama que decía:

Sr. Salvador Cárdenas, Presidente Municipal de Matamoros Tam. Su mensaje de hoy. De acuerdo con el artículo segundo del Plan de Agua Prieta que desconoce a los funcionarios públicos cuya investidura proceda de las últimas elecciones en el estado de Tamaulipas. Sírvase usted hacer entrega inmediatamente de esa Presidencia Municipal al C. Protacio Guerra. Por demás extraña este gobierno la forma en que se dirige Ud. a él, pues debo manifestarle que efectivamente me dirigí al jefe de operaciones en el Estado en el sentido de que me habían desobedecido la orden del gobierno a mi cargo para que hiciese Ud. entrega de la Presidencia Municipal.\(^{22}\)

Indudablemente que había nuevas personas en el poder y estaban más que dispuestas a hacer uso de él. Pero como dice el dicho: Para uno que madruga, otro que no se acuesta. Y don Emilio no contaba con la astucia de Don Salvador Cárdenas y sus amigos quienes mandaron llamar a Don Tacho (Protacio) Guerra, y al enterarlo del telegrama del Gobernador Provisional éste manifestó que él había recibido un telegrama similar y había
contestado lo siguiente: "con pena manifiéstole serme imposible asumir Presidencia Municipal, motivos a que asuntos particulares reclaman mi atención personal. Mucha grdezco distinción hecha mi favor y sinceramente (le doy mis) más expresivas gracias deseándole serle útil otra ocasión. Ademáes le asegura al cabildo que "por ningún concepto aceptará la Presidencia porque el actual (cabildo) es emanado del voto popular en los comicios de diciembre y en cuya campaña electoral triunfó legalmente el cuerpo consejial actuante de lo cual ha sido (testigo) ocular el que habla. Huelga decir que semejante ataque de democracia de Don Tacho motivó la calurosa felicitación de todos y cada uno de los miembros del cabildo que calificaron su discurso como "honrada actitud."

Con semejante estímulo el Cuerpo Consejial tomó el siguiente acuerdo: "Dígase por la vía telegráfica al C. Gobernador que habiéndose rehusado a recibir el Poder Municipal el C. Protacio Guerra, careciendo de justificación los cargos de desobediencia que se le imputan (a) esta corporación y no considerándonos comprendidos en la disposición que Ud. cita, porque refiérese a poderes locales del Estado y no municipales emanados de elecciones anteriores a las últimas que ningún origen fraudulentamente tienen de ellas, con el debido respeto manifestámosle que no procede la entrega y suplicándole nos permita expresar nuestro motivos y fundamentar en nuestra defensa a la que todo ciudadano tiene derecho. Sin entenderse por esto, que desobedecemos sus disposiciones o mandatos." Ese mismo día se dan el lujo de contestar la enésima queja contra los altos impuestos al "comercio" de Macedonio V. Marín, a quien se le contesta sin discusión que "estando dispuesto por el gobierno provisional el cierre de todos los establecimientos donde de vendan bebidas embriagantes queda la solicitud sin efecto."

Imposible obtener una mejor prueba de la obediencia del cabildo al nuevo gobierno. Poco le duró el gusto a Don Salvador Cárdenas, porque tres días después se presentó el General Junio Colunga dispuesto a hacer respetar la decisión de Don Emilio Portes Gil por medio de las armas, sin embargo permitió que se levantara un acta que en su parte medular dice: "Habiéndose recibido varias órdenes del C. Gobernador del Estado para entregar el Poder Municipal a lo cual se ha contestado que no se entregará dicho poder por considerar a esta autoridad incompetente para dictar tal determinación, puesto que la autoridad de que estamos investidos emana de la voluntad popular, que es la que en el caso está capacitada por medio de la fuerza para hacer tal disposición, se retiran protestando enérgicamente e instando su inconformidad." Ademáes el General tomó la palabra para expresar que cumplía órdenes superiores, acto que se hizo ante el Notario E. Montemayor y firmaron el acta 19 personas. Inmediatamente después se lee el Plan de Agua Prieta en el artículo segundo. Se levanta otra acta donde se da posesión al Sr. Miguel Elizondo y el General Colunga explica que no procedió por la fuerza como asegura el acta anterior, y prueba de ello es que se presentó acompañado únicamente del Capitán Primero Elizondo.

Aún el cabildo redactó una nueva acta en la que acusa al cuerpo municipal anterior de no haber entregado legalmente y que por lo tanto se procederá a consignarlos ante el Juez de primera instancia de la tercera Fracción Judicial Lic. Rafael Larrazolo.
Fue una ironía que quien pretendía defender al gobierno ya desaparecido de Venustiano Carranza fue el encargado de destituir a aquellos que hicieron posible el triunfo del Plan de Agua Prieta en Matamoros. De nada le valieron a Don Salvador los viajes a México y a San Antonio Texas, la política tiene sus caminos y en esta ocasión no condujeron al triunfo al Señor Cárdenas y su valiente cabildo. Quedó como consuelo su digna y valiente actitud que actualmente pocos pueden ufanarse de tenerla.

Instituto Tecnológico de Matamoros.

Notas de Pie

1 Andrés F. Cuellar, Crisis Económica en Matamoros de 1915-1920, trabajo inédito.
2 Libro de Actas de Cabildo, en lo sucesivo LAC, sesión del 12 de enero de 1920, p. 93. En lo sucesivo se indicará únicamente la fecha.
5 Juan Fidel Zorrilla, Gobernantes, Obispos y Rectores (Cd. Victoria: Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas, sin fecha), 28.
6 LAC, 15 de marzo de 1920, 132.
7 LAC, 13 de febrero de 1920, 115.
8 LAC, Sesión del 1 de marzo de 1920, 131.
9 LAC, 15 de marzo de 1920, 132.
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13 Dulles, 37.
14 Dulles, 38.
15 Dulles, 43.
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17 LAC, 10 de mayo de 1920, 152.
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19 LAC, 19 de mayo de 1920, 155.
20 LAC, 19 de mayo de 1920, 155.
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22 LAC, 2 de junio de 1920, 162.
23 LAC, 2 de junio de 1920, 161.
24 LAC, 2 de junio de 1920, 161.
25 LAC, 2 de junio de 1920, 162.
26 LAC, 2 de junio de 1920, 162.
27. Lac, 2 de junio de 1920, 162.
28. Lac, 5 de junio de 1920, 163.
29. Lac, 5 de junio de 1920, 162.
30. Lac, 5 de junio de 1920, 165.
Hablar del Dr. Rodríguez Brayda, es hablar de Matamoros, ya que fue un enamorado de su ciudad natal, un matamorense orgulloso de su pueblo al que dedicó algunos de sus poemas, en el cual se inspiró. En vida el Dr. Rodríguez Brayda se entregó por completo a mejorar las condiciones de vida de esta histórica ciudad que ha sido escenario de cuentas luchas, de momentos de gloria y de grandes progresos. El Dr. Rodríguez Brayda fue y sigue siendo parte importante del desarrollo social y cultural de Matamoros. Su vasta obra literaria es un rico patrimonio para las futuras generaciones. Este hombre bueno y sencillo dedicó gran parte de su vida a la medicina, sirviendo siempre sin afán de lucro a la clase humilde, a los necesitados, y lo hizo con profesionalismo y con amor.

Nació este ilustre matamorense en esta Heroica Ciudad de los Esteros Hermosos el 15 de febrero de 1897. Sus padres fueron Don Manuel Rodríguez Uresti proveniente de Reynosa y Doña Adelaida Brayda de Rodríguez, originaria de esta ciudad. Sus abuelos fueron Don José María Rodríguez Dávila y Doña Francisca Uresti, Don Carlos Brayda (farmacéutico) originario de Florencia, Italia, y Doña Refugio Treviño (nativa de Monclova, Coahuila). Contrajo matrimonio en 1937 con la señorita Raquel Herminia Longoria Guerra, con quien procreó 3 hijos: Raquel Herminia III, Adela Aurora y Manuel Feliciano. Desde pequeño demostró gran inteligencia ya que los tres años de edad aprendió a leer en un solo año escolar en la escuela de párvulos de la señorita profesora Luz Valdez o Lucita como él la llamará por cariño.

A esa edad escribió sus primeros versos, los cuales dedicó a su maestra y otros aspectos de la vida diaria. Su padre murió cuando Manuel tenía nueve años, por lo que desde esa edad quedó bajo los solícitos cuidados de su madre y el cuidado paternal de su hermano mayor (único) José María Brayda, quien en ese tiempo era un brillante estudiante del Instituto Literario Lic. y Gral. Juan José de la Garza. Al terminar éste sus estudios en ese instituto, debido a sus magníficas calificaciones, fue propuesto para una beca a nivel nacional, la cual rehusó para dedicarse a trabajar y costear los estudios de su hermano mayor. Manuel cursó su primaria en la escuela No. 1 para varones anexa a la Escuela Normal. Durante su primaria todos los años se hizo acreedor a medalla al mérito por su dedicación al estudio.

Cursó tres años en la Preparatoria del Instituto Científico y Literario Juan José de la Garza, que en ese tiempo dirigía el ameritado maestro Don José Arrese. La escuela secundaria todavía no se instituía. No pudo terminar sus estudios en esa Institución, ya que al estallar la revolución en 1913, los soldados del General Lucio Blanco tomaron la ciudad y el edificio fue ocupado como cuartel, ocasionando que se cerrará el Instituto, única institución de educación superior que existía en ese tiempo y a la cual las familias
de Brownsville mandaban a sus hijos dado el gran prestigio de dicho plantel, lo que le valió que Matamoros fuera considerada como la Atenas de Tamaulipas.

Fueron tres años que el joven Manuel Feliciano suspendió sus estudios para dedicarse a trabajar; se desempeñó como escribiente en la presidencia Municipal de esta ciudad. Más tarde al enterarse por el periódico Oficial del Gobierno del Estado, de una convocatoria donde se invitaba a los alumnos de la Escuela Normal Preparatoria de Ciudad Victoria para que continuaran sus estudios.

Manuel pidió la anuencia de su hermano José María para continuar sus estudios en Ciudad Victoria, pero éste le indicó que se fuese a Monterrey, ya que en ese tiempo Monterrey estaba mejor comunicado y no existía la carretera Matamoros-Victoria, por lo que los viajes se hacían en tren, pasando primero por Tampico y de ahí a la capital del estado. Debido a documentación perdida durante ocupación de la escuela por el ejército, no puede ingresar al Colegio Civil de Monterrey. Se regresa a Victoria donde le permiten cursar en forma simultánea las materias que le faltan con sus estudios regulares. Poco tiempo después por razones políticas abandona Ciudad Victoria y continúa sus estudios en la Escuela Nacional Preparatoria de la Ciudad de México.

En su juventud fue gran admirador de los poetas Manuel Acuña, Manuel M. Flores e Ignacio Ramírez (El Nigromante). Inspirándose en el soneto del Nigromante "Al amor" en el cual se inspira para escribir su soneto a Don Ignacio Ramírez. Fue admirador de Rosario, la de Acuña a quien dedicó el soneto No. 1 de su libro "La literatura Mexicana." Su carrera de medicina la cursó en la Facultad de Medicina de la Ciudad de México; de 1917 a 1923. Presentó su examen profesional para recibir su título de médico cirujano y partero con la tesis "Higiene de las embarazadas" los días 13 y 14 de agosto, título que recibe el día 20 del mismo mes y año. Siendo pasante, hizo estudios de especialización en pediatría con el maestro Torroella.

Su práctica profesional la hizo en los hospitales Juárez y General, de la Ciudad de México. Fue practicante de número en el consultorio No. 3 de la beneficencia pública. El ocho de diciembre de 1925 sustentó examen en la ciudad de Dallas, Texas ante el Medical Board of Examiners donde obtuvo su licencia para ejercer en dicho estado. Por varios años ejerció simultáneamente su profesión en ambos lados de la frontera, conservando vigente su permiso hasta el día de su muerte.

Presentó examen en Ciudad Victoria para obtener permiso de ejercer como farmacéutico en Tamaulipas, fundando la bóbita y sanatorio Brayda. Ejerció la medicina en Matamoros en forma ininterrumpida hasta un año antes de su muerte el 1 de septiembre de 1976, siendo por más de 25 años el decano de los médicos en esta ciudad. Fue médico residente de los Ferrocarriles Nacionales de México durante 33 años, hasta su jubilación.

Médico fundador y primer médico de la Cruz Roja Local. En el antiguo Hospital Civil de Matamoros, fue desde médico adjunto hasta director. Habiendo sido nombrado director honorario de este hospital por el gobernador de Tamaulipas General Raúl Gárate Leglú. Fue socio fundador y vicepresidente de la Unión Médica Matamorense y en fundador del Seguro Social en Matamoros, en el cual fue médico cirujano durante cinco
años y más tarde socio voluntario y pensionado. Fue también médico legista por tres años.

Se inició como docente mientras estudiaba en la Escuela Normal Preparatoria del Estado donde su maestro Don Lauro Aguirre le nombra catedrático del primer curso de español. Fue maestro de sus propios compañeros. Más tarde imparte la cátedra de biología en la Preparatoria que fundó en Matamoros el Lic., José Crispín Mainero. Por iniciativa propia luchó por que se fundara la primera Escuela Secundaria Federal en nuestra ciudad, pues lleva la representación del Ayuntamiento a la Ciudad de México y logra que le sea asignada una escuela secundaria a su querida Matamoros. Fue maestro fundador de la misma desempeñando varias cátedras por muchos años hasta que se jubiló después de 33 años de docencia.


Desde 1913 colaboró en periódicos y revistas locales, en 1914 era jefe de redacción del diario "El Unionist", fundó y dirigió el periodiquito "El Jojocón" (5 ejemplares), fundador y director del periódico estudiantil mecanografiado "Arte y Pluma" de Ciudad Victoria (6 números), redactor y corrector de pruebas del diario "El Demócrata".

Escribió los periódicos de la Ciudad de México, Monterrey, Nuevo Laredo, Laredo y San Antonio, Texas. Columnista por más de un año en "La Voz de la Frontera", en la que escribía secciones diarias con el título de "Ambiente", "Radiocomentarios", Editoriales, El "Epigrama cotidiano" y "Palique Dominical." En la columna "Poesía Cotidiana" del periódico local "Extra" colaboró con un soneto diario por varios meses. En el periódico "El Bravo", publicó diariamente por ocho meses sus epigramas en la sección "La Parcela del Dr. Rodríguez Brayda. En el boletín de la Asociación Médica Matamorense, colaboró con una ficha y un soneto en cada número en la sección "Médicos Poetas".

"Los cirujanos en Mexico" y El paludismo en Matamoros" publicados en los anales médicos de la FFCC y en la revista SAN-EV-ANK. "Mi Viaje a Aljibes" en el que narra su experiencia personal escrita en forma de diario. (relacionado con la última salida de Carranza y publicada en folletos encuadernables en la revista "Esto") sólo 10 ejemplares se hicieron en 1930. Otro de sus libros "Tus Ojos y tus Labios," el cual publicó a los 33 años de edad (madrigales a su esposa). Otro libro fue "De Tamaulipas" (poema dedicado a cada uno de los municipios del Estado) y editado por el Gobierno del Estado en 1960 siendo gobernador Dr. Norberto Treviño Zapata. "Sonetos Multiformes" otro libro en el cual escribe sonetos desde una sílaba literal hasta 32. Es uno de los 21 volúmenes de Raquel Herminia editado en 1960. "Apología a Don José Arrese" editado por la Sra. Profesora Doña Aurora Arrese de Castillo en 1962. "El Chinaco de Tamaulipas" escrito

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Algunas Mujeres Destacadas de Matamoros

por

Rosaura Dávila de Cuéllar

Nació en 1846 en Linares, N.L. donde realizó sus estudios primarios. De origen francés, se viene a radicar a Matamoros junto con su hermana Juliana. Tenía porte distinguido e infundía respeto y admiración. Su deseo de superación la llevó a estudiar varios idiomas.

Se inicia como maestra a la edad de 14 años fundando la Escuela Número 1 para niñas que se encontraba situada en la calle González Seis y Siete, en lo que fuera casa del General Rómulo Cuéllar.

Su gran amor por la niñez y vocación por el magisterio la llevaron a celebrar un contrato con el que sería su esposo, el Sr. Juan González Gascue, de origen español, por medio del cual, éste se comprometía a respetar la vocación de su futura esposa y no le prohibiría trabajar.

Después del nacimiento de sus cuatro hijos se ve presionada por su esposo para que abandone el trabajo. Más como había contrato de por medio, ella se niega a hacerlo y el esposo la abandona yéndose fuera de la ciudad.

Durante la visita que hiciera el Primer Jefe del Ejército Constitucionalista, Sr. Venustiano Carranza a Matamoros el 28 y 29 noviembre de 1915, el comité de festejos, formado por los comerciantes más destacados de la localidad, encargó a Doña Eduviges el diseño y confección de seis arcos para dar la bienvenida a tan ilustre visitante. Estos fueron confeccionados con flores de papel y flores naturales.

Fue fundadora del Liceo Patria y sus Escuelas Pestalozzi de donde egresaron las primeras normalistas que dieran renombre a las escuelas de Matamoros. Entre las que se encontraban: Panchita y Tomasita Zamora, María de los Ángeles Zolezzi, Esther, Enriqueta, y Paquita González Salinas.

En 1920 El Gobierno del Estado la pensiona con 75 pesos mensuales, quedando como Directora de la Escuela No. 1 para niñas su hija María González Celay.

Muere en la ciudad de Matamoros, el 18 de agosto de 1934 a la edad de 88 años. Sus restos reposan en el Panteón Antiguo y tiempo después sus agradecidas discípulas cooperaron para su lápida, la cual tiene la siguiente inscripción: Eduviges Celay de González Gascue 18-8-1934. Edad 88 años.

"La clara luz de tu inteligencia trazó una senda firme a tres generaciones. Benida Dios tu alma, benefactora de la humanidad; tu nombre está en nuestros corazones para siempre."
Esther González Salinas

Vio la luz primera en la H. matamoros, Tamaulipas el 16 de octubre de 1879, siendo la primogénita del matrimonio formado por: Don Manuel González Dena y Doña Cipriana Salinas quienes procrearon una numerosa familia de acuerdo a la usanza de esa época: Esther, Ernesto, Enriqueta, Manuel, Juan, Santiago y Francisca (Paquita).

Sus primeros estudios los realizó en el Instituto Hussey sito en las calles 13 Bustamante y Herrera. Esta escuela funcionaba en Matamoros bajo el patrocinio de misioneros protestantes de Estados Unidos. Eran ellos los que pagaban el profesorado y el mantenimiento del Instituto, que era mixto y que en la época en que la niña Esther estudió allí tenía como directora a la Profesora Julia L. Ballinger, y dicho centro educativo tuvo a lo largo de su existencia en la dirección a maestros como: Nancy L. Lee, María Picket, Auretta Thomas, Sara R. Charles, Genaro G. Ruiz, Nardo Mancilla y Sabina González.

Una de las consecuencias del artículo tercero de la Constitución Mexicana de 1917 fue que aproximadamente dos años después de su expedición la escuela fuera clausurada. Al finalizar la escuela primaria, continuó sus estudios en el Liceo Patria fundado por Doña Eduvigés auxiliada por la febril actividad de Don Guadalupe Mainero.

Terminada su educación superior fue catedrática en la misma institución, hasta 1902, fecha en que fuera designada Directora de la Escuela Oficial para niñas en Villa Hidalgo, Tamaulipas, cerca de la capital tamaulipeco ocupando dicho puesto hasta la época de la Revolución constitucionalista de 1913.

Por la inseguridad que causó la guerra revolucionaria emigra al estado de Texas, y en San Diego, lugar cercano a Corpus Christi, funda una escuela para niños de hispanos la que puso por nombre "México" y otra con nombre semejante en Kingsville.

Al volver a su ciudad natal principia a dar clases en la calle Bravo y Diez. Estuvo fuera del país de 1913 a 1918. Funda en Matamoros el Colegio México que iniciara sus labores el 18 de septiembre de 1913 que diera esplendor a toda una época.²

María Elena Palacios de Bouchard

El hogar formado por el Ing. Leopoldo Palacios y Doña María Suárez de Palacios se llenó de júbilo aquel seis de diciembre de 1904 al recibir en su seno a la primogénita de ocho hermanas de las cuáles sobrevivieron únicamente María Elena, Bertha y Lourdes. Desde sus primeros años mostró inclinación hacia la pintura y sus primeros modelos los constituyeron cuadros e historietas.

Realizó sus estudios elementales en el Colegio Alemán situado en la ciudad de México, ciudad que la vio nacer. Tiempo después, en 1917, se ven obligados a cambiar de residencia a consecuencia de un accidente sufrido por el Ing. Palacios, recomendándole su médico que buscara un sitio al nivel del mar, por lo que decidieron venirse a esta ciudad de Matamoros. Finalizó sus estudios primarios en le Escuela No. 1 para niñas de Doña Eduvigés Celay.
Su educación se complementa con lecciones de piano, siendo su padre quien estuvo guiándola en esos menesteres. Doña Magdalena Barrón de Garibay la inicia en el complicado mundo de la pintura. Su padre la estimula formándole un conjunto de cuerdas, convirtiéndose en la pianista del "Sexteto Verdi", siendo integrantes de éste, además de María Elena, como primer violín, Edmundo de la Garza; segundo violín, Salvador Zamora; vila, Alfredo Bouchard; chelo, Salvador Cárdenas; contrabajo, Amaese Hilton, quienes actuaban en el Teatro de la Reforma o en la casa paterna.

Ayuda en la formación del club UBC (Unión de Beneficencia y Cultura) transformado actualmente en ABC (Asociación de Beneficencia y Cultura) donde se ofrecían pláticas de tipo cultural, se confeccionaban canastillas, se ofrecían meriendas a los niños pobres y se les ofrecía ropa y medicina.

Fundó su Academia en 1936 en la casa de los Bouchard, donde ha ido plasmando a lo largo de todos estos años y con diversas técnicas, rostros y paisajes de la región. Es en 1947 y en un concurso celebrado en Harlingen, donde también participaron artistas texanos que obtiene un meritorio segundo lugar con el retrato titulado "mi sobrinita". Fue en esa época que se inicia como miembro de la Liga de Arte de Brownsville donde aprendió diversas técnicas con varios artistas.

A través de 50 años dedicada a la enseñanza de la pintura, han pasado por sus aulas muchas generaciones y cientos de alumnas. Influye notablemente en la cultura local al fundar la Asociación de Cultura Matamorense, la cual patrocinó importantes eventos tales como la presentación de: Ángelica Morales, Pepita Embil, Bertha Singerman, la Orquesta Sinfónica de la ciudad de México, etc; todos ellos presentados en el Teatro de la Reforma.

Es fundadora también de la Mesa Redonda Panamericana, la tercera en la República Mexicana. Actualmente vive en la vecina ciudad de Brownsville.

María Aurora Arrese de Martínez

Puebla de los Ángeles vio nacer el 17 de mayo de 1950 a la que posteriormente se convertiría en una mujer con gran sensibilidad musical y con una brillante carrera dentro de este género. Hija del matrimonio formado por Don José Arrese Castillo y Doña María de Lourdes Palacios de Arrese, fue la menor de una familia formada por cuatro hijos: María de Lourdes, Armando, María Elena y María Aurora.

Hizo sus estudios primarios en el Colegio Alejandro von Humboldt, en su ciudad natal. Su primer maestra de piano fue la Señora Esperanza Albizúa de Noriega, quien vertiera elogiosos conceptos sobre la vena creadora de la pequeña en los siguientes términos: "una encantadora niña de escasos seis años, es poseedora de la rara cualidad de componer con espontaneidad.

Es frecuente en algunos niños al iniciar sus estudios musicales improvisar algunas melodías, pero en el caso de María Aurora la cosa es diferente; sus obras pueden ser analizadas y encontrar en ellas que la tonalidad, giro melódico, estructura rítmica y aire, están perfectamente realizadas. Todas sus obras son distintas y, sin embargo, cada una
tiene la idea que ella quisó expresar. Por ejemplo: El Caballito Cojo es de una gracia encantadora; Chavalilla y Sacro Monte con el clásico estilo español; Oaxaqueña tiene el sabor de nuestra música sureña; y lo mismo es definida en el Shotis (pitsa), Tarantela (Bambina) o en la marcha (Las Hormigas).

Es para mí un placer, y con gran orgullo de maestra presentar públicamente a María Aurora, la niña que nos habla por extraña coincidencia de la rara luz de su genio creador. Su obra la dedica a todos los niños amantes de la música y estoy segura que los pequeños al interpretarla, sabrán comprender y por ello concer mejor el alma de esta niña en la que habla la eterna belleza espiritual de nuestro querido México". Esperanza Albizúa.

Ya establecida en Matamoros continúa su preparación académica en el Colegio Don Bosco, en donde realiza sus estudios secundarios y su preparación musical con la maestra Concepción de la Garza.

Sus estudios de preparatoria los realiza en la Escuela Preparatoria Juan José de la Garza y en el verano de 1969 viaja a Guadalajara, Jalisco a realizar estudios de guitarra clásica.

En el Texas Southmost College realiza estudios de piano con Jean Serafy y el Dr. John Raimo. En 1967 principia a dar clases de guitarra, años más tarde será Directora del coro del Colegio De La Salle, instructora de música en el St. Mary's ,Inmaculada Concepción y Montessori.'


Aurora Arrese de Castillo

Es la primogénita de un matrimonio ejemplar: Don José Arrese, poeta y filósofo y Doña Carmen Barragán de Arrese quién se había trasladado para ser atendida en un 14 de octubre de 1882.

Para festejar su primer aniversario ya en Matamoros, su padre le organiza una velada literaria en su honor, encontrándose entre los invitados: Don Guadalupe Mainero, Don Celedonio Junco de la Vega, Don Manuel Romero entre otros.

Inicia sus estudios en el Instituto Hussey, en Matamoros, Tamaulipas. Desde el primer año destacó tanto su talento que se hizo merecedora a un diploma que certifica que a la edad de seis años lee ya con puntuación y magnífica entonación, sobresaliendo también en las demás materias.

Sus estudios de Normal los realiza en Monterrey, de donde regresó al finalizarlos a trabajar en el Instituto donde había estudiado. Fue maestra de inglés en el Colegio México.
Entre sus obras sociales, fue presidenta de la Sociedad de Beneficencia Higia y durante su período se compró una autoclave para el Hospital Civil. Fue miembro activo de la Sociedad Teosófica de los Rosacruces e iniciadora y fundadora de la Asociación de Beneficencia y Cultura. Esto sucedió el 20 de febrero de 1947; tanto germinó su semilla que actualmente hay más de 30 clubes ABC en toda la Entidad.

Muere a la edad de 90 años el 20 de diciembre de 1972.

Ofelia González González

Arribó al mundo en la H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, el 8 de febrero de 1909 siendo sus padres; el Señor Antonio González y la Señora Juliana González de González. Estudió su primaria en la Escuela No. 1 para niñas, siendo ya directora de la institución la Profesora María González Celay. Dicha escuela posteriormente se convirtió en lo que actualmente conocemos como Escuela Josefina Menchaca sito en Guerrero y Quinta. Don Francisco Treviño Canales fue el donador de ese terreno y debe ese nombre a la esposa del donante. Años más tarde y estando como practicante, la señorita María le hace ver la conveniencia de hacer una solicitud para una plaza de maestra iniciándose por ese camino en 1922. Dos años después estudiaba y trabajaba preparándose en la Academia Comercial México, en ese entonces bajo la dirección de la señorita Estela Pelayo.

Su trabajo docente se inició en la misma escuela donde ella estudiara; en la Escuela Primaria José Arrese y en el Colegio México. Fue la maestra Esther González Salinas quién donó la Academia México y que actualmente se le conoce con el nombre de Academia José Arrese. Su profesión la ejerce simultáneamente en la primaria y en la Academia hasta el año de 1943 cuando abandona la primaria dedicándose nada más a la academia. Actualmente está ubicada en Quinta, Abasolo y González. De ella han salido cientos de alumnos que posteriormente han destacado en diversas actividades.

Se le han otorgado diversos reconocimientos, tales como Dama del año por el club Venecia el 17 de julio de 1968 y Medalla Ignacio Manuel Altamirano, el 15 de mayo de 1976. Los dos clubes de Leones le han otorgado reconocimiento. Medalla otorgada por el Ayuntamiento en 1986. En esa misma fecha la señora Alicia Montemayor de García Treviño le entrega un pergamo enviado por Doña Leticia Cárdenas de Martínez Manatou esposa del Gobernador de Tamaulipas en esa época. Todavía como maestra en activo, el pasado mes de marzo de 1992 la escuela cumplió los 50 años de su fundación.
Marta Rita Prince de García

Es en Parras de la Fuente, Coahuila donde vive sus primeros años. Fueron sus padres Doña Virginia Prince Aguilera, quien fuera maestra rural de la localidad.

La escuela primaria la realiza en la Miguel Hidalgo y en su misma ciudad natal ingresa en una Academia Comercial. Es en la capital del Estado de Coahuila que estudia su educación normalista obteniendo brillantes calificaciones.

¿Qué acción le corresponde desarrollar al maestro desde el punto de vista que es factor social de importancia en el medio en que vive? Fue el tema de su tesis y móvil para emprender la aventura maravillosa del magisterio que inicia en la fronteriza ciudad de H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, donde imparte la cátedra de Lengua y Literatura Española y donde 30 años después daría su última orden como Directora de la misma institución al jubilarse.

Es en la capital del país en donde estudia los cursos intensivos de la Normal Superior en donde recibe su título como maestra especialista en la cátedra de Lengua y Literatura Españolas.

Durante su gestión directiva se construyó el nuevo edificio escolar, mismo que fungió como secundaria "piloto" del país. Su acción bienhechora llega a las siguientes instituciones educativas donde hace gala de su vocación y capacidad.

Profesora y fundadora de la Preparatoria Juan José de la Garza donde imparte cátedra de Español, Literatura, y Latín. Así mismo en la Academia José Arrese y en la Escuela Preparatoria del Colegio La Salle "Taller de Redacción", así como Orientación Vocacional.

Fundadora de la Escuela para padres y coordinadora de Emisiones Culturales Centro Americanas. Dentro de sus actividades culturales ha ocupado el puesto de Jefa del Departamento de Promociones Culturales del Ayuntamiento en el período 68-70.

Fundadora y Primera Directora del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes en donde actualmente presta sus servicios como Jefa de Promoción Académica. Directora del Museo Casa Mata durante el período 1984-1986. En ese período que se reconstruyó la vieja fortaleza, se instaló la museografía, se adaptaron los espacios para disponer de laboratorio de conservación de piezas museables, así como el miniauditorio, dirección, biblioteca y hemeroteca.

Cofundadora del Círculo Literario Dr. Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, fue también su Primera Presidenta. Socia Fundadora de la Casa de la Cultura. Colaboradora de periódicos: "La Voz de la Frontera", "El Gráfico", más de diez años en "El Bravo".

Directora del Consejo Tutelar para Menores. Novena Regidora del Ayuntamiento en el período 1984-1986. corresponsable de la edición del Manual de Educación Vial con el Club Rotarios Matamoros Sur. Durante tres años consecutivos brindó atención personal a los internos del Centro de Rehabilitación Social CERESO de Matamoros, especialmente a las mujeres, y forma entre los reclusos equipos deportivos, recreativos, educativos, artísticos y laborales destacando el magnífico grupo de teatro y pintura mismo que es autor del mural que exhibe el CBTIS 134 de esta localidad.
Es nombrada Secretaria del Patronato Pro-Reconstrucción del Teatro de la Reforma A.C. durante cinco años. Colabora con la Cruz Roja, la Fundación San Francisco, el Centro de Orientación y Apoyo a la Mujer. A.C. en donde desempeña el cargo de Jefa de Relaciones Públicas.

Esta por finalizar su desempeño como Auxiliar de la Oficina de Promoción y Gestoría del VII Distrito cuya representante es la Diputada Guadalupe Flores de Suárez. Una calle del nuevo Fraccionamiento Las Arboledas lleva su nombre.6

Directora, Hogar Para Mujeres, Matamoros.

Notas de Pie

2 Entrevista oral de Aurora Cuéllar. 
3 Entrevista oral de María de Lourdes. 
4 Entrevista oral de María de Lourdes Palacios de Arrese. 
5 Entrevista oral de Ofelia González. 
6 Entrevistas orales de María Rita Prince de García y Rosalía Sánchez Cárdenas.
Illustration of the Brown Wagner House
245 East St. Charles
Built circa 1894
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Germany had its Frederich Ludwig Jahn, Sweden its Per Henrik Ling, Denmark its Franz Nachtegall and Brownsville its Margaret H. Clark. Wait a minute, Margaret H. Clark? It may be a little presumptuous to include the latter local figure with the three former national figures, but the impact that all four of these individuals had on the physical education programs of their locality cannot be understated. Without Jahn, Ling and Nachtegall, the legacy of European physical education would be considerably different. Without Margaret M. Clark, the same is true of the public school physical education program in Brownsville, Texas. This 4'8" dynamo almost single handedly changed the course of movement history for thousands of Brownsville's school children: and at age 83, she continues to exert an influence on the program she developed.

Life for this remarkable woman began in New Orleans, Louisiana, on October 18, 1910. Less than a year after her birth, her parents, Laura Stovall Monroe and James Hirsh Monroe moved to San Antonio, Texas, and from there to Brownsville in 1915. But let her tell it in her own words:

He [father] was a traveling salesman for an office supply company of San Antonio, and his territory included all of the valley [Rio Grande Valley] and up to Laredo and over to Corpus--all of South Texas. When we lived in San Antonio, he seldom ever got back there--every other weekend, maybe; which was why we moved to Brownsville, because he'd be home. In those days transportation was a problem from town to town. There weren't the bus facilities, and of course you didn't have a car, not in 1915. And if you did., the roads weren't any good between what towns there were. He went on the train; so we moved down here, so we knew we'd see more of him. I've lived here, except for the time when I was away at college and 15 months that I spent with my husband in Brazil, right after we were married.

Father was an outdoorsman. We hunted all winter, and he took us along and we camped out and cooked out, and we fished all the spring and summer. I had a grandmother, my maternal grandmother, who was a liberated woman 50 years before they--more than that, in the teens--before anybody ever heard of it. She traveled alone, went everywhere. She brought bathing suits from San Antonio for my sister and I and too, and took us out and waded in the resaca--she could swim herself. She didn't know doodly squat about teaching swimming, but
she grabbed a handful of bathing suit in this hand, and a handful in this hand, and said "Paddle and kick, Paddle your arms and kick your feet, I'm going to bring you for a week, and if you can't swim in a week, we'll quit." So that's the way we learned to swim. Dr. J.C. George's grandfather, who was a prominent lawyer here swam in that resaca a mile every morning. And he came by when we were just beginning to paddle, and took us on, and taught us his style of swimming, which we thought was perfect, which I found out when I went to summer camp, at Camp Woldemar in 1926, I wasn't doing a single stroke right. I had to learn them all, but I still won the loving cup for being the best swimmer and life-saver at Camp Woldemar, the first summer the camp was open, in 1926. Anyway, he took us on and we swam with him. He'd go by and pick up a bunch of us early in the morning, before school, in April and May, and all during the summer and we did that until we were about 12 years old; then we quit going with him. By then, we were almost all swimming a mile with him--the bunch of us.

Margaret's. outdoor education experience, her early exposure to swimming and the love she developed for that activity was to have a profound influence on her future education and choice of career.

I graduated from Brownsville High School in 1927 and everybody in my family that had been to college, and there weren't too many of them, had graduated from Texas University in Austin. My father was a Shriner, so I was enrolled at Texas University. I went up there as a 16 year-old from Brownsville High School, that had had less than 50 graduating seniors that year. I went to register and this woman at the desk said, "What's your major?" I said, "Major?" She said, "What are you going to study?" I said, "I don't know." So she handed me this catalog, about that [she forms an inch thickness with her thumb and forefinger] thick, and said, over there and sit down and read, and pick out your major, so I can assign you a faculty advisor." So I went over there and started through it, all these pages of requirements for this major and that major, and the other major, looking for something that didn't require any math or any foreign language. I had had no P.E. in high school; but I had learned to shoot, because my boyfriend, who many years later became my husband, was into archery, making his own arrows and bows, so he had taught me to shoot. I had taken tap dancing from a private teacher, but I was little bitty short--stuff, and they didn't want me on the basketball team. I couldn't even reach up to the middle of the volleyball net, much less up to the top of it, so my knowledge of physical education was 'blah.' I could play tennis,
archery, I could swim real well, and I'd already had junior lifesaving and all this stuff, so I picked P.E. I knew absolutely nothing about team sports, but I got through college just fine without knowing anything about team sports, because I took all the dancing, and all the tumbling and all the stuff like that and tennis, and swimming, and teaching swimming and all this stuff, and I just steered clear of all the team sports. It was very easy to do. I went my freshman year to the University of Texas and that summer, after my freshman year, I was a counselor at a camp up on Medina Lake. A bunch of the other counselors were from TCW; it's now TWU. Their program and the facilities for women at UT were nonexistent. What we had for a gym was a big old Quonset hut-type of barracks building thing. The program was ridiculous. The swimming pool was in the basement of the women's building, and I could dive off one end and glide, and touch the other end—a little bitty bathtub thing. They were describing the facilities they had up there, and I thought, "Hm, I'm getting cheated. Why go to UT just because, when I had to borrow money and work and everything else to get through. My mother and father were divorced and money was hard to come by, so I transferred up there for my sophomore year [1928] and graduated up there. And all of the women up there (all of "the girls") said when I got into sophomore classes, "Where were you last year?" I said at UT. "And you came up here?" You see, then it was a girls' school, and uniforms were worn, and very restricting to campus life. So they couldn't see—all of them were living for the day when their parents would let them transfer from there to UT, when they were grown up and mature enough to be able to go down there where the big bad wolves were. I went to school under very difficult circumstances. There was no money. I worked my junior and senior year; I did all the typing and mimeographing and all this stuff in my senior year. In my junior year, they had a room where everybody that couldn't participate in their regular P.E. classes because they had the cramps, or they had a toe-ache, or they had this, or they had that, reported up there, and we were supposed to do exercises for menstrual cramps, whatever, whatever. I manned that for I've forgotten how many hours a week it was, and I got paid for that. I thought my father, in the divorce decree, had agreed to provide $400 a year. He provided some money, and I borrowed the rest of it, for the first two years, and worked for the last two years and never had a penny for anything. I paid my expenses, room and board. But as for having any money to go to picture shows or go off anywhere on the weekend, forget it. I've often said since then that, looking back on it, if I had it to do over, I don't think I'd have the guts to stick it out. It
was tough. I didn't have very many clothes. Of course, going up there I didn't need anything but uniforms. I didn't go anywhere on weekends, I didn't have any spending money—but I graduated—and I'm the only one in my family who was granted a degree.

Margaret graduated from college in May of 1931 and returned to Brownsville to teach. She began her nearly fifty year teaching career as a classroom teacher, as Brownsville did not yet have an elementary physical education program. Margaret recalls:

Jobs were very hard to come by. I taught third grade at Annie S. Puteganat School, then called Washington Park School. I had enough education to have an elementary certificate so when I got out, I had both HPE and Elementary Education certificates. My earliest certificates from the Department of Education, as it was called then, list both teacher deals. That's why, after I married and had my three children and I went back to teaching, I taught first grade at Canales for several years; for first grades were on half-day session at that time, and I could spend the rest of the time at home with my kids. I had a son in '46, a son in '47, and a daughter in '48.

Except for some time off in the 1940's to get married, accompany her husband during a war training stint in Brazil, and have their children, Ms. Clark taught at various elementary schools around Brownsville until 1961. At that time she got a call from C.J. Garland, President of Texas Southmost College.

He said, 'Would you take a leave of absence and come teach our girls P.E. for this year, and give me a chance to find somebody?' I didn't have a master's degree; I couldn't qualify for it, and so I said, "Well, I'm not a team sports person; I can't do you any good for basketball," and he said, 'the only thing we want to require in the program is swimming. That's no problem for you. The rest of the time, you can teach whatever you want." So I went down there then, immediately, and asked Werner Steinbach [men's physical education teacher] to show me all the equipment. So he hauled out the basketballs and the volleyballs and I said 'phooey on that. What else have you got?' Well, there was archery equipment; they had a four-lane bowling alley in an old barracks building across the street from where the gym was. I said, 'Oh goody! Archery equipment!' He said, "Never been used, nobody likes it." I said "that's because they hadn't had anybody to teach them how to shoot so they could hit the broad side of a barn." So I mimeographed a list of everything we had; I put swimming at the top
and an asterisk by it, and said 'This is required,' and I told them the first day I met each class that I wanted them to check off five other activities that they'd be interested in and the five that got the most votes is what we'd do. So, they did. The only team sport that got a lot of votes was volleyball. We did archery, we did bowling, we did tennis. I had put on there figure-control exercise, instead of calisthenics, and we started every class off with that. Then we did folk and square dancing and they enjoyed it. Jeannie Curtis, who later became a P.E. teacher at Central, told me that up until that year she had hated P.E. with a purple passion. She said after that year, then she decided she was going to major in it.

So Margaret's career in the major field she had chosen precipitously at The University of Texas 35 years earlier had finally begun with her year at the junior college. Her legacy, however, was to be left with the public school district.

In March, I went down to the superintendent and I asked where I was going to be reassigned, because when you take leave of absence, you're not guaranteed to get assignment back--you're subject to reassignment. He said, 'You're going to the high school and start a program like you had down at the college this year. Get rid of this team sports thing.' I said, "Suppose the other teachers that are there don't want to change?" He said, "That's too bad; they can either change or they can leave." Well, some stayed and some left. It was funny. We started the year off; Bob Jackson was the high school principal. The first week he called me in and said, "Margaret, there's not a single man who's qualified to teach swimming to the boys. We don't have anybody over there who has had lifesaving or is a WSI, or anything. We can't offer this kind of a program for girls, and not offer it for the boys." They didn't have anything but basketball, touch football, flag football, anyway, and baseball the last part of the year. I said, "Bob, you're not suggesting that I have to teach the boys' P.E. classes?" He said, "Oh, the men'll go along on the bus, and they'll handle the discipline, but you'll have to do the instruction." I got out there and discovered that most of the men that were there couldn't even swim themselves! Mr. Garza, who finally ended up as the principal out at El Jardin, learned to swim right along with the class. He couldn't even float -- nothing! Two-thirds of the boys couldn't swim enough to save their lives if they got pushed off in the resaca. Learning to swim is critical here, I told the board, when Mr. Jackson told me that I had the job of going to the board and asking for permission to have a bus and to start the off campus program at Sams. When we moved the high schools, that put
an end to it, because it was too far to dress and go to Sams and back in
time. We could have a 30 minute instructional program when the high
school was located where Central is, which is what we did from '62 till
'67 when we moved Brownsville High School out to what is now Hanna.
Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays we took the girls; and on
Tuesdays and Thursdays we went with the boys. And they were very
enthusiastic about it — very anxious to learn. So I stayed there from
when I went back there in '62 until they yanked me out of there in '74
to do this elementary thing.

'This elementary thing' was to change the educational experience for generations of
Brownsville public school students. In February of 1974 the BISD School Board decided
that they wanted a physical education program from K-12 that complied with the state of
Texas accreditation standards. Originally the job of coordinating the physical education
program was assigned to the Athletic Director, but when that didn't work, Margaret Clark
got a call from Raul Besteiro asking her to become the secondary girls' physical
education coordinator and share elementary physical education coordinating duties with a
male colleague. Ms. Clark tells it like this:

I didn't know doodly squat, I was an all-levels P.E. major, yes, but I
had never, from the time I started teaching, been involved in any
elementary; I'd been at the junior high and the high school level
entirely, and '61 at the college. I had never been [in elementary
physical education]. And I told him when he called me down there in
February and told me what he wanted done, "Ye gods, Mr. B, I have
never taught elementary P.E. and I don't know whether he said,"I have
complete confidence that you can do it. You have from now till
September to study it.' Oh boy, you'd better believe-I can do it, first I
got the curriculum guides of the state, and I went to workshops and got
Pangnazi's book and I gave myself a college curriculum course in
elementary physical education. From the time I started in doing it, I
knew what I was doing. If you can read—if you have the basic
knowledge, and you want to do it, it's no problem. You just have to
have... [the desire]. Well, we tried working it the way they had
planned it for September and October; in November I went to Andy
[White, Athletic Director] and I said, 'Now look—this is not working;
because Lupe [Garza] is a secondary P.E. person. He does not know
anything at all about the elementary level. So let's redo this, and let
Lupe take all the secondary—girls and boys—and I'll take all of the
elementary.' He said, 'Well, that's hardly fair; that'll give him about
eight schools, and it'll give you seventeen." I said, 'Well, I'd rather do it
that way, because I think we'll get more done." So he said, "Okay, if
you don't mind the inequality of it.' So, starting in November, Lupe took over just the secondary, and I took all the elementary. That meant getting a staff, which was a slow process; it took two or three years to get rid of all the psychology majors, and home economic majors, and retreads of all kinds who couldn't do anything else, so they dumped them out on the playground. It was awful, what we had out there. It was nothing but a bunch of roll basket out, and throw out the balls, and stand under the only shade they could find. Instruction? Forget it! And when I started, I didn't like the first curriculum; I didn't have time to write, and do everything. They had basketballs and softballs, and a few volleyballs. They didn't have any manipulation equipment--beanbags, hoops, ropes--they didn't have any gymnastics equipment for developmental gymnastics--you had to find the money for all of that--the mats and the tumbling tables, and the springboards and the balance beams--everything. You name it. So it was change the staff. Had to find someplace to put all those guys and get some qualified people, get all the equipment, work on the curriculum. So what I did was write to the physical education section of TEA, and get all of their grade level curriculums, and that's what we used. Every school had a complete set of all the grade level curriculums, and that's what we used. Every school had a complete set of all the grade level curriculums, and that's what they were supposed to use, and a good majority of them did. When I started, I went to a motor development workshop at A&M when I was first going to take over, and I met Dr. Pangrazi, the author of this--and I have somewhere an autographed copy he gave me of his textbook. And I came back raving about him to Mr. Besteiro, who was not superintendent at the time--he was business manager of the school district. And he said, 'Margaret, stop! If he's as good as you say he I'll find the money.' I wanted to bring him here for a workshop. So we brought him here the next August. I had been to this workshop in the spring and we brought him here in August, 1975 for inservice training.

Margaret is still a firm believer that at the elementary level physical education should stress motor development. According to her:

In my fifty years of teaching, I know five-year-olds learn more, faster, in the relaxed play setting of the physical education class than in a more formal environment. They do. Because it's fun. Learning is fun--because you can verbalize every movement that you make, and movement is such a natural thing, and you can relate to [it]. I'll tell you a good story. I was at Garden Park one time, with my parachute, working with the kindergarten, because the kindergartens at the beginning were not included in the P.E. teacher's schedule. Their
teachers took them out for a very limited play program. So I would take time out of my trotting around, and one day a week I'd go teach at some schools with the ropes or the beanbags, or some of this new equipment I was trying to promote. So I was out there with the parachute, and I would say, 'Up!' And this woman behind me would say, 'Pa'arriba!' And I would say, 'Down!' And she would say, 'Pa'abajo!' So finally I said, 'Stop! Would you go and stand over there under that tree and don't say anything, and today--are these children supposed to learn English?' 'Well, yes, but it's a bilingual class.' I said, 'In other words, they're just speaking Spanish.' 'Oh, no, they're learning English.' 'Okay,' I said, 'today they're going to learn six words: UP, DOWN, GO, STOP, IN, OUT. You go stand over there under the tree and don't say NOTHING.' So we learned put your hands up, and say, 'UP.' Put them down, and say, 'DOWN' Walk in, and say, 'IN.' Walk out, and say, 'Out.' There's no better place than physical education to teach formal English.

From 1974 to 1981 the elementary physical education programs grew and prospered under Ms. Clark's expert guidance. What started as a recess period, a non-existent instructional program in which a school's total physical education equipment could fit in a grocery cart had become a full, professionally staffed endeavor at most district schools, with a large inventory of manipulative equipment designed to promote the motor development of young bodies and minds. It wasn't easy.

I'd been on the job two months, September and October. Sometime in November, I was down at the main office mimeographing some stuff to hand out to teachers—not mimeographing, but Xeroxing—for the only Xerox machine that they had in the district at that time was down there in the main office. He [Superintendent] came through and he saw me there and said, "Oh, Margaret, how are you getting along--how are things going?" I said, Mr. Ogg, I feel like I'm hitting my head against a brick wall. He said "You just keep at it, Margaret; you have a reputation of having a very hard head. If anybody can get through it, you can!" She started trying to retire from her job in 1978: "And every year Mr. B would say, "Just give us one more year!" Finally that last year I told him, "Mr. B., this is no job for a 70-year-old woman. It just isn't! I can't do what I used to do." He said, 'Which one of us can do what we used to do.' But he said, 'Even if you slow down, you're better than a new one!'

Finally, in 1981 she did retire from her school district job. But even then her teaching career didn't stop. She started the one-to-one program at the Lincoln Park School:

Mr. B. called me in and said I had been urging them—we'd been taking the older ones of the children (boys and girls) of the Brownsville Opportunity School over to Gonzalez Park to swim at the end of the
year for several years. I had been taking off a couple of days a week from my coordinator's job to go over there and help with that, and I had been recruiting volunteers to come over and help. Then, when they built Lincoln Park School, Mr. B. said, 'We're going to put a swimming pool in it just for you! And I'm going to put you in charge of getting the program started.' He said we were only going to be able to hire one teacher, so we were going to have to rely on a volunteer program, which is what I did. For a long time, it was very successful.

The program was so successful that in 1986 the Lincoln Park aquatic facility was named after Margaret M. Clark. To say that this remarkable woman single handedly changed the elementary school physical education experience for thousands of children would not be much of an exaggeration. Of course she had the help of many able teachers and administrators. But without her dedication and perseverance, the development of the program might never have happened:

What made the program here in Brownsville has been the efforts of an elementary P.E. coordinator to put things together, organize things, and keep behind it. You can't just turn people loose, higgledy-piggledy. You can't be wishy-washy and you can't be bothered with trying to hold a popularity contest. If you want to get anything done, you have to go at it, butt heads, and go at it tooth and toenail and if you have to stomp on a few toes on the way, well, that's the breaks of the game. You won't get anything done by sitting on your "como-se-llama" and wishing it would happen. You've got to out and really get in the trenches, and get it done; and it isn't easy, when you're really bucking an established program, or anything, when you're bucking the way things have been done: 'This is the way its been done; this is the way we do it.' [if you say.] 'We're going to change that, and we're going to do it this way you're going to have a lot of opposition.' It's not all that easy. The people who do the "spade work" don't always get the recognition that they should get. The recognition usually goes to the people who talk the loudest, not all the time the ones that produce the most. That's one of the thing that I've always been noted for. I'm like a bulldog, I get something in my teeth, and I'll hang on to it until I get it chewed up and swallowed--get something done. But that's what it takes.

Certainly this pioneer in the development of quality physical education in Brownsville schools had and continues to have 'what it takes.' Recognition should be accorded this 'bulldog' who got so much done to make a difference in the lives of scores of Brownsville's school children.
* Note: Most of the information for this article was obtained from an interview with Margaret M. Clark recorded on December 2, 1972. The interview tape and transcript are available in the UTB kinesiology department.

The University of Texas at Brownsville.
Mexican American Empowerment and Local Organization: Valley Interfaith.

by

Jose R. Hinojosa, Norman E. Binder, J.L. Polinard, Robert D. Wrinkle

It could even develop into a minor revolution of sorts. Those people up there have traditionally had long fuses, but they do have fuses... Still, most of those people are scared stiff of authority... Yet they are also curious right now... I'll tell you frankly, I don't want to misjudge [the] capacity for drawing those people together and causing trouble. Maybe it doesn't seem so now, but that's potentially one hell of a volatile area up there... (John Nichols, The Milagro Beanfield War)

One of the most enduring of all political axioms is that no one in power relinquishes it voluntarily. This axiom certainly is validated when one examines the historical political relationship between Anglo and Latino communities in the United States. Whether we look at the national, state or local communities, the same pattern emerges: Anglos historically control the political processes of the community, and any transition of power from the Anglo to the Latino community occurs as a result of the efforts of the Latino community.

The geographical focus of our inquiry is the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas. The Rio Grande Valley is distinguished by two overriding characteristics: its ethnic population (80 percent of the population is Spanish-surnamed) and its poverty (Maril, 1989) (it includes the two most impoverished counties in the United States).

In 1982, Valley Interfaith (VI), an organization somewhat similar to Communities for Public Service (COPS) of San Antonio, was organized. Like COPS, Interfaith is a Saul Alinsky organization. It is action-oriented and concentrates on training local Mexican Americans to organize politically so as to establish accountability between public officials and the Mexican American community. Farm workers comprise a high percentage of its membership. Interfaith derives its name from its origin having been centered in a group of churches throughout the Rio Grande Valley.

Interfaith has two characteristics which distinguish it from most Latino organizations of this type. First, it is not city-specific. The Rio Grande Valley covers an area which includes four counties and over thirty communities. This poses unusual problems in
terms of organizational effectiveness. Second, Interfaith is located in an area where 80 percent of the population is Spanish surnamed, and where an overwhelming number of public officials are Mexican American. Consequently, while the ethnic issues still remain, Interfaith must address also fundamental class issues as well in its quest to enhance Latino empowerment. We believe this uniqueness merits study.

Virtually all approaches to an understanding of the United States' political system recognize that individual behavior is less effective than organized group action. Even elitist explanations of American politics agree that the elites operate through their control of organized interests. This awareness of the importance of organized groups has not gone unnoticed by the academic community. Indeed, the pluralist approach to American politics, centered in this notion of group activity, enjoys continued support and has generated more academic research than perhaps any other approach to our system of government. Pluralism, however, has not been completely satisfactory in exploring issues of minority politics.

Our theoretical framework will utilize mobilization theory. Following Morrison (1987), we define mobilization as "the collective activation and application of community or group resources toward the acquisition of social and political goods." Morrison suggests that this process occurs through a series of sequential stages:

a) the existence of values and goals requiring mobilization;
b) action on the part of leaders, elites or institutions seeking to mobilize individuals and groups.
c) the institutional and collective means of achieving this mobilization;
d) the symbols and references by which values, goals and norms are communicated to, and understood as internalized by, the individuals involved in mobilization.

We also follow McAdam (1982) and Morris (1984) in their suggestion that indigenous leadership, mass organization, and collective attribution are the "cornerstones of mobilization" (Morrison, 1987). Mobilization theory is hardly new. Deutsch (1961), and Apter (1965) made various uses of the theory, and, more recently, Nettl (1977), Gamson (1975) and Oberschall (1973) have contributed to our understanding of its applications.

The subject of minority organizations also has received attention from academicians. Studies of Latino and black political organizations, and the roles they play in the process of political empowerment, date back several decades. The early studies (e.g., D'Antonio and Form, 1965, and Rubel, 1966) criticized the Latino population for failing to effectively organize. Later studies, however, exposed the fallacies of the earlier research (e.g., Litt, 1970; Tirado, 1970; Alvarez, 1971; Ambrecht and Pachon, 1974; Shockley, 1974; Vigil, 1975). More recent studies have added to our knowledge of the process of empowerment and its relationship to organized activities (Vigil, 1987; Villarreal and Hernandez, 1991 and, in the case of black community empowerment, Pinderhughes, 1987 Morrison, 1987 and Hanks, 1987).
As noted above, organizations supporting increased Latino political power have existed for decades. Some, e.g., LULAC and the G.I. Forum, follow traditional political channels of change and focus on a broad range of issues. Others, e.g., MALDEF and Southwest Voter Research Institute, concentrate on litigation, especially in the area of voting rights and voter registration. Still others, e.g., Mexican American Democrats (MAD), are partisan in orientation. Some of the organizations are city-specific, addressing particular policy concerns which affect the local Latino community. The Community Organized for Public Service (COPS) in San Antonio is perhaps the best known of these (Rogers, 1990).

This paper reports some preliminary findings that constitute part of an overall research agenda whose goal is to identify the variables which must be considered when Latinos organize to increase their access to the councils of power. In this paper we examine the attitudes toward Valley Interfaith in the two dominant counties in the Rio Grande Valley. More specifically, we ask whether Anglos and Mexican Americans differ in their perception of the role and impact of VI. We also look within the Mexican American community and ask if there is a relationship between knowledge of and support for VI and such policy issues as the education of the children of undocumented workers, and the treatment of political refugees from Central America contrasted with the treatment of economic refugees from Mexico.

The primary dependent variables used in our analysis are responses to questions indicating knowledge of and evaluation of Valley Interfaith. The independent variables include several contextual variables that our prior work has shown to be statistically significant in predicting the immigration attitudes of both Anglos and Mexican Americans (Polinard, Wrinkle, and de la Garza, 1984; de la Garza, Wrinkle, Longoria and Polinard, 1991).

We also use a scale measure of cultural attachment to Mexico. We sum the responses to the scale, and utilize the raw scale score in the analysis. Those scoring low on the scale are more attached to Mexico than those scoring high. We identify this attachment through a four-item scale including commitment to and recognition of two major Mexican holidays, support for Spanish language maintenance within the home, and maintenance of Mexican traditions. We label this as "Mexicanness" (de la Garza, et al., 1991). We performed a reliability analysis on these data, and the resultant Alpha for the scale is .72.

Our contextual variables will include location, that is whether or not the respondent lives in a colonia, an unincorporated area which traditionally has fewer services and is primarily the home of lower income families. As much of Valley Interfaith's political agenda has been to secure services, e.g., water and sewers for these areas, we expect that these respondents in these areas would be more knowledgeable of and supportive of Valley Interfaith.

Our structural variables include age, income, education and occupation. Our cultural variables are distinguished from the contextual variables by their direct link with Mexico and Mexican culture. They reflect, in various ways, a commitment to the maintenance of
the Mexican cultural heritage. The contextual variables, on the other hand, influence attitudes more as a function of physical and intellectual environment rather than cultural affinity. That is, a respondent on the strong end of our attachment to Mexico continuum might have little or no contact with undocumented persons, while a respondent on the weak end of the continuum might be more influenced more by personal contact with undocumented workers than by Mexican cultural traditions. Because Mexican Americans are a heterogeneous population, and vary in the intensity of their relationship to Mexico, unless multiple measures or scales are used, it is difficult to measure accurately and to what degree "ethnicity" affects attitudes.

Most of the data reported here come from a survey of 755 individuals, conducted in Hidalgo and Cameron counties along the Texas-Mexico border. These border counties are among the poorest in the nation, with a traditional double digit unemployment rate. Average per capita income is $11,232. The proximity to the border virtually ensures that the influences of traditions will be great. Data from the 1990 Census indicate that more than 80% of the population of the counties is Spanish surnamed.

A sample of 800 household telephones in the telephone exchanges of the counties was obtained by a random digit production process. This sample size allows us a margin of error of + or - 4% with a 95% confidence level. In conducting a telephone survey in this region a major problem emerges. While more than 90% of all households in the nation have telephones, only approximately 83% of the households in this area have telephone service (Backstrom and Hursh-Cesar, 1981; Rush, 1983). Because of the region's poverty, it is likely that a significant number of poor households are without telephone service. This is especially true when one considers the fact that the colonias (small, rural, unincorporated areas) in the region are without access to telephone service.

Consequently, we supplemented the telephone survey with personal interviews in more than 25 colonias. The total number of completed interviews was 755: 147 personal and 609 phone. Interviewers were trained by the authors. Almost all of the interviewers were bilingual. Almost 50% of the interviews were conducted in Spanish from an authenticated translation of the survey instrument. Household selection for the personal interviews was done by a two-stage cluster sample, utilizing a respondent randomizing device (Backstrom and Hursh-Cesar, 1981:94).

Eighty-one percent of the respondents are Mexican Americans; this corresponds to the demographics of the region. However, the sample underrepresented males by a considerable margin. Thus, we reweighted the sample to obtain more accurate population estimates. We utilized the WEIGHT command in SPSS.

In addition to the survey data, we also conducted a series of in-depth interviews with leaders of Valley Interfaith and the local political community. We will report most of those findings in a later paper.

In this preliminary assessment of our data, we focus only on Mexican American and Anglo attitudes toward Valley Interfaith, and the relationship between those attitudes and
some selected policy. We asked respondents if they were familiar with Valley Interfaith. VI now is in its 10th year. It has received considerable publicity both in the press and the television media, especially during its "accountability sessions" where various public officials are asked direct questions before the VI membership. As Table 1 reports, Anglos are much more likely to be familiar with VI than Mexican Americans. Almost 60% of the Anglo respondents said they were familiar with VI compared to less than 30% of the Mexican American respondents; the relationship is statistically significant.

The low percentage of Mexican American respondents acknowledging awareness of VI is at first surprising, given the clear intent of VI to empower the Mexican American population. This may in part be explained, somewhat ironically, by the high percentage of Mexican Americans in the total population. That is, in a community where Mexican Americans are a numerical minority, an organization focusing on Mexican American empowerment could reasonably be expected to be well-known throughout the community. In a community where Mexican Americans constitute 80%, the need for and recognition of such an organization may well be diluted. We also found that Mexican American respondents generally were not knowledgeable about other Latino political groups; for example, 62% were not familiar with MALDEF (not reported in tabular form). In addition, VI's primary impact on the Mexican American community has fallen on that part of the community at the low end of the income and education scale, again reducing its impact on and salience for the middle and upper income Mexican American population. As Table 2 reports, among those familiar with VI, Anglos differ significantly from Mexican Americans in that they have higher incomes. At the same time, 52% of the Mexican Americans familiar with VI have incomes in excess of $15,000/year, a figure that separates them from a significant portion of the Mexican American community in the Rio Grande Valley.

As Table 2 reports, there are some significant differences within the Mexican American population. Those Mexican American respondents familiar with VI are more likely to be professional, have a higher income, less likely to be first generation, and more likely to report contact with undocumented workers. They also are more likely to support the education of the children of undocumented workers. They are less likely to distinguish Mexican immigration from Central American immigration, although a majority of both Mexican Americans familiar with VI and those who are not do believe that the two immigrant groups come to the United States for different reasons.

We expected to find Mexican American attitudes toward VI to be more positive than among Anglos. Valley Interfaith has been highly publicized as an organization seeking to empower the powerless in the area, and there are very few Anglo members. As Table 2 reports, Mexican American attitudes toward Valley Interfaith are statistically significant in their differences from Anglo attitudes. Fifty-seven percent of the Mexican American respondents reported a positive attitude toward Valley Interfaith, compared to less than 20% for Anglos. However, we found no statistically
significant difference between Anglos and Mexican American respondents on the policy issues.

When we analyze the Mexican American respondents based on location we expected to find that those respondents living in colonias would be more knowledgeable and supportive of Valley Interfaith. In part, this is what we found. There were no significant differences in knowledge of Interfaith between colonia and non-colonia residents [$X^2=3.69$, df=1, $P < .07$]. However, colonia residents were more favorable toward Valley Interfaith [71%-52%; $X^2=4.5$, df=1, $P < .05$] than non-colonia residents.

In essence, then, we find that Anglos are more likely than Mexican Americans to be aware of Valley Interfaith, and they are more likely to hold a negative view of Valley Interfaith than their Mexican American counterparts. Our data indicate no significant difference in attitudes between Anglos and Mexican Americans toward our selected policy issues. While the data show that the Mexican American community is not generally familiar with Valley Interfaith, those Mexican Americans who are tend to view Valley Interfaith in positive terms. Interestingly, our "Mexicanness" scale does not clearly differentiate between knowledge of Valley Interfaith, but does between supporters and non-supporters of Valley Interfaith, after controlling for knowledge. That is, among Mexican Americans who are knowledgeable about Valley Interfaith, those who score high on our "Mexicanness" scale tend to be more supportive of Valley Interfaith.

Given the above findings, then how do we explain the apparent success which Valley Interfaith has had in achieving its agenda. By virtually all accounts, Valley Interfaith has now become a "touchstone" for political action within the Mexican American community of South Texas. While these data are preliminary, we suggest that its success lies in the nature of the organization. It cannot be evaluated as other political interest groups might be. Rather than basing its effectiveness on rallying mass support with the community, Valley Interfaith has concentrated on building community leaders, focusing on particular policy issues and targeting selective policy leaders. We believe that Valley Interfaith has become such a model of mobilization within the Mexican American community that it is effective even without extensive levels of name recognition within the minority community. We expect to continue this line of research by focusing next on the levels of support among political leaders and the strategy and tactics of the organization itself.

The University of Texas Pan American and The University of Texas at Brownsville.


Vigil, Maurilio, "Ethnic Organizations Among the Mexican Americans of New Mexico: A Political Perspective." Ph.D. dissertation, University of New Mexico, 1975.


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Crosstabulation of Attitudes Toward Valley Interfaith

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* Mexican Americans only

** Controlling for knowledge of Valley Interfaith
Illustration of the Sacred Heart Church
Corner of 6th and Elizabeth
Built in 1913
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
The Economic Impact of the Port of Brownsville

by

Randall Florey

The Brownsville Chamber of Commerce, in cooperation with the Port of Brownsville and the University of Texas at Brownsville graduate program, evaluated the economic impacts on Cameron County generated by the Port of Brownsville activity. With an increase in manufacturing and business in South Texas and the related need for facilities to export and import goods and materials, the Chamber of Commerce sought to quantify the Port's current role in the economy of the county. This information can be used to determine more efficiently, the needs of port users and industry.

The results of this study are described in this report. Included are research and sources, explanations of areas of study, and definitions and discussion of terms essential to the understanding of this report. This study reflects the economic impact of the Port of Brownsville in 1990. As a contributor to the health of Cameron County, the Port accounts for over 2,802 jobs and over 44 million dollars in personal income, more than $180 million in sales, and over $2.9 million dollars in tax revenues. The text of this report details how these totals were arrived at by calculating direct, indirect, and induced impacts for the three classification areas. Importers and exporters have discovered that the port's facilities are efficient and economical and that the port serves lines that are among the finest in the world.

The study of the economic impact of the Port of Brownsville on Cameron County, Texas was completed by twelve graduate students enrolled at the University of Texas at Brownsville under the direction of the Department of Business Administration. This was done at the request of the Brownsville Chamber of Commerce with the full cooperation of the Port of Brownsville. Public awareness of the Port's economic impact on Cameron County was the Chamber's intended result.

To study the Port's impact on a county-wide basis, the analysts utilized the Port Economic Impact Kit (Port Kit) developed by the Maritime Administration (MARAD) of the U.S. Department of Transportation. The kit was designed to be region-specific, and allow ports to quantify their importance to their local area. The interactive microcomputer model provides a port with an understanding of how the port is linked with other industries, measures its impact in terms of jobs, income, sales, and taxes, and simulated port activities based on development forecasts.

In the course of the study, three separate areas were analyzed: port industry, port users, and impact from capital expenditures by the Port Authority. The guidelines accompanying the kit provided the framework within which the economy of Cameron County and the impact of the Port was assessed. The sophistication of the microcomputer model required the manual calculation of only three separate direct
impacts. These three direct impacts include tons of cargo, capital spending, and port user direct employment. The remainder of the statistics presented in this study were accomplished by the microcomputer model.

The acquisition, preparation, and processing of data for the study areas was a time consuming task. Privileged business information had to be collected from the local maritime industry sector and from port users around the county. Other sources of information included the Federal Bureau of Census, the U.S. Department of Labor, and the Bureau of Economic Analysis. Once collected and processed, this information was used to calculate the levels of economic impact. These are explained in the sections that follow. It is important to note that only the businesses that are located within Cameron County were included in the study. This was done to eliminate money that travels out of the county, known as leakage. This greatly enhances the accuracy of the study by focusing only on money earned and spent within the county.

Furthermore, by eliminating this money early in the processing phase, the figures and amounts expressed in the combined indirect and induced statistics are more accurate. By discarding amounts of money outside Cameron County, the analysts avoided any inflationary distortion in their final statistics. Similarly, because the scope of the study was limited to Cameron County, employment was restricted to County residents. Those workers commuting from outside the county were excluded from the study as their employment, income, taxes, and personal expenditures created an impact in areas outside of the county.

Commercial and operational classifications of economic impact can be seen in the following categories:

Port Industry - maritime industry engaged in activities essential to moving any cargo through the Brownsville Port.
Port User - any industry or business that may be "dependent" on the port, in the sense that the port's existence was a major factor in the initial decision of the firm to locate near the port or remain in its original location. Examples: Amfels, independent shrimpers and shrimping services.
Capital Expenditures - money spent in fiscal year 1990 by The Brownsville Navigation District on the Port of Brownsville for upgrading port facilities.

Types of economic impact include the following:

Direct Impact - the effect of initial spending and employment generated by port users, port industries and capital expenditures.
Indirect Impact - the effect on other industrial and service sectors resulting from direct impacts of port activity. This includes the inter-industry economic activity supported by purchases of supplies, services, labor, and other resources.
Induced Impact - the economic effects that result from household purchases of goods and services made possible because of income generated by the direct and indirect economic impacts of the Port of Brownsville. (e.g. the use of take-home pay for paying rent, to buy groceries, or for family and guest entertainment).

Measures of economic impact include:
Employment - the number of people employed attributable to port activities.
Sales - the value of a firm's revenues is output attributable to the port activities.
Taxes - value of state and local taxes collected and attributable to port activities.

The impact of the port industries was determined by examining the factors associated with vessels and cargo as they moved through the port. These factors include the following categories: Custom Brokerage, Equipment Rental, Navigation Services (tug, pilotage and line handling), Miscellaneous (ship utilities and bridge tolls), Warehousing, Wharfage, Stevedores, Transportation (truck line and railways).

Impact results were tabulated by the five vessel types commonly served in the port. These categories include: Dry Bulk Ship, Liquid Bulk Ship, Break Bulk Ship, Dry Bulk Barge, and Liquid Bulk Barge. The use of barges as a cargo handler deviated from the basic vessels categories found in the Port Economic Impact Kit. This reflects the unique situation of the Port of Brownsville in regard to the Inter-coastal Water Way. Most of the barge cargo is not transferred from ship to barge at this port. Therefore, barges were treated as cargo vessels only, instead of inland transportation.

The data from each port industry was tabulated and classified according to vessel type. The direct sales impact for 1990 by cargo vessel is: Dry Bulk Ship: $3,458,784, Liquid Bulk Ship: $2,341,392, Break Bulk Ship: $3,169,845, Dry Bulk Barge: $2,885,982, Liquid Bulk Barge: $4,374,712. These sales figures only represent dollars generated within Cameron County. Revenues that extend beyond county lines such as truck or railroad transportation to Mexico are not. However, indirect sales generated by those activities, such as bridge tolls, are included.

Figures reflect sales for 1990. In 1991, wharfage fees have increased and total tonnage moving through the port should also increase. However, the complete figures are not available. Since the calculation of the direct sales impact depends heavily upon these amounts, figures for the current year are probably higher than reported. The extent of change between 1990 and 1991 is beyond the scope of this study. In most cases actual revenues or fees, not estimates, were used to calculate the direct sales impact. Two estimates were needed to get a complete picture for Cameron County.

Rail and truck rates reflect the national average of costs per ton-mile. Actual rates from a specific port are confidential and could not be obtained. Toll bridge revenues were based upon the assumption that 50% of truck and rail traffic was related to the Port of Brownsville industries. This percentage was documented in a financial feasibility analysis for a proposed port bridge. The numbers reflect the most conservative estimates. Note that the port industry impact could increase significantly if proposed changes at the port are implemented. These changes include: deepening the channel, building an international bridge between Matamoros and port property, and developing a fuel bunkering facility. However, only the bunkering project could be completed quickly enough to affect revenues for 1991.

The port user impact was determined through a list identifying the port users provided by the Brownsville Navigation District titled: Fishing Harbor Lessees, dated November 6, 1990, and a list of Turning Basin Lessees dated June 4, 1991, was provided by the Port
of Brownsville leasing office. The study analysts developed a list of 121 port users. All 121 of these companies are located along the Brownsville Ship Channel. Only those employees residing in Cameron County were counted as contributing to the Cameron County economy.

All of the 121 companies were surveyed by telephone using surveys modeled after examples from the Portkit manual. As surveys were completed a data-base was established to record results. Contact was attempted at least twice for each of the companies on the survey list. If no contact was made, it was assumed that either the company was out of business or that its employment impact was negligible. Overall response rate was 49.5% (60 out of 121 companies). By comparison, a typical rate of return on a survey is 20%. Due to the limited scope of this Economic Impact Study, a higher response rate was not sought out. It is important to note that the impact study excluded a significant number of employees that do work in industries located at or near the port.

This was done because it was determined that the expenditure of the port (i.e. ship channel) was not required for some jobs to exist. Also, employees who did not live in Cameron County were not included in the study results. Therefore, when comparing the direct employment total to the report provided by the Brownsville Navigation District (The Port of Brownsville Job Comparison Report 1/31/91), the amount of employment was considerably less (i.e. 2,944 versus 1,751). The analysts grouped the industries by Standard Industrial Classification (S.I.C.) codes and calculated direct impact for employment. The computer model, once supplied with these initial figures, was able to calculate impact statistics for the Port of Brownsville on Cameron County.

Expenditure figures represent only those monies spent within the fiscal year 1990. Only those dollars spent for labor, equipment, and materials were considered applicable. To preserve accuracy, each of the capital expenditures were reviewed by the Director of Administration and Finance for the Port. Expenditures were grouped into seven categories as listed in the Port Kit manual: paving, building, piers, dredging, equipment, landfill, and land purchase.

In reporting the study results, the graduate students assembled their data under headings of specific impacts: employment, sales, income, and taxes. Under these headings, statistics were listed by Port Users. Port Industries, and Capital Expenditures. Direct impact values for each are listed, followed by the combined indirect and induced impact.

The importance of the Port of Brownsville on the economy of Cameron County is best demonstrated by discussing port user, port industry, and capital expenditures under the headings defined in the "measurement of Economic Impact" subsection of this report. By grouping the commercial and the operation impact sections under each measurement area - employment, sales, income and taxes - the total impact of the Port on the economy becomes evident.

The unit of measure most conspicuous in determining the health of an economy is employment. The man or woman earning a wage becomes the catalyst for firing and
sustaining the economic engine of the county. But first, there must be jobs, and in Cameron County the Brownsville Port can be tied directly and indirectly to in excess of 2,802 jobs. In conducting the study, the Analysts utilized statistics from the Navigtation District for workers who were local residents. Port Users accounted for 88% of the direct employment attributable to the existence of the Port. Those companies shipping and receiving cargo through the Port as part of their business employed 1,549 people in full-time positions.

Because of the activities of those businesses and their employees, other sectors of the economy were stimulated. Another 893 Cameron County residents were able to work either in businesses which serviced the port users or in the induced sector filled by consumer spending. Spread throughout the county, the businesses which utilize the Port in the conducting of business contributed most significantly to the health of the county economy.

Port industry, situated close to the Port, had the direct impact of providing 194 jobs. The direct and induced impact of 152 jobs resulted from the economy stimulated by workers employed in the port industry. For communities with an economic interest in Brownsville Port activity, this meant that a total of 846 local persons were at work earning money that would find its way back to the community. Less obvious, but no less significant, is the fact that a stable and dependable work force in the port industry section provides increased benefits to port users in terms of professional handling and processing of cargo.

Capital expenditures, while small in impact relative to the impact of port users and port industry, have the ability to reach throughout the state. Contracts for capital projects are awarded statewide. For the purpose of this study, it is not unreasonable to consider that a paving company from Corpus Christi may win a bid for work at the Port of Brownsville. The employment impact, therefore resembles that of the port user more so than that of port industry. From the study it was found that 8 jobs were directly attributed to the Port capital expenditures. The indirect and induced employment resulting from this primary round of employment resulted in six additional jobs that could be traced back to the Port of Brownsville's capital programs. Overall, 1,751 jobs were attributable to the existence of the Brownsville Port. Additionally, another 1,051 jobs existed because of commercial activity in Cameron County that was stimulated by the direct impact of 1,751 jobs. For 2,802 residents of Cameron County, the Port influenced prosperity and economic stability.

Closely related to the number of people at work is the income earned by those people. The dollars earned and spent within the county caused other sections of the economy to increase their activity and productivity. Wages and salaries earned directly affect the economy as they are allocated to housing, food, entertainment, and personal needs. Each dollar circulates from pocket to pocket in support of the economic system. Just as employment sparks the economic engine, income serves as the medium to transfer the stimulus from enterprise. Understandably, the port users accounted for the largest segment of income impact. Through wages and non-wage income, Cameron County
workers earned over $2.4 million. This income was attributable to the role the Port of Brownsville plays in the success of businesses using the port. For workers in jobs indirectly or inductively impacted upon by the port, over $15 million was earned.

For all three impact areas affected by port users, over $44 million in earnings could be ultimately traced to the Port of Brownsville. In the port industry sector, persons directly involved with commercial shipping and cargo handling earned just over $4 million. In indirect and induced employment area employees earned over $2.2 million. While the jobs in the port industry sector may be tied locally to port communities, the income earned is not. In spending for transportation, entertainment, goods and services, money earned in one location flows easily to another geographical location. A Brownsville stevedore may travel to McAllen to purchase a new car. The ability of money to move throughout the state elevates the impact of income upon the economy to a level beyond strictly local parameters.

For capital programs, income impact could also be felt on county-wide terms. Income which is directly earned as a result of capital expenditures was over $84,000. Capital expenditures are perhaps the most susceptible to fluctuations. As a project is completed, the income benefits taper off until a new project is started. When a massive upgrading effort is underway, income impact increases dramatically. Future data will bear this out as the Port of Brownsville initiates several more capital projects to meet the needs of its customers. The long term completion of the bridge and the diversity of labor types employed will guarantee that both employment and income impacts are felt throughout Cameron County.

The ability of Brownville's Port to generate the sales revenue (excluding leakage) means over $180 million for the economy of Cameron County. Directly, indirectly, and inductively this revenue was generated by moving cargo through the Port; were it not for the existence and excellence of the Brownsville Port system, this money would have gone out of state to ports elsewhere. Port users can directly tie the over $109 million in sales to their import and export activities involving the Port. Additionally, indirect and induced sales generated by companies dealing with port users and their employees and families came to more than $44 million.

The port industry, through providing services to move and process cargo, earned over $16 million. Companies in the indirect and induced impact sectors generated just over $7 million in sales. As with income, this money can easily spread throughout the state as services and commodities are bought and sold. More so than with income, subsequent purchases of those business related materials and services by nature of their high dollar volume make a greater income impact on economies distant from all the waterfront communities. In any case, large amounts of money travel through the state and in turn generate commerce as second and third level businesses make their own purchases, pay their employees, and invest in their own capital improvements.

In the area of capital expenditures, over $632,000 in sales were directly attributable to the Port with an indirect and induced impact of over $271,000. The figure of $1,041,000 reflects the money spent by the Brownsville Port for capital improvement for
construction, rehabilitation improvement, dredging, and land purchases. As with income and employment, these figures depend on the number and the magnitude of the projects under way at the Brownsville Port facilities and only reflect the money spent during the fiscal year 1990. It is important to note that the monies spent on capital projects came solely from the earning of the Brownsville Port. No tax dollars were spent and no state revenue was appropriated to finance the projects of the Brownsville Port. The same holds true for income and benefits paid to Brownsville Port employees.

Structured and mandated to operate in the manner of a private business, the Port of Brownsville may only spend what it earns through tariffs, berthing fees, and other charges assessed of users of the ports' facilities. The handling of that money is the responsibility of the Port of Brownsville and its goal in that endeavor is increased and improved service to the business community of Cameron County.

A healthy economy is a source of revenues for the county that will in turn finance programs to benefit the residents of Cameron County. Improved transportation networks, public utilities, and public services make Cameron County a safer, more efficient and even more attractive place to conduct business for indigenous enterprises and those companies seeking to relocate in South Texas. Total impact for tax revenues attributable to the Port of Brownsville amounted to over $2.4 million, port industry was responsible for generating over $444,000, and the total direct, indirect, and induced tax impact under capital expenditures was over $150,000. Considered under taxes were all those taxes applicable in Texas: personal income, sales, excise, corporate, state and local. Weighing direct impacts only, port users paid over $1.5 million in taxes on port related commerce, port industry paid over $294,000 in income earned through the port, and capital expenditures accounted for over $10,000.

The Port of Brownsville is the southernmost port in Texas and the southern terminus of the Gulf Intracoastal Waterway System. The Port of Brownsville connects with the Gulf of Mexico via a 17 mile channel. The channel has a depth of 36 feet and its additional deepening to 42 feet has been authorized. The port, a man-made basin 3500' by 1000' is three miles north of the Rio Grande River and the Mexican border, five miles east of the City of Brownsville and seven miles from the rail and highway border crossing. The port is connected with the Gulf of Mexico at Brazos-Santiago Pass (Lat. 26 deg. 04 mins. North; Long. 97 degs. 03 mins. 30 sec. West).

All modes of transportation are available at the Port of Brownsville. Both rail and truck loading/unloading facilities are available adjoining all docks. The Port of Brownsville's elevator has the flexibility to load and unload both ships and barges. Two large floating cranes, rated at 150 metric tons each for a total capacity of 300 metric tons, are available for heavy lifts at any dockside location in the port area. Since 1936, the port has efficiently served the region of South Texas and Northern Mexico, influencing economic development on both sides of the border. The Port of Brownsville is a first-class deepwater port providing facilities for the movement of cargo to all parts of the world.
Cargo facilities at the port include 17 deepsea docks, five of which are for petroleum and liquid products, plus 10 barge berths. Nearly 600,000 square feet of transit shed space is available on the docks. The Port of Brownsville is governed by the Brownsville Navigation District, a political subdivision of the State of Texas. The District is guided by a Board of Commissioners which establishes the policies, rules, rates, and regulations of the Port and approves all contractual obligations.

The Entrance Channel is protected by two rock jetties each over 5,000 feet in length and 1,200 feet apart. The ship channel has no bridges or other obstruction for the entire length of this virtually straight waterway. Controlling depths in feet at mean low water are the same for existant bottom width and depth as for authorized bottom width and depth. The width and depth are as follow: Entrance Channel: Width: 300, Depth: 38; Laguna Madre Channel: Width: 200, Depth: 36; Ship Channel, Laguna Madre to Goose Island at both the Passing Basin and the Turning Basin: Width: 200, Depth: 36; Turning Basin Approach: Width: 500, Depth: 36; Turning Basin: Width: 1000, Depth: 36.

Consisting of approximately 40,000 acres, the Port of Brownsville is a large industrial park with Foreign Trade Zone status, providing sites for a host of diversified industries and representing a combined public and private investment valued at over $400 million. Land is available for long or short term lease both on and away from the waterfront.

The Main Harbor consists of the Turning Basin and Approach, containing over three miles of improved frontage. The Turning Basin is 3,500 feet long and 1,000 feet wide and contains Cargo Docks 1 through 13 aggregating 6,500 lineal feet plus a 400 foot small craft dock. Oil docks 1,2,3 and 4, a 400 foot Bulk Cargo dock serving the Grain Elevator and Bulk Plant, a Liquid Cargo Dock, and Express Dock and one Hopper Dock are located in the Turning Basin Approach which is 4,500 feet long, 650 feet bank width and 500 feet minimum bottom width.

The fishing Harbor is four miles east of the Turning Basin, with a protected entrance to Ship Channel. This basin measures 2,100 foot peninsulas in the center. The channel connecting with the Ship Channel is 200 feet wide and 600 feet long. This basin provides 10,800 lineal feet of dock space for trawlers, tugs and other small craft. Controlling depth is 14 feet.

All waterfront facilities on the Brownsville Ship Channel, at the Main Harbor and at the Small Craft Harbor, are owned by the Brownsville Navigation District. Certain small craft facilities are leased to private operators, but all deepwater facilities at the Main Harbor are operated as public facilities. Vessels and agents are assigned berths at the discretion of the Navigation District. Vessel loading and discharge is performed by stevedoring contractors. Car and truck loading and unloading, except at elevators, is customarily performed by stevedoring contractors. Around the clock supervision of vessels and vehicle traffic at Port Brownsville is provided by the Navigation District. The Harbor Master's Office schedules vessel arrivals and departures, maintains radio contact with the pilot boat of the Brazos-Santiago Pilots Association and provides up-to-the-minute information on schedules useful to agent, stevedores, tugboats, linerunners and the general public. Vessels can call on Channel 16 twenty-four hours a day.
All general cargo sheds, except Shed No. 2, are equipped with automatic drypipe sprinkler systems and hoses, hose connections and wet water extinguishers. Fire hydrant stations are located on wharf aprons and throughout the port areas around the sheds. Water supply is from the port's 2 MMG per day capacity waterplant main connecting with the City of Brownsville. Storage capacity and pressure equalization are provided by one 500,000 gallon elevated water tower, and one 1,000,000 gallon ground storage tank at the waterplant. Around-the-clock guard service is provided in all general cargo facilities. The Port Director's office is located at the port and handles all inquiries on Trade and Industrial Development, Accounting, Purchasing, Credit Traffic, Personnel, and Engineering. All mail inquiries should be directed to: P.O. Box 3070, Brownsville, Texas 78523-3070.

The Navigation District owns and controls more than 44,000 acres of land adjoining the Turning Basin and Ship Channel, and this acreage is available for industrial development. In recent years over $150 million worth of industrial development has been located on port property, including petro-chemical plants, tank farms, light manufacturing, seafood processing, and steel fabrication. Plant sites of virtually any size, with access to the deep water harbor, rail connections, paved highways, and utilities may be rented on long term leases at attractive prices from the Navigation District.

The Brownsville Navigation District is a Grantee to operate Foreign-Trade Zone No. 62 at the Port of Brownsville. This Zone offers the flexibility to serve large or small industrial and warehousing operations. The location of the Port of Brownsville includes all of the port's developable properties. Also, less than five miles away, the Brownsville/South Padre Island International Airport location provides approximately 200 acres in an industrial area with good access to the runway system, which has FTZ status. Sites are available for lease with all utilities and excellent land, air, and water transportation services, which is a bonus to manufacturers is the "twin plant" program in sister city Matamoros, Mexico. This program allows companies to use the competitive labor rates in Mexico for their labor intensive or assembly line products. The product can then be moved into an FTZ site for distribution, re-export, qualify testing or value adding activities.

The catch word for ports today is "intermodalism." For fifty years, the Port of Brownsville has had five of the six modes of transportation and is now moving into the sixth mode that has captured the imagination of the shipping industry. Containerization has been slow moving into our markets of South Texas and Mexico. However, it is now an important influence. Container feeder service is now available from the Port of Brownsville to all destinations worldwide. The other five modes are: Ocean vessels, Truck transports, Rail service to the U.S. and Mexico, Air service from the Brownsville/South Padre International Airport, and Barge through the Inland Waterway System of the United States.

The Port of Brownsville owns approximately 40,000 acres of land through which the 17 mile ship channel connects the turning basin to the Gulf. 18,000 acres of the port's land are developable for the port facilities and industrial sites. Another 2,000 acres are
devoted to highways and rail facilities and 7,000 acres are designated as dredge disposal areas. The remaining acreage is wetlands or submerged land. The ability to work outdoors virtually all year round makes the area even more attractive.

The Port of Brownsville is a major center of industrial development with close to 200 companies doing business. Activities include construction of offshore drilling rigs, ship dismantling, steel fabrication, boat construction, rail car rehabilitation, paper bag manufacturing, asphalt handling, petroleum storage, waste oil recovery, bulk terminaling for miscellaneous liquids, grain handling and storage and many other things. Adequate space is available for expansion of existing or addition of new industries. The Port of Brownsville provides the most efficient services to facilitate the international movement of goods between Mexico and the United States. At Brownsville, the land transportation of Mexico is linked with the Inland Waterway System of the United States.

Not only is the Port of Brownsville a deepwater seaport served by worldwide shipping, but it is also the southern terminus of the U.S. Inland Waterway System. The Gulf Intracoastal Waterway provides the most economical transportation of goods by barge to the principal cities that are located on the inland rivers and waterways of the United States.

Port Brownsville has over twenty-eight miles of railroad trackage, with rail sidings serving warehouses, industries and all docks in the port area. General Cargo facilities with the exception of Docks seven and eight have shipside tracks and all general cargo facilities have double depressed tracks at the rear of the transit sheds. Storage and classification tracks are capable of holding 300 cars.

The Port of Brownsville owns and operates eight transit sheds totaling almost 600,000 square feet of space. These buildings are all located adjacent to vessel berths and are equipped with marginal rail tracks at dockside. The sheds are equipped with aprons and rail track on the side away from the water to facilitate efficient transfer to or from railcar or truck. All sheds are protected with modern sprinkler systems and fire doors and are monitored by Port Security on a 24-hour basis. In addition to these buildings, there are another one and a quarter million square feet of public warehousing available a short distance away from the docks. Commodities that do not require covered storage are adequately handled by more than 242,000 square feet of deep-draft open dock space and approximately 271,000 square feet of shallow draft open docks. More than eighty acres of surfaced open storage space is available away from the docks.

As a bulk commodity port, the Port of Brownsville has developed a versatile marine terminal operation covering both liquid and dry cargo handling. Principal imports and exports include chemicals, petroleum, grain, cotton and agricultural products, sulfur, citrus, glass, steel, ores, fertilizers and crude rubber. The Port of Brownsville is constantly seeking new ways to improve the efficiency of handling cargos in our rapidly changing economy.

Terminal facilities are available at the Port of Brownsville to handle and store all types of liquid commodities in bulk. The large storage tanks vary from 500 to 20,000 barrels each, providing a total of more than 455,000 barrels capacity for the entire installation.
The modern liquid dock adjacent to the facility accommodates vessels with a deep draft of up to 34 feet. Loading racks provide for the safe and efficient transfer of liquids to either truck or rail. Four oil and chemical docks are located on the north side of the ship channel and are used by major U.S. and Mexican companies to handle bulk petroleum and chemical products.

The grain elevator, which is now privately owned and operated, is located at the approach to the Turning Basin. The elevator has a capacity of over 3,000,000 bushels. An adjacent bulk plant provides flat storage for all types of dry bulk commodities. Two large gantry cranes handle the loading of vessels. The maximum spout clearance for loading vessels is 45 feet above the water. The 400 foot warf is twelve feet above the water and has an unlimited berth length with a maximum loading capacity of 1200 long tons per hour to vessel. The elevator at the Port of Brownsville also has the flexibility of loading and unloading vessels and barges.

Located on the north side of the channel about four miles eastward from the Turning Basin is one of the most unique assets of the Port of Brownsville. The Fishing Harbor consisting of three twelve foot deep basins and over 10,000 feet of dock is the home of one of the largest shrimp boat fleets in the Gulf. It provides, in one central location, all the facilities necessary to support the fleet.

The University of Texas at Brownsville.
Illustration of the Celaya Home
504 East. St. Francis
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Illustration of the Ortiz Grocery Store
Corner of East Madison and 10th Street
Constructed in 1892
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Historic Architecture in Brownsville and Matamoros

by

Mark Lund

In this account, the reader shall encounter a brief overview of Brownsville's historic buildings and their identifying characteristics. Structures are included to illustrate key aspects of the architectural traditions of this area. Many important buildings in Brownsville are given no mention in this overview due to constraints of space.

Those examples that are discussed have been chosen to illustrate a particular style, or its variants. Historic structures built in Matamoros are included in some cases to illustrate the similarities and differences within the traditional building practices of the two communities.

From looking at each style, the reader gains an ability to recognize the features of the different architectural styles and to understand their historical significance. In the descriptions that follow, the salient, identifying characteristics of historic buildings are documented. Unfortunately, some of the terminology used by architectural historians to describe these features can be confusing. While this account attempts to avoid many of the pitfalls associated with the classification and description of historic architecture, it is incumbent upon the reader to do their part...to share in the task of surmounting the jargon.

How does one gain an understanding of these buildings? Part of the answer is to go out and look for yourself. Make a sketch. Once one notices all of the details that have to be included in even a rough sketch...it is a surprise. At that moment, one begins to realize the need for the many terms used to describe a building.

Ornament is integral to the historic architecture. For this reason, there is a need to use an even larger number of architectural terms in discussing historic buildings. These older structures simply have more elements, details, and ornament than modern buildings possess.

For those readers who wish to learn more about this particular subject, I would recommend further readings in *The Penguin Dictionary of Architecture* by John Fleming, Hugh Honour, and Nickolaus Pevsner, from Penguin Books.

I hope that you find that learning these terms is ultimately helpful to you...even if at first glance the architectural terminology seems quite remote.

I owe a debt of gratitude to quite a large number of local residents, preservationists, historians, and local property owners. These persons have been very generous to me in offering their help and sharing of their knowledge about the city's history and its landmarks. In this spirit, I hope you gain some insights and a deeper appreciation of Brownsville's architectural treasures from this account.

Town Planning in Brownsville and Matamoros

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The earliest development and growth of Brownsville stemmed from two seminal events:

1. The establishment of Fort Brown at its Brownsville location, near a bend in the Rio Grande River. The Fort was moved to the west of the original 1846 location of the earthworks, because of periodic flooding in that low-lying area.

2. In 1848 Charles Stillman founded the townsite...named Brownsville to honor the fallen Major Jacob Brown.

The relocation of Fort Brown controlled the pattern of early development in Brownsville. The first buildings constructed were sited in close proximity to the river in the area west of the Fort. The oldest surviving buildings extant in Brownsville are to be found in the same area, near the bend in the river.

Stillman recognized the future potential of this land adjacent to Fort Brown. Merchants based there could supply the U.S. Army and easily trade with numerous Mexican customers in Matamoros.

In June 1848 Stillman formed a partnership with Samuel A. Belden and Jacob Mussina, a New Orleans produce broker represented in the Rio Grande Valley by his brother, Simon Mussina. Their venture was named the Brownsville Township Company.1

Many of the first warehouses erected in the new town were made of wood. Merchants rushed to set up their businesses in Brownsville and wooden structures could be constructed in a short amount of time. None of these early wooden warehouses built along the river have survived to this day. Fortunately, some of the brick structures of this era have remained standing. The Gem, located at 400 East 13th Street, is one survivor. This circa 1848 building is mentioned in the December 1848 issue of the American Flag as the storehouse of J.E. Garey: “Fine brick buildings are springing up. Mr. Charles Stillman has just completed his large and commodious brick store...a building that would be a credit to any town...Mr. Belden has commenced putting up a fine brick storehouse also, Mr. J.E. Garey & Company. Wooden houses in numbers are also being erected.” 2

This evidence suggests that the Gem is the oldest structure built in Brownsville. The Neale Home, presently in use as a part of the Brownsville Art League and Museum, may be older. It is has been claimed that the Neale Home was built outside the City and later moved to a lot in the Original Townsite.

George Lyons, the deputy surveyor of Nueces County, was hired by Charles Stillman during that summer of 1848 to lay out lots and survey the townsite. 3 If one compares the results of Lyon's efforts with the town planning methods used in Matamoros, some striking differences become apparent. First, the original townsite in Brownsville made no provision for public open space or parkland dedication, whereas, in Matamoros the plan of the town was notable for its inclusion of a public plaza. Around this plaza was space reserved for the most prominent public buildings to be built as a first order of business: the cathedral and City Hall.

Public spaces were eventually created in Brownsville...Market Square was created in 1850. Years later, the establishment of Washington Park took place. However, these public areas were created as afterthoughts...they were not part of the original plan. This deficiency of the Brownsville town plan, if it can be called that, can be best
understood by an examination of the purposes for which the plan was developed. Namely, the main purpose of the Brownsville plan was profit. Speculation and profit by the sale of lots was achieved by the division of the larger property into smaller parcels in the most efficient manner. Undoubtedly Lyon’s instructions from the Brownsville Township Company were to produce the maximum amount of land for sale. This goal was achieved in the use of a grid system for dividing the property into lots. No land was set aside for public purposes, i.e., plazas or parks. Viewed in terms of profit, nothing was "wasted." Almost all of the land so divided could be sold as lots, excepting streets and alleys.

Unlike the Mexican town plans drawn up by the Spanish, there is no hierarchy present within Lyon's scheme. In the original townsite almost all of the lots are the same size. When a particular lot is deemed comparatively more valuable by a prospective buyer, it is due to the influence of other extraneous factors. For instance, value was assigned to a property by the proximity to Fort Brown, rather than due to a variation in the size or shape of the lot itself.

As has been previously mentioned, a few of the lots do indeed vary in size in the Matamoros town plan. The generous amount of land set aside for the main plaza by this design created a larger open space for public purposes. This is a hierarchical layout...the message inherent in such a plan is that this plaza area in combination with the surrounding blocks (site of the cathedral, customhouse, and city hall) is the heart of the city. And in actual use, it turns out this central area has indeed been the most important part of Matamoros since its founding.

The Matamoros town plan has had a stronger, longer-lasting effect upon the life of that City compared to Brownsville's plan. This can be seen in how a pedestrian gains a sense of direction and moves through the streets of Matamoros. The cathedral is quite often visible from many parts of the City, and thus, it is used as a point of orientation from afar. One can gauge one's progress through the City by assessing the distance and direction vis-à-vis this landmark on the plaza. One is aware of the central plaza, even when one is not physically within the confines of the plaza itself.

These two different town-planning traditions have had far-reaching effects upon the architectural developments within the respective cities. Other differences between the two cities can also be seen in the architectural styles used in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in these two communities.

Regional Architectural Traditions and Practices

Traditional building practices as developed in the Lower Rio Grande Valley represent a continuation of practices brought here from the Old World by the Spanish. Spain, which had long been an important colonial territory of the Roman Empire, possessed a wide range of building traditions as a result of centuries of Roman influence. About 1715 Spain was overrun by the Moors. This conquest began a long period of Islamic control and cultural influence.
A number of features of the traditional practices of the Spanish builders were greatly influenced by the Moors. The importance attached to the use of courtyards as a retreat or oasis is a good example. Although this type of residential space existed in Roman architecture built in Spain, its development or refinement in Spain can be traced to the Moorish influence. Many such design motifs and other local building practices can be traced back to Spain.

Aside from jacales, folk homes built with crude timbered walls and thatched roofs, we find two fundamental roof types used in Spanish colonial architecture. They are: (1) the pitched roof (2) the flat roof with parapet. The Spanish used both systems in the New World. The mission churches were typically built with pitched roofs. In some of the larger church buildings, the addition of buttresses at the exterior walls was accomplished when the builders realized a need for the additional structural support. Buttresses serve to contain the forces generated by the outward thrust of the roof timbers and thereby redirect the loads downward to the ground.

In commercial architecture and many residential buildings, the Spanish and Mexican builders utilized the wall and beam system, the common method of flat roof construction. In Brownsville and most especially in Matamoros, one sees many surviving examples of this type of architecture. This second roof type is often called "flat roof," but this is a bit misleading. The horizontal roof timbers are usually slightly pitched and therefore not set perfectly flat. Usually there is a gentle slope of the roof to promote drainage. Buildings with roofs that are quite flat do exist, although they are rare.

The parapet is an extension of the brick load-bearing wall up and above the roof line. In Spanish Colonial style architecture, the parapet at the front of the building is almost always transformed or composed so as to form a cornice. Roughly speaking, a cornice is a crown. In other words, the designer has manipulated the brickwork of the parapet so as to achieve this particular feature.

A common method of detailing of the parapet was the architect's use of corbeling of the bricks. Corbeling involves the projection of certain bricks or whole brick courses outward or away from the face of the exterior wall. These projections cast shadows upon the building wall and when done in intricate fashion some very remarkable ornamentation is created.

The Spanish builders and the Mexican descendants who followed them did not invent these classical elements used in the cornice. The Greeks invented many of these decorative details, such as dentils, a projection of small rectangular blocks used in the entablature of Greek temples.

However, the Spanish and Mexicans developed and refined various decorative schemes commonly used to decorate the parapet walls of these structures. For example, one may notice that some nineteenth century buildings have dentils that are made of single units. The dentil is achieved by the projection of one brick set on end. Both the Gem and the Yturria Bank Building feature cornices with dentils of this nature. In other structures, notably the Alonso Building and El Globo Nuevo, the dentils are larger and the rectangles are composed of many bricks. The detailing of the dentils of the El Globo
Nuevo is especially bold. It includes a single unit placed below the bottom of the larger whole, an extension of the rectangle.

Another fairly common refinement of the parapet detailing on historical buildings is the use of molded bricks in the design. A good example is the cornice on the facade of a section of the San Fernando Building at 1106 East Adams Street. It features the incorporation of such customized bricks within the design. Many historic buildings in Matamoros feature molded brickwork used in the cornices of these structures. The detailing of Casa de las Estrellas at Calle Abasolo 125 is a superb example of this regional style. This Matamoros building includes molded bricks placed above the decorative door arches at the upper level of the front facade, as well as molded bricks that are part of the elaborate cornice. Another example of the use of molded bricks is the detailing of Casa Iturria at Calle Abasolo 84-88. Perhaps the best example of molded brick detailing in Brownsville is a molded brick tomb or crypt found near the entrance of the Brownsville City Cemetery. Some scholars believe this crypt is an example of the work of Heinrich Portscheller. Portscheller, who built many beautiful brick buildings in Roma and Rio Grande City in the late 1800s, died in 1915 at the age of seventy-five.

Identifying characteristics of the Spanish Colonial style include thick masonry walls, symmetrical compositions with multiple doorways, adornment present at brick cornices. The cornice invariably is part of a parapet that extends above the roof line of the building. Another common feature is the use of double wooden doors, often topped by transom window openings. Another detail that is common with this style is the use of pilasters. A pilaster is a shallow pier attached to a wall, often decorated to resemble a classical column. These details may be seen on many buildings in Brownsville and Matamoros.

In classical Greek architecture, a column usually has a base, shaft, and a capital on top. On many Brownsville buildings one can see that the pilasters conform to one of the orders. They are decorated and proportioned according to one of the accepted modes. The capitals are usual quite simple...molded bricks that effect a simple curved projection usually suffice...the projections are not deep enough to allow for an elaborate Corinthian capital.

The San Fernando Building at East Adams has pilasters as described above. The Miguel Fernandez Hide Yard, (El Almacen), directly across the street, does too. This structure features a number of pilasters that support an entablature (with cornice) above at the parapet.

The Miguel Fernandez Hide Yard is an authentic reminder of the 19th Century ranching operations that were based in this area. Ranchers would come to pick up food stuffs, Spanish red wine, barbed wire, farming implements and tools. They traded or bartered at this store. They brought to the merchant cattle hides, bones, and tallow. Then, after receiving a credit for these hides, the ranchers could trade or exchange for the general merchandise goods carried by this store-warehouse.

One must remember that Brownsville and Matamoros builders and designers of the nineteenth century worked within a system of traditional building practices. These
practices included a variety of prescriptive rules. For example, there were rules of how to proceed with the design of the foundation so that the brick structure would be quite sturdy and no cracks would develop. Other rules informed the builders about the use of ratios and what to consider when proportioning the various elements of structures, so that the final appearance of the building would be graceful, harmonious, and appropriate for its function.

A basic rule of composition at that time was that the principal facade of a building should exhibit symmetry. In other words, the left side of the facade should be roughly identical to the right side. What is most interesting to note is how this system of practice worked to aid these designers. These builders did not follow these rules blindly. In fact, there were so many rules it was nearly impossible to conform to all of them. The nineteenth century builder who operated within this system or tradition did not experience or find these dictates restrictive. On the contrary, the existence of the various rules seems to have operated as a spur to innovation...rather than to curb the creative impulse of the builders.

Unlike the modern designer, the nineteenth century builder did not concern himself with developing radical new forms. Instead he devoted his attention to making designs based on selections from a vast array of classical elements. He might experiment with reshaping some of these elements, but his basic acceptance of the validity of the system was never in doubt.

Architectural Styles in Brownsville

Many historic homes in Brownsville were originally built as stylistic mixtures. A mixture occurs when two or more styles are used in the detailing of a building, although one style may be expressed more boldly...or be more pronounced than the other.

In the Stillman House, one can identify how two styles were joined together by the designer to form a very subtle mixture. This ante-bellum house can best be termed Greek Revival in style. The influence for use of this style derives from the examples built in the eastern part of the United States where this architectural style was developed in the early 1800s. However, there is another style or source present within this mixture, although its presence is rather faint so that it is easily overlooked.

This second source of inspiration stems from the local (Spanish Colonial or Mexican) building traditions that were in use in Brownsville during the nineteenth century. So while the overall character of the Stillman House design is set or defined by the formal elements of the Greek Revival style, technically speaking, the house is a stylistic mixture. The following Greek Revival elements are present at the Stillman House: columnar porch, central entrance, and six over six lights used in the sash treatment of the double-hung windows.

All of these formal elements derive from the Anglo-American building tradition. Upon closer inspection, one can note how some of these Greek Revival elements were reshaped or slightly altered by their combination or use within the local (Spanish Colonial) building traditions. For instance, the Doric columns at the Stillman House
porch were composed of brick covered by stucco and not made of wood as found in most other Texas examples of this style. Another obvious difference is the introduction of parapets at the brick gables above the roof line. This detail represents a clear break from the usual Greek Revival idiom. This mixture of styles and architectural details, which is not readily noticeable at first, is one factor that makes this historic house unusual.

Many historic buildings in Brownsville exhibit such intriguing mixtures of style. In this particular architectural example cited above, the Hispanic influence upon the building's design is only faintly visible. This influence is evident only within a few Spanish Colonial style details incorporated in this structure.

In considering other Brownsville buildings constructed in the nineteenth century, we find that the mixture of styles is often resolved with different results. It is apparent that with most early Brownsville buildings, the Hispanic (Spanish Colonial style building traditions are paramount. Elements and classical vocabulary from the Spanish Colonial style are dominant in these architectural compositions. Other design influences or sources (usually Anglo-American and/or French inspiration) are typically present in these buildings, but to a lesser degree.

Before this matter of the mixture of styles is examined in greater detail, it is appropriate to finish the description of the notable features of the Stillman House. The Stillman House was originally built with a detached kitchen to the rear. Many decades later, in this century, an addition was built that served to connect the kitchen to the main body of the house. The use of a detached kitchen was a common feature of early Texas residential architecture. By having the kitchen built separate from the main house, the builders reduced the threat of fire...it was much better to lose a kitchen than to lose the whole house to a fire. Buildings from the Post-Civil War period or Victorian architecture represent a distinct improvement in convenience as builders then began to incorporate kitchens within the house itself.

Other differences in Victorian house plans compared to the earlier styles appear. One difference is the preference for asymmetrical compositions. Many large Victorian mansions exhibit this change. The plan of these larger homes breaks with the earlier symmetrical, center-hall plan used in Greek Revival homes. The designers achieved this new informal type of plan by taking the old central hall plan and placing one room forward of the door and the main body of the house. Quite often a porch was wrapped around the front elevation from this projection and along the exposed side of the house.

"Victorian" style is a term that can mean anyone of several styles: Second Empire, Shingle style, Queen Anne, Richardsonian Romansque, jigsaw, and Gothic Revival. It is a much used and abused term in describing architectural styles. Nonetheless, this use of the term can be of some value. Victorian indicates one of several styles used in America during an era...in Brownsville, in the years from 1870 to about 1910.

Eclecticism characterized much of the architecture built in the United States in the immediate post-Civil War period. This is true in the case of Brownsville as well, except that developments in Brownsville lagged behind the national trends by several years.
For instance, the Second Empire style was quite popular in the east coast in the 1860s and early 1870s. Its use in the eastern states dwindled following the panic of 1873. In Brownsville, this style was used in the construction of the Kowalski House as late as 1890. The Kowalski Home, at 507 East Elizabeth Street, was designed by S.W. Brooks. The mansard roof is a characteristic identifying feature of this style. This is a dual pitched hipped roof, with dormer windows that project through the steep lower slope. In this two story home, the mansard roof is marked by decorative fish-scale shingles. Eclecticism is present in the design as Mr. Brooks employed Italianate brackets used on the porch-support columns. The mixture of Italianate detailing with the Second Empire style was a common occurrence at that time. Architects took advantage of mass production of complex house components doors, windows, and decorative detailing. The Brulay mansion at 508 East Elizabeth Street was also built in this French style. This three-story Second Empire Building was destroyed in the 1950s.

Victorian styles tend to overlap. In most U.S. cities, one does not see the clear cut differences between the styles that are apparent with earlier buildings. In Brownsville, there are both similarities and striking differences between some Victoria style examples. For instance, compare the S.W. Brooks Residence with the W. Russell Home. The S.W. Brooks Residence is located at 623 East St. Charles Street. Originally built on E. 13th Street, this home was moved to E. Jackson Street about 1950. Then it was moved again in 1986 by the Big Brothers & Big Sisters of the Rio Grande Valley. The Brooks residence is built in the Shingle style. It has a central entrance, as does the W. Russell Home. Both homes have front porches. The Brooks Residence features very ornate, intricate detailing used at the porch, whereas the detailing of the W. Russell Home seems quite understated by comparison. Upper level balconies project from the front and side elevations of the Brooks residence. This shows the Victorian preference for breaking up the surface of the structure into irregular pieces. The W. H. Russell Home's dormer is somewhat similar. It represents a break from the overall Greek Revival pattern composition that characterizes the W. H. Russell Home, but it is a small break.

"Architecture of this period, although still usually based on historical precedent, represented a reaction to the archaeological bent of the earliest revivalists. Mid-century architects reasoned that no age had produced the perfect architectural expression and that they could benefit from all the best of the past. Why hesitate, therefore, to combine features from various styles? Freer adaptation could evoke the spirit of the past without slavish imitation and would allow more creativity." 4

The Ortiz Store and the Alonso Building are two examples of eclectic buildings that combine features from two or more styles. Both buildings take their basic organization from the Spanish Colonial building traditions. Thick masonry walls, double exterior doors, and intricate brick detailing are some of the identifying features of this tradition used at these structures.

The Ortiz Store, also known as "La Madrileña," departs from the usual Spanish Colonial style pattern by the use of some very elaborate brick detailing...presumably of Victorian (Anglo-American) inspiration. Pinnacles are utilized to mark and subdivide the parapet

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A pinnacle is a small turret-like projection that projects vertically, in this case above the rest of the parapet.

As one style fades and another style of architecture gains popularity, one can sometimes witness this change taking place in the architectural detailing used during the period of transition. The W.H. Russell Home at 602 East Saint Charles Street is a local example of a house built in a period of transition. The Greek Revival plan with a central entrance is still present, but Victorian ornament is used on the porch. The dormer on the second level is a new feature too. Greek Revival and Victorian elements are combined in this house. This house is a hybrid. It exhibits traits of both periods or styles.

Most of the buildings constructed in Brownsville in the early 1900s did not introduce many new ideas in terms of new styles, features, or ornament. The Rock-Gomez Home at 500 East Levee Street and the Tijerina House at 333 East Adams Street are typical examples of this pattern. Both of these homes are well-built and quite beautiful in their proportions and detailings. However, with both homes one can easily imagine the designer having formulated the designs many years earlier...in the 1890s for example, instead of in 1900 and 1912 when these homes were built. Many wood frame homes built in Brownsville before the 1920s are Queen Anne style homes.

The Baroque style may be described as the combination and manipulation of the classical elements of architecture to create an impression of movement. Baroque architecture has a tendency towards theatricality in its aim to make a building's facade interesting, inviting, or even a bit puzzling. Neil MacGregor explains the derivation of this term: "Initially a term of abuse applied to malformed pearls, it was soon used to describe that style of building which, beginning in Rome in the early seventeenth century, rapidly swept Europe."  

Early churches built in Texas were influenced by the Baroque movement. Spanish builders constructed the mission churches of San Antonio de Valero, Nuestra Señora de la Purisima Concepcion, and San Jose y San Miguel de Aguayo in the eighteenth century in New Spain. Mardith Schvetz points out that all of these San Antonio structures were designed "according to a system of geometric proportions emanating from a basic square, the circle, and from the eight-pointed star which can be derived from that square."  

These frontier churches are perhaps less elegant or ornate than those buildings constructed at the same time in Mexico City. However, these structures demonstrate the use of very sophisticated proportional systems of design in the 1730s and 1740s even in the far flung Spanish frontier settlements. These examples listed above show or "reflect the baroque taste of the period as executed within the economic limits of the frontier, and serve as enduring monuments to professional craftsmanship."  

The Churrigueresque style, a particularly exuberant, florid variant of the Baroque, was a notable Spanish export to the New World. In Mexico this decorative tradition was joined with native carving traditions of the local Indians to fashion architectural monuments of astounding beauty. In some cases ornamentation employed on certain facades was taken to such excessive length as to become almost grotesque.
The founding of Brownsville occurred many decades too late for the Baroque movement to have been a direct influence upon the architecture of this City. Happily, one does encounter in Brownsville various Baroque elements utilized in the Spanish Colonial Revival style. Spiral columns, ornamental designs based on organic forms, and many other decorative details of the Baroque are all present in Spanish Colonial Revival style buildings constructed in the 1920s. Events that took place in California earlier in the 20th Century helped to bring this about.

In 1915 two big expositions were held in California for the purpose of celebrating the opening of the Panama Canal. The fair held in San Diego, known as the California-Pacific Exposition featured a notable Mexican Baroque structure...the California Building. Although prior to 1915, there existed a few individual buildings built in California that could be termed Spanish Colonial Revival, the opening of this fair properly marks the beginning of this period movement. Bertram Goodhue designed the California Building. It closely resembled a huge Baroque cathedral...and a very ornate one, too. By the late teens, houses in this style were being built across many parts of the United States due to the activities of architects and the coverage of national builder's magazines. "Goodhue wanted to go beyond the then prevalent Mission interpretations and emphasize the richness of Spanish precedents found throughout Latin America. Inspired by the wide publicity given the exposition, other fashionable architects soon began to look directly to Spain for source material."9

The style was very popular in the Southwest and in parts of Florida as well. This popularity of the Spanish Colonial Revival Style was not limited to house design alone. Public buildings, hotels, and other large commercial structures were built in this style. Brownsville experienced an economic boom during the late 1920s. As a result, we are fortunate to have a legacy of many fine Spanish Colonial Revival style structures in Brownsville.

An example is the El Jardin Hotel, a high-rise structure built in 1927. Sadly, the Missouri Pacific Depot, a revival structure located next door to the Hotel, was demolished. Also built in this style, is the Brownsville International Airport terminal. It was designed by Ben V. Proctor. Known today as the Pan Am Building, this structure is still in use by the City. It is one of the original buildings. The other structure was demolished.

Another notable example of this revival style is the McDermott Motor Company Building, a one story building located at 451 East Elizabeth Street. This 1927 structure now houses part of the operations of the Tipotex Chevrolet Company. It is evident that this auto showroom represents a modern building type. Auto showrooms, such as the McDermott Motor Co. structure, did not even exist in the nineteenth century. The few automobiles that were built in the 1890s were sold out of buildings that housed horse-drawn carriages.

We are indebted to Stephen Fox for his analysis of the popularity of the Spanish Colonial revival style in Brownsville in the 1920s. Fox describes how use of this period...
style was considered a progressive step forward at that time. No contradiction was seen by the designers in using Baroque detailing on up-to-date, modern structures.

Harvey P. Smith designed the McDermott Motor Company Building. Smith selected elements from the Baroque period in composing this particular design in the Spanish Colonial Revival style; spiral columns, a curved-shaped parapet, red clay tiles at the roof, and flanking decorative urns are present at the front facade. The result is a monumental appearance for what is actually a relatively small building.

The Los Ebanos Subdivision in Brownsville features many fine homes in this style. Some of the Spanish-style homes built in the late 1920s in this area might be classified as Mission houses. This is another term used for those buildings with dormers or roof parapets that mimic those found on Spanish Colonial mission buildings, especially the Alamo. The Rockwell House by R. Newell Waters is a Spanish-style home of graceful proportions. This home at 110 Ebony Avenue has no parapet. Instead of a parapet, one finds that the designer utilized the chimney at the front facade as a sculptural element.

This feature and other ornamental features, such as a stuccoed grill of an upper level window, provide a picturesque character to this home despite its simple lines. Other buildings such as the Yturria home on Palm Boulevard and the Valley View Apartments, circa 1929, are even more picturesque. Even the names selected for the streets in this subdivision suggest a romantic past to this area of South Texas: Palm Boulevard, Acacia Drive, Poinsettia Street, Hibiscus Street. No hint is given of the rough and wild nature of the area's historic landscape...all of the references cite "domesticated" or benign trees and plants. The marketing effort for this subdivision conjured up an imaginary past along with a picturesque environment.

In Brownsville, the Southern Pacific Railroad Depot is an excellent example of this architectural style. Designed by Leonard B. McCoy, the Depot was built in 1928. The coped parapet is a typical Hispanic design element. This shaped parapet is reminiscent of Mission San Antonio de Valero (the Alamo) although there are some minor differences between the two examples. The Alamo's scalloped parapet actually dates to 1851 when the United States Army remodeled this structure. The Army rebuilt the ruined church, which was in danger of crumbling away. Use of a high, shaped parapet is a very common feature found in the Spanish Colonial Revival style.

In all revival movements there is much borrowing and adaptation of the traditional shapes and detailing of elements by the designer. Here with the Depot, one can notice how the cast stone ornamentation of the entrance is quite elaborate...more elaborate than most of the early Baroque churches built in Texas. Window grilles fashioned of wrought iron cover many of the windows of the Depot. Each of these grilles, possesses some ornamental characteristics...notice how the iron pieces have been bent or put together in a decorative pattern.

When the Depot was restored in the early 1980s by the City of Brownsville, the open-air arched openings were closed in...to make space for the Historic Brownsville Museum. Note however, that structural glass was used in accomplishing this task. In this
way, some of the open-air aspect or feeling of the original plan of the Depot was retained.

The City of Brownsville officials and staff and the Museum Association took extra steps in drawing up rehabilitation plans for the building's restoration. The goal was to preserve the building's character in adapting it for use as a museum. The Texas Historical Commission staff reviewed the proposed restoration work for the Depot prior to any work getting underway since some federal funds were to be used in paying for this project. In this case, the Secretary of the Interior's Standards were used as the guidelines for the rehabilitation.

Many types of old and historic buildings deserve this type of respectful treatment. Frequently, a building can continue in its original use. If not, finding a new use keeps a building as a contributor to its community. In this way, we may succeed in not only saving our historic buildings and places, but in addition we might transform the values by which we live.

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Endnotes

1 Historic Brownsville-Original Townsite guide by Betty Bay. Published by Brownsville Historical Association, Brownsville, TX 1980, pp. 25-26.

2 Newspaper account from American Flag (periodical 1848) cited Ibid. Betty Bay, p. 22

3 Ibid. p. 21.


7 Ibid., p. 20.


9 Ibid., p. 35.
Architecture in Brownsville: The 19th Century

by

Stephen Fox

Since the mid-1970s, Brownsville, like other U.S. cities, has been affected by the historic preservation movement. As a result, its 19th and early 20th-century architecture is now treated with a degree of reverence that seemed inconceivable in the 1950s and 1960s, when buildings acknowledged to be historically significant were demolished nonetheless. The effort to document, preserve, and rehabilitate historic buildings has succeeded to the extent that Brownsville has a strong city preservation ordinance, a municipally-constituted Heritage Council, and a highly qualified preservation professional who serves as the city's Heritage Officer. In the 1980s a consensus developed that Brownsville's civic identity was intrinsically linked to its historic architecture. To residents and visitors alike, historic buildings seemed to say: This is who we are.

Historical interpretation of this cultural heritage has not quite caught up with the preservation of the artifacts themselves, largely because documentation of many of the preserved buildings is incomplete and research will require the tedious, if rewarding, job of sorting through such primary sources as county legal records, daily newspaper reports, census schedules, and archival materials deposited in many different collections.¹

One can, however, begin to provide a framework for interpreting the architecture of Brownsville and, by extension, facets of the daily lives of its residents. One can also ask how the patterns that emerge from an analysis of its building history compare with those of other cities in order to understand the ways in which cultural experience in Brownsville conformed to, as well as deviated from, broader cultural trends.

What makes the architecture of 19th-century Brownsville particularly fascinating is that it spatially preserves the city's experience as a border town, a condition that caused Brownsville to be shifted abruptly, and with little transition, from the foreground of national and international events to the remote background. Architecture mirrors, and conserves the memory of, the swift, often disjunctive, experience of history in buildings that testify to the complex layering of indigenous, newly arrived, and imported cultures.

The Question of Context

There are a number of contexts through which to begin to explore the architectural history of Brownsville. One is temporal: the major periods that episodes of building seem to impose. For 19th-century Brownsville, these were the period of the town's founding
and its initial growth--1848 to 1865; a brief post-Civil War interlude--1865 through the early 1870s; and the long period between the mid-1870s and the arrival of the railroad in 1904. Another is cultural. What were the influences that affected the development of architecture in Brownsville and how were they transmitted? A third is professional. How were building operations organized professionally? Who was responsible for the production of buildings in Brownsville? A fourth context involves the circumstances of being on a border: How were influences from two contiguous national cultures accommodated and to what extent did each influence the patterns of use associated with the other?

Planning and Building Brownsville: 1848-1865

The town plan of Brownsville was laid out by George Lyons, deputy surveyor of Nueces County, for the Brownsville Town Company in August 1848 adjacent to the permanent site of Fort Brown. The town site expanded from the Santa Cruz bend of the Rio Grande northeast to what is now Pierce Street, and from the Quartermaster's Fence at Fort Brown (now the line of International Boulevard) northwest to what is now Palm Boulevard. The town site was surveyed as a series of rectangular blocks, 300 feet long by 250 feet wide, set in an orthogonal grid of streets rotated diagonally to the cardinal points. The main streets ran northwest to southeast, and the cross streets southwest to northeast. Cross streets were numbered and the main streets, in a show of U.S. nationalism, were named for U.S. presidents, except for Levee Street, which skirted the waterfront, and St. Charles and Elizabeth streets, which commemorated Charles Stillman, the managing partner of the Brownsville Town Company, and his fiancee, Elizabeth Goodrich.

As John W. Reps has demonstrated in his survey Cities of the American West, A History of Frontier Urban Planning, the gridded town plan was favored by the town­ rounding speculators of 19th-century America. It also has a long history of association with European colonization. Spain encoded the gridded town plan into the Laws of the Indies of 1573, by which it regulated settlement in its colonial empire. The Escandón towns of the Lower Rio Grande--Camargo, Reynosa, Revilla, Mier, and Laredo, all platted in 1767-comprised grid-iron lay outs of streets and blocks. In accordance with the Laws of the Indies, each town was fixed on a central plaza, around which the seat of municipal government, the parish church, and the houses of leading citizens were to be built. Matamoros, planned in 1774, conformed to this pattern. Its streets were uniformly dimensioned as ten varas (approximately 30 feet) in width.

The town plan of Brownsville was diagramatically quite similar to that of Matamoros. In less obvious ways it differed. These differences bespoke cultural assumptions about city life and the centrality of public institutions that distinguished the United States from Mexico. The Brownsville Town Company's plan lacked the spatial hierarchy embodied in Spanish colonial towns. It had no central plaza surrounded by public institutions.
Market Square, Brownsville's public square, occupied the interior of a block. Washington Square, which comprised four city blocks, was far from the initial center of settlement. Despite the fact that Brownsville's designation as county seat of Cameron County in late 1848 was critical to its survival, no provision was made for a courthouse square, which provided the central spatial focus of many 19th-century Texas towns. Brownsville had a 19th-century scale that differentiated it from the 18th-century scale of Matamoros. Its main streets, at 60 feet, were twice as wide, and its cross streets were 40 feet wide. Another feature of the Brownsville town plan that differentiated it from Matamoros was that each city block was bisected by an alley, which all lots in the block abutted. Thus, access from a public way to the rear of properties could be had without entering the property from the street front. The organization of space by the city's Anglo-American founders followed a tradition of new town planning that was particular to the United States, even though Charles Stillman and his resident partner, Samuel A. Belden, were residents of Matamoros.

Brownsville was founded because the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo created a new international border along the Rio Grande. The border imposed a line of cultural demarcation that had not previously existed. This was reflected in the early buildings of Brownsville, which mirrored the overlap of Spanish-Mexican Creole and Anglo-American building cultures. There are clear instances of buildings that reflect one culture or the other. There are also buildings in which the two cultures mixed to produce a hybrid. From Brownsville's inception, examples of each of these three approaches were produced.

The Mexican Creole tradition was embodied in a distinct building type, a one or two-story, block-like house set parallel to the street and enclosing an open-air patio behind it. The simplest examples of this type might be one-room deep and one or two rooms wide. Double door (and window) openings were set at regular intervals into a planar street wall of brick. Pilasters (vertical piers embedded in the wall but projecting slightly forward from it) might be stationed between openings, rising from ground level bases to a parapet at the top of the wall. This parapet often rose above the roof level and might be capped with superimposed courses of molded brick. Both the pilasters and the molded brick courses might be detailed to imitate classical architectural decoration. Two-story houses often had balconies that projected over the sidewalk. These were accessible from upper floor openings. Ground-floor windows were often barred with iron cages that projected far enough forward from the exterior wall to permit hinged shutters to be swung open and closed. A large street door might open to the zaguan, an enclosed passage leading from the street back to the patio. The architecture of this building type represented a vernacular style, executed by skilled building craftsmen (as opposed to a high style, designed by an academically trained architect).

In Mexican cities, this house type was built in continuous rows along the sidewalk, strongly defining the street as a corridor of public space. As strongly as it shaped the public space of the city, the Creole house type also shaped the intimate domestic space of
the patio. Houses might be used for residential or business purposes, or both simultaneously. In mid-19th-century Matamoros, the one building that deviated most conspicuously from this type was the parish church, Nuestra Señora del Refugio (1831). Its façade was treated as a screen of classical Roman columns framed by tall towers. In its arrangement of parts, its emphatic verticality, and its high style classical decoration (in contrast to the low style vernacular classical decoration of the Creole house type), Nuestra Señora del Refugio spatially demonstrated the exceptional and superior status of the church within the hierarchy of Spanish Creole public institutions.14

The notion of building type was just as strongly embedded in Anglo-American as in Spanish-Mexican Creole practice. But in contrast to Matamoros, Brownsville's urban composition exemplified a trend common among U.S. cities founded after the first quarter of the 19th century: differences in building types emphasized differences in urban land use. Brownsville exhibited distinct types for dwelling houses, business houses, public buildings, and religious buildings, rather than one dominant building type which was adapted to a multitude of uses. The business district, which stretched from the levee to Market Square between 13th and 11th streets, was characterized by one and two-story brick buildings built side by side and up to the sidewalk line, as in Matamoros. People dwelt, as well as worked, in these buildings. Residential districts tended to consist of free-standing dwelling houses constructed on individual city lots. Houses tended to be set back from the street in fenced yards. The front yard was a ceremonial, semi-public space, often planted with ornamental shrubs and shade trees. The back yard was a work space. American dwelling houses were more likely to be built of wood than brick. They were capped with pitched, wood-shingled roofs. In the coastal South, they were often raised above the ground on piers to permit breezes to blow beneath them. Porches, projecting from the street front of the house, were typical, especially in the South. The Neale House, originally located at 619 14th Street (c. 1850), exemplifies this type. It was a free-standing wood house with a wide front veranda, although it had no front yard. Its veranda was built right up against the sidewalk line, as was true of many houses of this type in Brownsville, such as the later but similar Caledonio Garza House at 909 E. 13th Street (c. 1890).15 Miller's Hotel at 13th and Elizabeth streets (1849), Brownsville's best-known 19th-century hotel, was a two-story wooden house faced with two-story verandas.16 Its small scale and milled lumber construction made it very similar to the business houses that had been erected ten years earlier in such new Texas cities as Galveston and Houston. Henry Miller's "white cottage" at 13th and Washington streets (1851), which Charles Stillman rented for his family, exemplifies most of these characteristics, although it was built of brick rather than wood. In this respect, it was a hybrid of the two cultures: Anglo-American building type and Mexican Creole building technique.17

The most substantial business houses constructed in Brownsville in the thirteen years between the end of the Mexican-American War and the beginning of the Civil War bespoke not the influence of Texas cities or Matamoros, but of New Orleans. New Orleans was the Southern metropolis and the great port city of the northern Gulf of
Mexico. Because Brownsville's connections to the U.S. were principally maritime, New Orleans was the U.S. city to which Brownsville was most closely tied economically. That Charles Stillman's other partner in the Brownsville Town Company was the New Orleans merchant Jacob Mussina conveniently personifies these economic ties. To a much greater degree than was true of Galveston or Houston, Brownsville was influenced architecturally by its trade and transportation connections to New Orleans.

Brownsville's oldest surviving commercial houses... The Gem at 400 13th Street (1849), the San Roman Building at 1231-1241 Elizabeth Street (1850; now altered), the Commercial and Agricultural Bank Building at 1159 Elizabeth Street (c. 1850), the Martínez Building at 1201 Elizabeth Street (c. 1853; altered), and the Yturria Bank Building at 1253 Elizabeth Street (1859)--exhibit versions of an architectural feature typical of brick buildings constructed in New Orleans between the 1830s and the early 1850s.

This was a decorative panel near the top of the street-front wall, which projected forward of the wall plane. This panel was capped by an overhanging cornice. Below the cornice was a band of dentils (decorative, rectangular, block-like projections derived from classical architecture) or diminutive brackets. Below this band, but still part of the projecting panel, was a row of small rectangular indentations, which probably functioned as vent openings. Robert Runyon's photographs from the 1910s indicate that buildings with similar decorative features were once numerous in the 1100 and 1200 blocks of Elizabeth Street. Among Brownsville's surviving business houses, the San Roman Building is unusual in that it has a double-pitched shingled roof framed by high brick side gables, much like the Stillman House and a recurring feature of the brick row houses of New Orleans, rather than the flat, or slightly sloped roof typical of the casa terrada, the terraced-roof Creole house. Although the Elizabeth Street business houses shared many more features with the Mexican Creole type buildings of Matamoros than did Anglo-American dwelling houses, they probably would have appeared "American," rather than "Mexican," to mid-19th-century observers.

Matamoros type buildings were built in mid-century Brownsville. Civil War engravings indicate that Charles Stillman's one-story brick building at 12th and Levee (1848; demolished), the first brick building constructed in Brownsville, had ranks of double-doors set beneath a molded brick cornice. However, there were no business houses in Brownsville that competed in size with the principal houses of Matamoros. Rather than stretching out parallel to the street, as large buildings in Matamoros did, Brownsville's smaller business houses tended to expand back into their lots, perpendicular to the street. The existence of alleys in Brownsville may have influenced such planning by rendering the zagúán superfluous, since rear yards could be entered directly from the alley. Second-story balconies on Brownsville business houses often expanded into wide, roofed verandas, completely covering the sidewalk. The one-story Creole house type, common in Matamoros, seems to have been used very rarely in Brownsville as a dwelling house. The house at 530-538 13th Street was occupied as a dwelling house in the late 19th century, as were several others that no longer exist. Brownsville preserves no examples--and historic photographs or drawings seem to
illustrate but one--of the grilled window cages still visible on the ground floors of Matamoros houses (and in Laredo and San Ygnacio as well). If one-story Creole type houses were used principally as business houses in Brownsville, *rejas* would have been unnecessary since exterior openings would be shuttered when the business was closed and the interior left unattended.

An early and important Brownsville building that illustrates the combination of Mexican and U.S. architectural traditions was the City Market House in Market Square (1850-1852). Until San Antonio's austere Grecian style Market House was built in 1859, Brownsville's City Market House was the grandest municipal building in Texas. It is now the oldest city hall building in continuous use in the state.

The City Market House was an archetypal example of a characteristic 19th-century Anglo-American building type, the municipal public market. Its long, thin plan shape, ground-floor arcades, and roof top cupola were architectural insignia of the public market house. Before the Civil War, it was not unusual for American public market houses to receive more highly individuated architectural treatment than the offices of the city government, which might be incorporated in the market house, as was the case in Brownsville. The priority accorded the market as a civic institution in the U.S. contrasted with Mexican custom. Matamoros' Palacio Municipal at 6a and Morelos (1831; demolished) faced the Plaza Hidalgo at the center of the city, flanked by or facing other important public buildings and the parish church. Matamoros' public market was located several blocks away. Although it covered the interior of a block, it did not rate a plaza of its own. The same separation of municipal offices and public market is present in Reynosa and Nuevo Laredo.

To give the City Market House architectural distinction, the builders--the New Orleans born brick mason, Adolph Seuzeneau, and the English-born carpenter, John P. McDonough--constructed it with brick arches and colossal brick pilasters set on high molded bases and upholding a deep entablature. The architectural treatment was Mexican Creole. The full-rounded ground-floor arches and the elliptically-arched fan lights above second-floor balcony doors were elements that appeared much more frequently on Matamoros buildings of the 1830s, '40s, and '50s than on Brownsville buildings of the 1850s and 1860s. The application of traditional Mexican brick architecture to an Anglo-American building type was one of the most frequent ways in which the two building cultures were combined in 19th-century Brownsville to produce a hybrid. That neither of the contractors was Mexican is of note. Ethnicity or national origin was not necessarily decisive in determining building technique and appearance. Two possible explanations might be inferred from this. Either Seuzeneau or McDonough had worked in Mexico and were familiar with Mexican architectural culture. Or: The laborers who built the City Market House under the master builders' supervision were Mexican, so adherence to Mexican building techniques was expedient.

Apart from the City Market House, Brownsville's most impressive buildings of the 1850s were the first Convent of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament at 9th and Frontón (built in 1853 under the supervision of Fr. Jean Maurice Verdet, OMI, who was
a mason by trade; it was destroyed in the great Storm of 1867), 26 Immaculate Conception Catholic Church at 12th and Jefferson (1854-1859), and the Oblate fathers' Community House behind Immaculate Conception at 13th and Jefferson (1861; altered 1970). 27 All were freestanding brick buildings. The Convent and the Community House were examples of Creole classicism, with windows and doors set between two-story pilasters on high bases, like the City Market House. Both had vent openings above second-floor windows. The Convent had a high hipped roof, but the Community House was a casa terrada.

Amidst these examples of Creole vernacular classicism, Immaculate Conception Church, like Nuestra Señora del Refugio, stood out as a work of modern architecture. It was designed and built in the Gothic Revival style under the direction of Father Pierre Y. Keralum, OMI, (1817-1872), another one of the five Oblate missionaries who came to Brownsville in 1852. 28 Father Keralum had been trained as an architect and cabinetmaker in France before taking holy orders. At Immaculate Conception he brought the modern revival of medieval religious architecture to the lower Rio Grande. The thinness and insistent verticality of Ft. Keralum's rendition of Gothic architecture were typical of Early Victorian Gothic-Revival churches built in the U.S. By the standards of American metropolitan centers, Ft. Keralum's work was not particularly sophisticated. By Texas standards it was. St. Mary's Cathedral in Galveston (1848), the first major work of civil architecture to be built in Texas since the Franciscan mission churches of the mid-18th century, and St. Mary's Church in San Antonio (1857; demolished) were the only two comparable church buildings in the state. Both were designed in the Gothic Revival style by the American-born, Paris-trained architect T.E. Giraud of San Antonio and New Orleans. Father Keralum designed the small, stone Church of Our Lady of Refuge, Roma (1854, demolished 1962), and the large, stone San Agustín de Laredo Catholic Church, Laredo (1871-72). He produced designs for a brick-built rural chapel, from which Our Lady of Visitation, Santa María (1882), and St. Joseph, Toluca Ranch (1899), were built in the decades following his death. 29 All were in the Gothic style and reflected Izr. Keralum's Early Victorian sense of composition and proportion. Immaculate Conception attests to the extent to which Brownsville, despite its isolation, was affected by broader cultural trends current in the 19th century.

The three Catholic buildings of the 1850s represent the varying degrees to which indigenous and imported architectural cultures intersected in Brownsville. At Immaculate Conception, a modern architectural style with religious associations to which both non-Catholic Anglo-Americans and the French missionary clergy could be expected to respond was pursued in the design of the church. By virtue of its size, composition, and architectural detail, Immaculate Conception stood out on its corner site, just beyond the periphery of Market Square. Architecture gave the church building a prominence that compensated for its lack of centrality in the town plan. Why the Community House and the Convent were not also carried out in the Gothic Revival style, given its strong religious connotations, is an obvious question. Reasons of expediency and economy perhaps encouraged assimilation to the local building culture. Such practical
considerations might have outweighed the desire for conspicuous architectural display, which was reserved only for the church building.\textsuperscript{30}

In Brownsville of the 1850s, style-conscious building was unusual and subject to the exigencies of the frontier. It is this condition that underscores the exceptional status of Immaculate Conception Church. Two buildings indicate the way in which elements of Greek Revival decoration were reduced to accommodate what were probably the limitations of local building production. The columns of the Stillman House are simple stuccoed brick cylinders. They suggest Doric columns but possess only the most minimal classical architectural detail. A more ambitious attempt at Greek Revival decor was represented by the Israel B. Bigelow House at 908 Levee (1859; demolished).\textsuperscript{31} It was a type of house frequently found in the garden district neighborhoods of Southern cities: a two-story, three-bay wide town house, with a two-story front veranda and an offset rear service wing. The Bigelow House was built of brick, which would have been unusual in Galveston or Houston but not in New Orleans. What betrayed its frontier setting was the builder's crude attempt to reproduce Greek Revival style crossetted door and window frames with simple raised brick outlines. Brownsville buildings of the 1850s could be "modern" when, as in the case of the New Orleans style business houses, building type and stylistic decoration did not depart too far from familiar local building types and brick-building techniques. Or when, as in the case of Immaculate Conception, a professional could communicate to building craftsmen what was required to reproduce architectural details with which they might have no prior familiarity.

Adaptation to local conditions was evident in other ways. The prevalence of brick construction indicated not only the availability of clay suitable for brick making, but the existence of Mexican brick manufacturers and skilled brick layers. The rosy-tinged brown buff brick with which the Stillman House was constructed recurred on Brownsville buildings into the 20th century. Helen B. Chapman noted in several of her letters of 1849 and 1850 the "handsome brick warehouses" and "good brick dwelling houses" being built in Brownsville. In 1849 she reported that "The price for brick I believe is rather cheaper than in New Orleans, and the buildings I understand are fully equal to what could be built in that city at the same cost." In 1850 she wrote that one reason that merchants, whose stores occupied buildings "of brick, large and handsome," dwelt in "small, unpretending houses," was that "lumber is so high." Abbé Domenech and Teresa G. Vielé, who described Brownsville as each found it in 1852, commented on its brick buildings, although each also mentioned the presence of wood buildings.\textsuperscript{32} Brownsville's building culture at its origin contrasted with that of Galveston and Houston, where brick construction was rare until after the U.S. annexed Texas, and even then was almost never used for residential construction.

Anglo-American milled lumber construction does not seem to have remained economically prohibitive for long. Indeed, of the 15 Mexican-born building professionals listed as living in Brownsville in the Census of 1850, 10 were carpenters. Twelve of the fourteen Mexican-born building professionals listed in the Census of 1860 were carpenters. When the Mexican-born merchant Francisco Yturria moved across the Rio
Grande and built his house at 1424 Washington Street (1853; demolished 1961), it was an Anglo-American type, free-standing, 1½-story wood cottage with a front veranda, set in an expansive garden. Again: ethnicity and national origin did not provide reliable indicators of professional skill or typological or material preferences in 19th-century Brownsville.33

Circumstantial adaptation to local conditions also involved the amelioration of Brownsville's hot, humid climate. This sometimes occasioned departures from the conventions of siting and planning that rather strictly governed the design of city buildings. One prominent example was the substantial brick house built by the merchant H.E. Woodhouse at 1136 Washington Street (1856; demolished c. 1926).34 It had a street-facing front porch that wrapped around the southeast side of the house, opening to a deep side garden in the manner of Charleston, South Carolina, houses. This arrangement appeared on other Brownsville houses, although it never became universal.

Who were the building professionals responsible for Brownsville's architecture in the 1850s? This question can be answered only partially, due to lack of research of primary documents that could establish architectural attributions and details about the careers of building professionals. The U.S. Census schedules for Brownsville of 1850, 1860, and 1870 give some information about building professionals during this period. The 1850 census lists nearly 90 men who identified themselves as a carpenter or brick mason, an astonishing number given Brownsville's population of around 3,000 people. What this indicated was Brownsville's status as a frontier boomtown. Mrs. Chapman wrote in 1849 of the numerous carpenters, "mechanics," and laborers attracted to the Rio Grande by the U.S. Army's occupation of Matamoros and their involvement in the construction of the first Fort Brown.35

Most of the men listed in the 1850 Census ranged in age from 25 to 35. Very few were married and very few declared ownership of real estate. Fifteen men were born in Mexico and one, who was Hispanic, was born in Texas. Forty-three were born in the U.S. (mostly the Atlantic seaboard states, but in Ohio, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Louisiana as well). And twenty-eight were born in Europe (in descending numbers they were from England, Ireland, France, Germany, Spain, Scotland, Holland, Denmark, and Sweden). Census data do not indicate whether or not these men were self-employed, or where they had worked before coming to Brownsville (i.e. might they have come from New Orleans?). Only two men listed in the 1850 Census are also listed in the Censuses of 1860 and 1870: the Louisiana-born carpenter Henry Markwood (born c. 1832) and the Virginia born carpenter Abram B. Mauk (c. 1834-1874). Sanford Kidder, Jr., (c. 1822-1874) a carpenter born in Connecticut who had come to the Rio Grande with Zachary Taylor's army in 1846, is listed in the 1860 Census and his wife and daughter are listed in the 1870 Census. Adolph Seuzeneau (c. 1806-1879) is not listed in the 1850 Census but does appear in the Censuses of 1860 and 1870.36 Markwood, Kidder, and Seuzeneau all married women who were born in Mexico. Thus, one can surmise that the flood of building professionals who swelled Brownsville's population in 1850 were transients who moved on as economic conditions changed. This conforms to a pattern that prevailed in
other Texas cities before the 1870s. Three of the four who remained married women who probably had family ties to the Rio Grande.

The Censuses of 1860 and 1870 give very different vignettes. Only 27 men in 1860 (when Brownsville's population was 2,734) and 35 men in 1870 (when the population had risen to 4,905) listed themselves as carpenters or masons. Twelve of the twenty-seven in 1860 were born in Mexico (two more with Spanish surnames were born in Texas). Twenty of the thirty-five in 1870 were born in Mexico (one more with a Spanish surname was born in Texas). Four men in 1860 were born in Europe; seven men in 1870. A much higher percentage of these building professionals were married, had families, and declared assets than had been the case in 1850. The censuses demonstrate that, after the early 1850s, the building profession in Brownsville was dominated numerically by Mexican-born craftsmen. Without further research in county deed records, it is not possible to determine how many of these men were "master builders," who solicited building contracts, and how many were construction laborers who worked for others.

The only building professional identified in contract documents during this period as an "architect" was Henry A. Peeler. He does not appear in the Censuses of 1860 or 1870, which may indicate that he lived in Matamoros rather than Brownsville. The three buildings that can be attributed to Peeler are the Yturria Bank Building in Brownsville, the Teatro de la Reforma in Matamoros (1861-1864), and the Casa Yturria at 6a and Abasolo in Matamoros (1865).37 Because the U.S. Census schedules were prepared at ten year intervals, they are not the most precise data with which to analyze what probably was a highly mobile population. For instance, there are master builders--such as Juan Valz, who built Francisco Yturria's house, and George More (c. 1826-1872), the Scottish-born master mechanic who built the second Convent of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament in 1868--who do not appear in any of the Census schedules.38 Father Keralum, whose contemporaries described him as an "architect," seems to have undertaken building projects only for the Oblate order. Such patterns--transient building craftsmen and the rarity of self-styled "architects"--were typical of Texas towns as a whole before the Civil War. San Antonio was the only Texas town in which architecture was established as a profession, distinct from the building trades, before the 1870s.39

New Departures and the Old Conservatism, 1865-1870

The Civil War temporarily elevated Brownsville to the status of an international trade center and it was indirectly responsible for the establishment of the architectural profession on the lower Rio Grande. Brownsville's foremost late 19th-century architect-builders, S.W. Brooks and Martin Hanson, Jr., came to the Rio Grande from New Orleans during or just after the war (as did Charles L. Hillger, a prominent architect who resumed his practice in New Orleans after the war).40 While they had a visible impact upon Brownsville and Matamoros architecture, they were also affected by its conservatism to a significant degree.
Matamoros retains examples of a series of buildings dating from the "tiempo de los algodones," as William Neale referred to the 1860s in his memoirs. These buildings conformed to the dominant Creole typology but were bigger in scale, and exhibited decoration that was more modern, elaborate, and "American" than preceding Matamoros buildings. Dated examples were built between 1865 and 1873. These include Casa Yturria, the Casa de las Estrellas (1870) at Abasolo 825, the building (pictured in Chatfield) at 7a and Abasolo (1873), and several undated examples: the Casa Támave at González 463-467, the house across the street from it, and a three-bay wide house in the 600 block of González, just west of Calle 6a. Henry A. Peeler's documented involvement as architect and builder of the Casa Yturria and the architecturally similar Teatro de la Reforma implies what was perhaps U.S. professional involvement in this building episode in Matamoros. If foreign professionals were involved, they did not challenge Mexican urban building types. Instead, they updated them with a repertory of American Victorian decorative devices: segmentally arched window openings framed by molded brick hoods (as on the Teatro de la Reforma, Casa Yturria, and Casa Tármave) or arcuated cast iron lintels (as on the Casa de las Estrellas), vent openings faced with cast iron grills above second-floor windows, and heavy brackets beneath cornices (sometimes in combination with dentils).

Only one Brownsville building exhibited this combination of elements: the Metropolitan Building at 13th and Elizabeth (probably constructed in the late 1860s; now demolished). Across 13th Street from the Metropolitan Building, a three-story brick annex to Miller's House was built in 1863 (demolished 1967). The new wing of the Miller was taller than any house in Matamoros, but it covered less ground than the casas Yturria or Tármave, as was also true of the Metropolitan Building. Architecturally, the Miller annex represented a continuation of the Elizabeth Street business house style of the 1850s. Its only exceptional features were a pair of doors facing 13th Street, framed by elaborate classical architraves. In terms of the architecture of its business houses, Brownsville remained subordinate to Matamoros.

Brownsville in 1860, and again in 1870, was the fifth largest city in Texas. In 1880, it had fallen to the rank of eleventh largest city in the state, but it was more than twice as populous as Corpus Christi or Laredo. Despite what would prove to be the downward trajectory of the local economy, building construction resumed in the postwar period, partially in response to the disastrous effects of the Storm of October 1867. The City Market House lost its top floor to the hurricane. It was reconstructed in a reduced form, with city offices housed in a second-story attic enclosed by a high gabled roof. This reflected a decline in civic aspiration that proved sadly prophetic. New building illustrated the range of alternatives that prevailed in Brownsville before the war, expanded somewhat to accommodate new styles and types current in the U.S. in the 1860s. But these new tendencies were eventually assimilated to the brick building system that so strongly marked Brownsville's architecture as conservative and resistant to unprecedented changes.
Major new institutional buildings reflected this conservatism. George More's expansive convent for the Sisters of the Incarnate Word and Blessed Sacrament (1868; demolished 1969), built on 8th Street between St. Francis and St. Charles to replace the large building lost to the Storm of 1867, exhibited the application of Mexican Creole architectural detail to a free-standing, Anglo-American type institutional building, replete with twin cupolas to signify typologically its status as a public building (inasmuch as the sisters operated their school in the convent). Father Pierre F. Parisot, OMI, pastor of Immaculate Conception, had the Brownsville Academy (or as it was better known, St. Joseph's Academy; 1866; demolished 1971) built on Elizabeth Street between 7th and 6th in an equally conservative manner. Both buildings featured pilasters on bases stationed between arched ground-floor openings. Second-story windows were shuttered and attic-level dormer windows were partially obscured by high brick parapets. Both buildings faced southeast, in an environmentally responsive manner, although this meant that the smaller Academy building turned its narrow gabled side toward Elizabeth Street.

These two school buildings exhibited the combination of Anglo-American building type and Mexican Creole architecture that characterized the first Convent and the Oblate Community House. As in the pre-war buildings, circumstances of limited funds and the need to replace the destroyed convent quickly may have made traditional border architecture the most expedient alternative.

Conservatism was evident in the construction of new elite dwelling houses, which adhered to familiar Anglo-American types. Although Robert Dalzell seems to have been involved in the construction of the Metropolitan Building, he built a conventional 2-story, wood house with a 2-story front veranda for his family at 8th and Elizabeth in 1865. Reflecting the growing prestige of the 700-900 blocks of Elizabeth and Levee streets in the West End as an elite neighborhood was the commodious 1-1/2-story, brick, Anglo-American type cottage that Indalencio Trevino built for his family at 838 Levee Street in the early 1870s (demolished 1970). It was a more expansive version of the Southern cottage type represented by the Stillman House. Only brackets above the columns on its front veranda indicated its postwar construction date.

The Trevino House was built next door to the house of an Irish-born carpenter, Lawrence J. Hynes, who, according to a biographical profile published in the early 1890s, came to the Rio Grande in 1864 to "erect houses that had been manufactured in and shipped from the East." Hynes prospered to the extent that he was able to build the house at 826 Levee Street (1867-1868; demolished 1975) and at the same time acquire Rancho Santa María upriver from Brownsville. The Hynes House represented a very individualistic cultural hybrid. It was a Mexican type building set on its site like a free-standing Anglo-American type dwelling house, except that it transgressed even this convention by being pushed to the back of the lot and not addressing the street with a front porch. The idiosyncracy of Hynes' house suggests that he used conservative traditional types and techniques to shape his house in an innovative, unconventional, and personal way.
The conservatism evident in postwar Brownsville buildings affected other Texas towns in the 1860s and early 1870s. What made Brownsville remarkable is that for the rest of the 19th century, it never moved beyond this condition. Although a cultural lag was visible between U.S. style centers and Texas, Texas' major cities and towns did participate in mainstream architectural trends in the late 19th century. But in Brownsville, the swift succession of High Victorian and Late Victorian architectural styles was scarcely registered at all.

During the 1870s, Brownsville experienced almost no population growth. Between 1880 and 1890, its population increased from 4,938 to 6,134, then remained virtually static through the decade of the 1890s. During this period, Laredo, which obtained the rail connection between San Antonio, Monterrey, and México, D.F. in 1881, grew from 3,811 in 1880 to 11,763 in 1890 and 13,429 by 1900. It did not merely surpass Brownsville and Matamoros but literally sidetracked them. With commercial traffic diverted upriver, Brownsville could not generate enough business to justify more than minimal shipping connections, so that New Orleans ceased to be an influence on the town's architectural development. W.H. Chatfield's publication, *The Twin Cities of the Border and the Country of the Rio Grande*, was devised to try and reverse this state of affairs by awakening outside interest in the border country and stimulating investment in railroad construction and agricultural development. Compared to the volumes of promotional literature that flowed from larger Texas towns during the 1880s and 1890s, Brownsville's one effort seems rather wistful. The Panic of 1893, which occured the year Chatfield's tabloid was published, abruptly ended the real estate boom that many Texas towns experienced in the late 1880s and early 1890s.

Promotional literature on American cities during the late 19th century stressed the role of architecture as a symbol of local economic progress. Architects and builders were likely to be profiled in such publications alongside a city's leading industrialists, financiers, and merchants. Individual buildings, both public and private, were described in extensive detail and the city's most expensive houses were apt to be illustrated. Chatfield adhered to this formula in *The Twin Cities* with his profile of S.W. Brooks (Martin Hanson, Jr., advertised himself as an architect and builder in *The Twin Cities* but was not profiled). Chatfield exhaustively described the Catholic, Episcopal, and Presbyterian churches, the Convent and the new High School, the county courthouse, and the new federal building, as well as buildings at Fort Brown and in Matamoros.

It is interesting to see how gingerly Chatfield dealt with Brownsville's Mexican architectural aspect. "Evidences of Mexican origin are extant in the oldest buildings, and 'jacales' still protect a few of the foreign element from sun and rain; but a large majority of the dwellings are substantial in structure and pleasing in style of architecture, thus attesting the financial prosperity and refined tastes of the owners." Chatfield evidently felt compelled to acknowledge Brownsville's difference from the American urban
mainstream, but stressed that this difference was a residue of the community's beginnings rather than a portent of its future. It was through Brownsville's modern public buildings that Chatfield chose to represent the present, although the evidence they provided was ambivalent.

Brownsville's new public buildings in 1893 were not numerous, although they were conspicuous. During the early 1880s, the Brownsville Opera House (better known as the Vivier Opera House) was built in the residential West End at 10th and Levee, and Cameron County's first purpose-built courthouse and jail were built on 12th Street, between Jefferson and Madison, diagonally across from Immaculate Conception. S.W. Brooks designed the Opera House (1880-1881; demolished 1972). Its Victorian architectural decor was similar to, if less elaborate than, that of the Metropolitan Building and the post-Civil War business houses in Matamoros. The Opera House was not comparable to the Teatro de la Reforma in terms of size, nor to the opera houses built in the late 1870s and 1880s in such growing Texas towns as Sherman, Brenham, or Columbus.

The Cameron County Courthouse (1881-1883; altered) and the adjoining Jail (1883; demolished) were unusual in being designed by an out-of-town architect, J.N. Preston & Son of Austin. At the same time that the Brownsville courthouse was under construction, the Preston firm designed architecturally related courthouses for Bastrop County in Bastrop (1883; demolished) and Bell County in Belton (1883-1884). These were much larger (especially the one in Belton) and possessed much more elaborate architectural detail. The Cameron County Courthouse, pushed onto a series of town lots rather than set on its own square, was almost bereft of ornament, as though architectural enrichment would strain the county's budget. S.W. Brooks supervised construction of the Cameron County buildings, so the possibility exists that the courthouse may have been built without the full array of decorative detail with which it was designed. The courthouse illustrates the absorbing power of the local, brick-based, building vernacular, especially after it lost its ornamented central cupola and corner roof caps in the Storm of 1933. Brooks's twin courthouses for Hidalgo County in Hidalgo (1886; partially extant) and Starr County in Rio Grande City (1886; demolished) were similar to the Cameron County Courthouse, although they were even simpler in detail.

Brownsville High School, constructed on the east half of Washington Square in 1889-1890 (destroyed 1933), underscored Brownsville's poverty and isolation. Designed by Martin Hanson, Jr., and constructed by Brooks, the long, two-story, L-shaped brick building was surrounded by two-story wood galleries. A three-story clock tower, centered on the line of Jefferson Street, typologically identified the school as a public building rather than a rustic resort hotel, which its galleries made it resemble. The tower's mansard cap was an architectural feature typical of the 1860s or 1870s. What was intended as the building's note of architectural distinction thus identified it as provincial and out-of-date.

The U.S. Courthouse, Customhouse, and Post Office at 10th and Elizabeth (1889-1892; demolished 1931) was designed in the office of the Supervising Architect of the
Brownsville's other new public buildings. During the 1880s and 1890s, the federal government's public building program was the target of constant criticism in American architectural journals, whose editors derided the Supervising Architect's office for its inconsistent design standards. These critics probably would not have accorded Brownsville's federal building high marks. But so remote was Brownsville from the mainstream of American architectural practice at the end of the century, that the courthouse, Customhouse, and Post Office stood out as an unusual example of modernate Victorian architecture.

The federal building played a crucial role in expanding the limits of downtown Brownsville by encouraging the growth of the retail district up Elizabeth Street toward it. A three-story, iron-faced retail building, dating from between the mid-1890s and the mid-1900s and constructed at 1031-1035 Elizabeth Street on the same block as the federal building, was Brownsville's largest Victorian storefront. Smaller Victorian storefronts were constructed in the 1100 blocks of Elizabeth and Washington streets. A surviving example is the J.L. Putegnat & Brother Building at 1141 Elizabeth (c. 1895), which has lost its ornamental central gablet. These storefronts constituted rare modern incursions in the business district, which, as the engravings in The Twin Cities show, ad trees growing in it, an amenity that might be appreciated today but would have been seen as a sure sign of Brownsville's complete lack of progressiveness in the 1890s.

The work of Samuel W. Brooks (c. 1829-1903) illustrates the curious phenomenon that might be described as arrested development as it applied to Brownsville's late 19th century architecture. Because he was profiled in The Twin Cities of the Border, Brooks is Brownsville's best-known late 19th-century architect. He came to the Rio Grande in the fall of 1863, one-and-one-half years after the fall of New Orleans to the U.S. during the Civil War. Brooks did not settle in Brownsville but in Matamoros. According to the brief biography published in Chatfield, and expanded on in his obituary notice in the Brownsville Daily Herald, Brooks did not move to Brownsville until 1878.

Brooks did not confine himself to architectural practice, but worked as a lumber dealer, builder, and engineer. Indeed, in the Census of 1880, he identified himself as a carpenter. Only in 1900 did he list himself as an architect. Brooks also held public office, serving eight terms as City Engineer. These multiple occupations suggest the precariousness of professional practice in a marginal economy and the crucial importance of securing appointment to public office under such circumstances.

As a professional to whom a body of work can be attributed, Brooks is intriguing because of his relationship to traditional Mexican Creole types and techniques. He clearly played a part in introducing what were new types and styles in the 1860s and 1870s, yet he also accommodated his work to prevailing local practices. This assimilationist approach is visible in a building that Brooks built (but did not design), the Post Hospital: Fort Brown (1868-1869), the major work of architecture in the rebuilding of the fort following its destruction during the Civil War and the damage it subsequently incurred in

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the Storm of 1867. Willard B. Robinson has demonstrated that the plan of the Post Hospital was based on a diagram circulated by the Surgeon General's Office, which also guided the design of extant post hospitals at Fort Ringgold in Rio Grande City, Fort McIntosh in Laredo, and Fort Davis in West Texas.\(^{65}\) Brooks built the Post Hospital in the border brick style, with brick pilasters rising from bases to a stepped brick entablature. Pilasters framed the arched openings of the galleries that encircled the entire building. The architectural innovation of the Post Hospital was an elaboration of the frieze zone of the entablature. Long brick pendants stepped out at regular intervals from the face of the wall. These were bolder in scale and set up stronger shadow patterns than did dentils. But since they were built with the same brick modules with which the walls were built, they were probably more economical than cast iron or molded brackets. Brooks appears to have accepted prevailing construction techniques, and the architectural conventions predicated on these techniques, and innovated within the limits they imposed. Brick friezes became the most distinctive feature of Brownsville's later 19th-century buildings. The Post Hospital and the contemporaneous Hynes House exhibited the earliest dated examples of this feature.

Two related characteristics bespeak Brooks' equivocal occupational status as he sought to cross over from the building trades to the profession of architecture. One was the conservatism of his work. Brooks' buildings perpetuated into the 1890s compositional formulas and stylistic vocabularies that were features of the 1850s and 1860s, when Victorian picturesque shapes, scale, and style overtook the Greek Revival throughout the U.S. Such large houses by Brooks as the Kowalski-Dennett, Browne-Wagner, and Armstrong houses are much more typical of the 1860s and 1870s than of the 1890s, when they were built.

The second characteristic was Brook's propensity for duplicating details, indeed sometimes entire building designs, a trait that late 19th-century apologists for the profession of architecture would condescendingly have ascribed to builders. Brooks' clearest example was his design of the identical county courthouses and jails for Hidalgo County and Starr County.\(^{66}\) Although such practices may have resulted in designs that were not "original," they have the advantage of allowing one to identify other possible Brooks-designed buildings.

There are strong similarities in composition and stylistic detail between Brooks' Kowalski-Dennett House at 5th and Elizabeth (1893) and both the Gomila-Lorber Wortman House at 7th and Levee (c. 1876; demolished 1972) and the carriage house and stable of the Brulay House at 6th and Elizabeth (1896).\(^{67}\) The front façade of the Casa Cross at 7a and Herrera in Matamoros (1885) is identical to that of Brooks' Armstrong House at 1328 Washington (1896; demolished 1968).\(^{68}\) Chatfield stated that the Presbyterian Church in Matamoros (1877; demolished) duplicated Brooks' First Presbyterian Church at 8th and Elizabeth (1870; demolished).\(^{69}\) Until firm documentary evidence is uncovered, these attributions to Brooks must remain conjectural. He does not
seem to have been the only Brownsville builder to pursue such an economical approach to building design. Martin Hanson, Jr.'s house at 7th and St. Charles is a condensed version of the more elaborately ornamented 1-½ story wood cottage of Captain William Kelly at 7th and Washington (demolished).

The extent to which Brooks, the Hansons, or James McCoy, a third building professional active in late 19th-century Brownsville, adapted Mexican Creole building types is unclear due to lack of documented architectural attributions. The Gomila House at 7th and Levee represented an interesting typological hybrid. Although the main body of the house was a modern, free-standing, French-roofed villa type house, its service wing was a Creole brick block, built right up against the sidewalk line on 7th Street.

Mexican Creole type buildings continued to be built in Brownsville into the 1910s. Among the impressive surviving examples are La Villa de Llanes, the J.H. Fernandez y Hermano Building (1883-1884 and later additions) at 12th and Adams on Market Square, and the Miguel Fernandez Building (c. 1880s) a block away at 11th and Adams. Both are classic "Matamoros" examples of the type, with pilasters on bases, molded brick cornices, shuttered French doors, and, in the case of La Villa de Llanes, a narrow, second-floor balcony.

Three other examples were built outside Brownsville's downtown business center. Unlike Matamoros examples, these were free-standing, rather than contiguous party-wall buildings. The Alonso Building at 6th and St. Charles in the West End (c. 1890); La Nueva Libertad, the Andrés Cueto Building at 13th and Adams in the East End (1893); and the H.M. Field Building at 11th and Monroe (c. 1895) were two-story, brick, corner store buildings. All were part of multi-building complexes. All but the Field Building had their corners framed by pilasters set on bases. All had shuttered, transom-topped French doors and two-story wrap-around galleries. Elaborately corbelled decorative brick friezes crowned with shaped parapets were the outstanding architectural feature of each. The Alonso and Cueto buildings had one-story wings capped by decorative friezes that were less elaborate than those on the two-story portions of the buildings. All were built by Spanish-born merchants, with the exception of the Field Building (which was eventually acquired by Field's business partner, the Spanish-born Andres Pacheco). A one-story, flat parapeted version of this type is El Globo Nuevo, at 15th and Madison (1897), built for the Mexican-born Adolpho Garza. These buildings featured decorative brick friezes that were similar, yet subtly varied. Whether this similarity in detail is a key to the architectural authorship of these buildings has not been established. With the exception of Brooks' frieze at the Post Hospital, none of the buildings attributable to him, Hanson, or McCoy exhibit such features. The corner grocery store was a neighborhood institution in late 19th-century Southern cities; it was not unique to Brownsville. The older neighborhoods of Laredo, Houston, and Galveston retain examples that, like their Brownsville counterparts, were often two-story buildings with two-story verandas or galleries. However, in none of these Texas cities were corner groceries stores the focuses of architectural attention that they were in Brownsville.
The most famous examples of ornamental brick work on the border are the work of the Prussian-born master mason Enrique Portscheller (1840-1915), who lived in Mier and Roma from 1879 to 1894. One structure in Brownsville is tentatively attributed to Portscheller on the basis of stylistic similarity, the tomb that the Mexican-born grocer Lucio Bouis had built in City Cemetery about 1886 to contain the body of his five-year old son Pedro. The Bouis Vault is liberally decorated with Portscheller's trademark, classical architectural detail executed in molded brick. It is as elaborate as Portscheller's most intensively ornamented building, the Silverio de la Peña Building in Rio Grande City (1886). No building in Brownsville possessed such intricately wrought brick work. Nor did any building in Brownsville exhibit Portscheller's characteristic classical architraves framing door openings or his distinctive corbelled frieze detail (which was not as elaborate as some of its Brownsville counterparts). Brownsville's late 19th-century brick architecture adhered to Mexican Creole building types and architectural formulas, as did Portscheller's. They were more individualistic in terms of ornamentation than surviving examples in Matamoros, Laredo, or Nuevo Laredo. However, none achieved the singularity of Portscheller's Roma-period buildings. Mateo E. Adame and James McCoy were responsible for the most exuberant display of brick detailing on a surviving Brownsville building, La Madrileña, built for the Spanish-born Adrian Ortiz at 11th and Madison in 1892. Its brick detail is completely different in conception from that of Portscheller's work and of Brownsville's other corner store buildings.

The engravings in Chatfield's *Twin Cities of the Border* illustrate a once common building type that hardly seems to survive in Brownsville, although there are still examples in Matamoros. This was a one-story, linear building type with a pitched roof, built parallel to the sidewalk and usually up against it. When built of brick, the pitched roofs were often framed by high, side gables. Both brick and milled lumber examples of the type might have wooden canopies covering the sidewalk. Interior spaces were used for residential or commercial purposes. One such building at 12th and Madison survived into the 1980s. It was of wooden "box" construction and contained a succession of doors opening directly onto the sidewalk. The Sanborn Map Company, which first mapped this part of Brownsville in its 1894 edition, identified this building as a "Mexican tenement," implying that its street-facing rooms were rented as small dwelling apartments.

Another example that survived into the 1980s was at 701 6th Street and Adams. Also built of wood, it contained a corner store attached to a free-standing house next door at 715 6th Street. Along Adams, the store building expanded into a wing containing several apartments, each of which opened to the street. At least one example of this type of combined corner store and rental apartment row partially survives at 13th and Madison. The one-story brick Creole type store building at 1247 Madison, visible in one of Chatfield's engravings, had a pitched-roofed wooden wing along Madison that contained apartments. In the 1990s this wing was demolished but in 1992-1993 it was in the process of being replaced by a concrete block wing that appeared to duplicate the dimensions of the old wood wing. It is difficult to determine from historic images and Sanborn maps how old these row houses were.
The 1894 edition of the Sanborn Map Company's fire insurance maps, which showed the outline of every structure on each city block that it mapped, indicated that another Mexican house type was prevalent in certain Brownsville neighborhoods, the *jacal*, to which Chatfield referred. Houses in the 900 and 1000 blocks between Jackson and Van Buren streets were labelled as having thatched roofs and being "Mexican dwellings." These tiny houses, which must have been single-room dwellings, were probably built of vertically aligned wood staves infilled with wood branches and covered by roofs of grass or reeds. Unlike the Creole *casa terrada*, *jacales* typically had pitched roofs. The blocks of Adams, Jefferson, and Madison between 11th Street and Washington Square contained a mixture of *jacales* (sometimes with more than one per lot) and shingle-roofed wood houses of the same diminutive size, some with front porches, others without. Larger cottages tended to be set in the middle of lots, in the Anglo-American fashion. Smaller houses were often built on the front property line, as were corner store buildings, which occurred on at least every other street intersection. However, alignment of houses in rows was rarer than in the older neighborhoods nearer Market Square. By 1906, when the next series of Sanborn maps were published, the neighborhood around Washington Square had begun to be rebuilt with the small Victorian cottages that still predominate there. The 600 through the 800 blocks of 12th Street and the 1200 blocks of Washington, Madison, and Monroe were where more densely configured linear row houses were clustered. An exception was the 800 block of Washington Street, where a row effect seems to have been present in 1894. This block even contained a thatched roof house of fairly substantial size, as well as the still extant (but refaced) Bestiero House, built right up to the sidewalk line at 8th and Washington. Some scholars have concluded that the pitched-roof brick and milled lumber houses of the border represent a translation into more permanent materials of the building shape associated with the *jacal*. If this deduction is accurate, it would make the small, pitched-roof wood houses with front porches which filled out the northern precincts of Brownsville's original townsire in the early 20th century yet another example of cultural hybridity: a merging of the Mexican *jacal* and the Southern cottage with front porch.

This mention of popular house types in late 19th and early 20th-century Brownsville underscores the axiom that architecture spatially embodies power relationships. The surviving public, religious, commercial, and domestic monuments of 19th-century Brownsville largely reflect the concentration of wealth in institutional bodies and in the city's mercantile elite, which tended to be composed largely of Anglo-American and European immigrants rather than Mexican-Americans. Yet as 19th-century Census schedules or the records of interments in City Cemetery during the 19th-century indicate, Brownsville's population was overwhelmingly Mexican-American. Research on Brownsville's architectural history should be carried out with a conscious awareness of the social, economic, and cultural asymmetries on which the ability to build was predicated. The urban landscape associated with Brownsville's popular culture should not be slighted simply because it rarely includes buildings that present themselves as architectural landmarks.
The turn of the 20th century did nothing to diminish the persistence of earlier 19th-century architectural conventions in Brownsville, as four post-1900 houses demonstrate. The one-story, brick, Creole type house at 5th and Levee known as "Mi casita del sur" (c. 1910; demolished 1981), contained the one documented example of grilled window cages in Brownsville. Across Levee Street, the Rock House (c. 1900) is a classic border brick style hybrid: a three-bay wide cottage with a front porch; built of brick; with high side-gabled end walls and even a New Orleans-style raised denticulated panel across its front. The Webb-Martinez House at 1324 Madison (1906-1907) is another border brick construction, with galleries wrapped around its street front and its southeast garden side. The Celaya House at 5th and St. Francis (1904) might just as well have been built in 1874. Its array of projecting, one-room deep wings terminating in chamfered cornered bays, its segmentally arched windows crowned by brick hood moldings, its decorative frieze of bold, simple dentil blocks, and its buff brown brick surfaces make the Celaya House as much a classic of the border brick style in its Victorian phase as the Rock House is of its earlier New Orleans phase or Mi casita del sur of its Mexican Creole phase.

What these buildings testify to is the power of place. They emphasize the local nature of Brownsville's building culture prior to the arrival of the railroad. In Texas, local building cultures began to be transformed in the 1870s as railroads penetrated the settled parts of the state. In a sense "railroad" is a metaphor for the complex of phenomena involving economic and cultural modernization in the U.S. during the 19th century. In the realm of building, modernization included the emergence of a specialized profession of architects divorced from the building trades, the circulation of national architectural journals disseminating new stylistic developments to this professional audience, and the formation of new commercial and institutional organizations with specific and highly differentiated spatial and symbolic requirements.

Modernization transformed cultural production by connecting interested local parties to discourses that, though they might be carried on in small circles and in distant centers, were broadcast nationally or internationally through specialized news media. The growth of cities by in-migration brought new architects, who competed with established local builders and architects on the basis of the newcomers' superior modernity. Thus one-to-one cultural exchanges (such as New Orleans-to-Brownsville, or Brownsville-and-Matamoros) were superseded by the production of media images and their consumption by specialized professionals for competitive advantage across a broad and indeterminate field. The dynamic of change was considerably speeded up. Instead of the reproduction of familiar building types in locally available materials and their incremental adaptation to changing circumstances, new types were constantly being introduced. And new materials, manufactured in distant locations, were made available through new systems of distribution at costs that drove small local producers out of business.

Brownsville's architectural experience in the 19th-century was part of a wider historical pattern that began with the opening of Matamoros as an international port in 1823, resulting in the introduction of foreign, Anglo-American building typologies and
techniques. Brownsville's initial development in the 1850s made it the recipient of modern types and styles introduced by new in-migrants (such as Fr. Keralum) and outside contacts and trade with New Orleans. The New Orleans connection even brought a second generation of builder-architects and their new styles and types in the 1860s. But the shrinking economy of the border and the attenuation of outside communication links after the Civil War reduced the requirement for large-scale new building and provided such limited incentive for the in-migration of new professionals that the cycle lost its momentum. The pressure of externally induced change was so weak that after the Civil War the local architectural vernacular was not marginalized. In-coming building professionals assimilated to it rather than superseding it, even though this vernacular was "foreign" to the newcomers because of Brownsville's border location. The vernacular underwent incremental changes as it was adapted to the newcomers' cultural predispositions. Architectural hybrids emerged, and the vernacular acquired characteristics in Brownsville that made it foreign in a Mexican context. Assimilation of existing customs and to new conditions was a mutual experience, as the house types occupied by both immigrant elites and the indigenous non-elites imply. The local context was the defining context in Brownsville as long as the 19th century lasted there.

It would be intriguing to compare Brownsville's 19th-century experience with those of other centers of Mexican culture in the U.S.: the settlements of the Lower Rio Grande, San Antonio and Eagle Pass, Presidio and El Paso, New Mexico, Arizona, and California. Examining the 19th-century vernaculars of Brownsville in this broader Mexican American cultural perspective would help identify the unifying characteristics of this building tradition, as well as isolating local and regional differences. The Mexican centers of influence on different U.S. Mexican sites, the point of initial contact with Anglo-American culture, the intensity of that contact, the extent to which architectural assimilation between the two national cultures occurred, the impact of local building culture on imported types and styles, and the circumstances under which Anglo-American architecture culture subordinated the hybrid approach all need to be determined and evaluated. What might begin to become apparent is the way that 19th-century border architecture represented (in striking contrast to some of the most dramatic events of mid and late 19th-century border history) a policy of cultural accommodation and mutual respect.

Rice University
Endnotes


4 The plat map in *Century of Conflict* indicates that the four streets south of St. Charles were named A (now St. Francis), B (now Frontón), C (now the right-of-way of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railway tracks), and D. The Census of 1880 identifies what is probably St. Francis as Belden Street. Chatfield's *The Twin Cities* and the Sanborn's fire insurance map of 1894 both use the designations St. Francis and Frontón.


7 Kearney and Knopp. *Boom and Bust*. pp. 15-16. The Abbé Domenech observed of Camargo, which he visited in the early 1850s, that it "resembles all the towns of these frontiers [that is, the Escándón towns]. Indeed, you could say they were all built on the same plan by the same architect." Abbé Domenech. *Missionary Adventures in Texas and Mexico. A Personal Narrative of Six Years Sojourn in Those Regions*. London: Longman. Brown. Green. Longmans. and Roberts. 1858. p. 277. In Matamoros, Camargo, and Mier, the north-south streets are not in 90-degree alignment with the east-west streets. Thus the blocks are not rectangular.

8 Betty Bay in *Historic Brownsville*, pp. 104-108, sorts out the complicated history of the origin of Market Square. No such square was called for in the Lyons town plan. It was created by action of the Brownsville City Council in 1850.

9 At Rio Grande City and Roma, spatial differentiation was pursued to an even greater degree. All streets in these two towns were 60 feet wide. except for the ceremonial avenues that bisected each town site. Broad Street (now Convento Avenue) in Roma. which led from the bluff above the
river up to the parish church. was 120 feet wide. as wide as Congress Avenue in Austin. Britton Avenue in Rio Grande City was 150 feet wide. as wide as Broadway in Galveston. Florence Johnson Scott, "Early History of Starr County," in Valley By-Liners, Gift of the Rio. Story of Texas Tropical Borderland. Mission: Border Kingdom Press, 1975, pp. 32 and 34.


11 The vernacular classicism of the border brick style may not predate the 1840s. The Palacio Municipal of 1831 in Matamoros. architecturally similar buildings in the 500 block of Morelos visible in Robert Runyon's photographs. and the building variously identified as the Governor's Palace in an 1864 engraving and as the Instituto Científico y Literato de San Juan at 40 and Gonzalez do not have pilasters, although these were large, important buildings. However, the houses at Morelos 484-486, now known as the Casa Lauro Villar and dated to the 1840s, have pilasters on bases. Eighteenth-century houses in Monterrey are ornamented with high style classical decoration that might plausibly have provided a model for the decoration of houses along the Rio Grande in the 1840s.

12 Helen B. Chapman wrote a detailed description of the spatial organization and appearance of the large house facing Plaza Hidalgo where the U.S. Army of occupation requisitioned rooms for her and her husband. Caleb Coker, editor. The News from Brownsville: Helen Chapman's Letters from the Texas Military Frontier. 1848-1852. Austin: Texas State Historical Association. 1992, pp. 10-12. Teresa G. Viele likewise describes the interiors of a substantial one-story house in Camargo where she was entertained in the early 1850s. Mrs. Viele. Following the Drum; A Glimpse of Frontier Life. New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1858, pp. 181-184. The Spanish Creole house type was found throughout Spanish territory around the Gulf of Mexico. The reconstruction of the French Quarter of New Orleans after the great fire of 1794 resulted in new building ordinances issued by the Spanish colonial city administration. These mandated fire-resistant brick construction; flat terraced roofs; and alignment of facades with the streets. As New Orleans' foremost architectural historian, Samuel Wilson. Jr., notes. the zaguan communicating with an internal patio. shuttered double-doors, and second-floor iron balconies were characteristics of these post-1794 buildings. Thus, the architecture for which New Orleans' French Quarter is best known reflects Spanish colonial precedent. Samuel Wilson. Jr., The Vieux Carré. New Orleans: Its Plan, Its Growth. Its Architecture, New Orleans: Bureau of Governmental Research, 1968, pp. 102-105. I am grateful to John Ferguson for calling to my attention the determining Spanish influence on early 19th-century New Orleans.


14 An engraving of Nuestra Senora del Refugio with its original towers appears in Father Bernard Doyon, The Cavalry of Christ on the Rio Grande, 1849-1883, Milwaukee: Catholic Life Publications of the Bruce Press, 1956, facing p. 112. So rare were deviations from the vernacular that the so-called Casa Ampudia at Abasolo 689A-691 in Matamoros (c. 1844) stands out because of the low-raked pediment superimposed on its parapet.

15 Bay, Historic Brownsville, pp. 133-139 and 146-147.

16 Miller's Hotel is illustrated in Brownsville, A Pictorial History, p. 58.
Betty Bay documents the construction date of the house and the ownership of the property by Henry Miller in *Historic Brownsville*, p. 39. Its description as a "white cottage" in a newspaper rental advertisement of 1851 may indicate that it was originally painted white.

Miss Bay also notes Samuel Belden's business connections to New Orleans. Kearney and Knopp note that New Orleans had been Matamoros's chief U.S. trading partner since the 1820s. They also cite Eliseo Paredes Manzano on the visibility of the "aliens' housing" in Matamoros in the 1820s. *Boom and Bust*, pp. 30-32.

On *The Gem* see Brian Robertson, "Brownsville's Crown Jewel," *Brownsville Herald*, 14 February 1990. *Historic Brownsville* contains entries on the San Roman Building (pp. 126-129), the Commercial and Agricultural Bank Building (pp. 119-122), the Martinez Building (pp. 122-125), and the Yturria Bank Building (pp. 129-133). The Yturria Bank Building is often dated to 1854. I am grateful to Frank D. Yturria for supplying me with the information that it was built in 1859.

The Friends of the Cabildo's photographic surveys of New Orleans make it possible to identify this feature as one that occurs frequently on New Orleans buildings of the 1830s through the early 1850s. For illustrations of individual examples see Samuel Wilson, Jr., and Bernard Lemann, *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 1: The Lower Garden District*, Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1971, pp. 103, 107, 119-121, 140-141; and Mary Louise Christovich, Roulhac Toledano, Betsy Swanson, and Pat Holden, *New Orleans Architecture, Volume 2: The American Sector (Faubourg St. Mary)*, Gretna: Pelican Publishing Co., 1972, pp. 79-80. Although this detail does not seem to have been common in Matamoros, examples were built there. The building identified by Chaffield as headquarters of the Fourth Military Zone (on the site of the present Palacio Municipal) possessed such a detail. *The Twin Cities*, p. 35. See also Frank N. Samponaro and Paul J. Vanderwood, *War Scare on the Rio Grande: Robert Runyan's Photographs of the Border Conflict, 1913-1916*, Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1992, pp. 53 and 92. There are also a number of Elizabeth Street scenes from this same period in the Harry Lund Collection, Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

The building is visible in the 1864 engraving reproduced in L. Tuffly Ellis, "Maritime Commerce on the Far Western Gulf. 1861-1865," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 77 (October 1973), p. 212. Mrs. Chapman mentions the Stillman Building in a letter dated 4 January 1849: "The proprietors [of Brownsville, Stillman & Belden, have erected handsome brick warehouses at a cost of about three thousand dollars each." *The News from Brownsville*, p. 107. Betty Bay cites a report in *The American Flag* from December 1848 which reported that Stillman had just completed the building. Pierce reported the building extant in 1917 (Frank Cushman Pierce. *A Brief History of the lower Rio Grande Valley*, Menosha: George Banta Publishing Co., 1917, p. 139). It seems to have been demolished about 1921 to build the present Maltby Building.

The Sanborn Map of 1885, the earliest published for Browsville, designates the house at 530-538 13th Street a "dwelling." An examination of the Sanborn fire insurance maps of 1885, 1894, 1906, and 1914 reveal a number of what seem to be Creole type houses that no longer exist. One was a U-shaped, one-story brick house at 901-909 Levee (demolished between 1930 and 1949) configured around a south-east-facing central patio. Two two-story brick houses that featured large walled enclosures were at 1020 Levee (demolished between 1906 and 1914) and at 754 St. Francis (demolished between 1930 and 1949).
The Market Hall of Charleston, South Carolina (1841), is a high-style, Roman temple version of Brownsville's public market. Laredo's City Hall and Market House (1885) is a Victorian rendition of the type. The City Market House is illustrated in its original configuration in Brownsville. A Pictorial History, p. 60.

The Palacio Municipal is illustrated in War Scare on the Rio Grande, p. 53.

Historic Brownsville, pp. 104-105 and 108-109. New Orleans is listed as Seuzeneau's birthplace in Record of Interments in the City Cemetery of Brownsville, Texas, Volume 1, May 7, 1854 to December 31, 1880, p. 38.


The Cavalry of Christ, p. 77. The Community House and Immaculate Conception are illustrated in a photograph dated to the early 1860s in The Cavalry of Christ, facing p. 49.

The Twin Cities, pp. 5-8; Historic Brownsville, pp. 49-60.

The Rev. Pierre F. Parisot, OMI, The Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary, San Antonio: Press of Johnson Bros. Printing Co., 1899, p. 29. Fr. Parisot, another one of the five Oblates to come to Brownsville in 1852, wrote of Fr. Keralum: "Being a good designer and architect he was sent to Texas to superintend the construction of buildings to be erected in the mission entrusted to the Oblate Society." See also The Cavalry of Christ, p. 143, and The Rev. Edward Kennedy, OMI, A Parish Remembers: Fifty Years of Oblate Endeavors in the Valley of the Rio Grande (1909-1959), Mercedes: Mercedes Enterprise, 1959, pp. 1-2. Fr. Kennedy states that the chapel at Santa Maria was built from plans for a model chapel prepared by Fr. Keralum. St. Joseph, Toluca Ranch, is a version of the Santa Maria chapel. None of these sources connect Fr. Keralum to the design of Our Lady Of Refuge, Rio Grande City (1868; demolished). However, it looks as if it might have been his work. There are good photographs of this church in the Robert Runyon Collection at the Barker Texas History Center at the University of Texas at Austin.

The same disparity between high style Gothic Revival churches and vernacular style convent and school buildings occurred in Galveston and San Antonio in the 1850s and 1860s. On the religious significance of Gothic style architecture in the 19th century, see Phoebe B. Stanton, The Gothic Revival and American Church Architecture: An Episode in Taste, 1840-1856, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

"Fifteen Historical Buildings in Cameron County May Be Included in Official Library of Congress List," Brownsville Herald, 10 May 1936. There are good photographs of the Bigelow House in the Fannie Ratchford Collection at the Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin. It is also illustrated in Brownsville, A Pictorial History, p. 59. The first Church of the Advent (1854) at 10th and Washington may also have been another rare example of architectural modernity. Chatfield states that the parish's second church building, constructed in 1876-77 on the same site, was built "from the original plans" of the 1854 building, which had been destroyed in the Storm of 1867. Late 19th and early 20th century images depict a church in the High Victorian Gothic style, but so obscured by shrubbery that architectural analysis is difficult. Its proportions and composition imply a building that would have been very up-to-date architecturally by Texas standards of the 1850s, which is conceivable given the Episcopal Church's role in disseminating

*The News From Brownsville*, pp. 107, 174; *Missionary Adventures in Texas and Mexico* pp. 220-221; and *Following the Drum*, p. 104. In his book *The King Ranch*, Tom Lea states "Affluent Charles Stillman and his merchant partner Belden built themselves brick residences, the first of those show places giving rise to the town's epithet for the rich and uppity "the brick house crowd." Lea, *The King Ranch*, Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1957, volume 1, p. 68. Lea does not disclose the source of this phrase.

33 Information on the Yturria House is from Don Clifford, "Putting History to Bed," *Horizon*, 26 October 1985, p. 1. Milled lumber apparently had to be shipped into Brownsville. S.W. Brooks' biographical profile in *The Twin Cities* states that during the ten years (1853-1863) he lived in New Orleans before coming to the Rio Grande, he operated a lumber yard, and that "he shipped materials for the roof of the Catholic Cathedral in this city [Brownsville], from his lumber yards, in 1857." *The Twin Cities*, p. 20.

34 The Woodhouse House is illustrated in *The Twin Cities*, p. 21.

35 *The News from Brownsville*, p. 102. The Census of 1850 enumerated what were then Cameron, Starr, and Webb counties as one district. The Brownsville returns came first, although one must guess at where the stopping point is. The 3,000 population figure is cited in *Boom and Bust*, p. 69.

36 Mauk, Kidder, and Seuzeneau all died in Brownsville. Their ages at time of death do not coincide with the ages that they declared themselves to be in the Census schedules. *Records of Interment, Vol. 1*, pp. 22, 26, and 39.

37 Henry A. Peeler is identified by Chatfield as the "architect" of the Teatro de la Reforma in *The Twin Cities*, p. 32. Eddie Valent reprinted passages from the building contract for the Reforma in which Peeler is called "arquitecto" in "Original Reforma Theater was Matamoros Palace," *Brownsville Herald*, 6 November 1973, p. 8D. Frank D. Yturria states that Yturria family records identify Peeler as architect and builder of the Yturria Bank Building in Brownsville and Casa Yturria in Matamoros. Henry A. Peeler is mentioned in an article in the *Galveston Daily News* of 11 April 1884, but he does not seem to have practiced in Galveston, as he is not listed in city directories there at any time during the 1880s. He is not listed in the Census of 1880 as living in Texas.

38 Valz is identified as builder in the article cited in footnote 33; More by Mother M. Patricia Gunning in *To Texas With Love*, p. 92 (where she spells his name as Moore). More is listed in the *Records of Interment, Vol. 1*, p. 28, where is occupation is listed as 'master mechanic' and his place of birth as Scotland. The Census of 1880 lists as living in Brownsville what seems to be his widow and 5 children. The eldest son, William Moore (rather than More), was a carpenter, 29 years old, and born in Texas.

39 Both the Census of 1860 and the Census of 1870 list only 8 men in Texas who identified themselves as architects. By 1880 that figure had risen to 52.

40 Martin Hanson, Jr., (b. 1857) was a child when his parents came to Brownsville from New Orleans. The senior Hanson (c. 1825-1900) was listed in the 1880 Census as a carpenter, born in Louisiana of Norwegian parents (the 1900 Census lists him as having been born in Denmark). By 1880, the Hanson household, which included 22-year old Martin, Jr., who listed himself as a carpenter, seems to have lived at 647 St. Charles. In the 1900 Census, Martin, Jr., is listed as head
of the household, which included his father-in-law, the Irish-born carpenter John Lynd first listed as living in Brownsville in the Census of 1880. Lynd's daughter, Ella Lynd Hanson, was also born in Louisiana. Charles L. Hillger's son. Samuel E. Hillger, is listed as having been born in Brownsville in August 1861 in Henry F. Withey and Elsie Rathburn Withey, Biographical Dictionary of American Architects (Deceased), Los Angeles: Hennessey & Ingalls, 1970 (originally published 1956), p. 287.

41 Century of Conflict, p. 81.

42 Most of these buildings are surveyed in the Catálogo nacional de monumentos históricos inmuebles, Tamaulipas, tomo II, pp. 421-422, 425-426, and 427-428. I am grateful to Mark Lund for providing me with a copy of this volume. The Casa Tarnave is cited in Alan Hollander, "Strolling Through the Centuries: A Walking Tour of Matamoros," Horizon, 13 January 1985, pp. 4-5.

The Metropolitan Building is illustrated in Brownsville. A Pictorial History, where it is identified as the Metropolitan Building (p. 79) and the King Building (p. 114). Chatfield calls it the King Building in The Twin Cities, p. 27.


45 The revised version of the City Market House is illustrated in Brownsville, A Pictorial History, p. 69.

46 To Texas With Love, p. 92. There is a drawing of the convet in Edward M. Schiwetz, Buck Schiwetz' Texas, Austin: University of Texas Press, 1960, p. 47. It is also illustrated in Brownsville, A Pictorial History, p. 67, with a photograph that shows its 1883 annex, which was demolished in the mid-1920s.

47 Reminiscences of a Texas Missionary, p. 112. There are photographs of St. Joseph's Academy in The Cavalry of Christ, facing p. 80, and in the Harry Lund Collection at the Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin.

48 A Brief History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, p. 120. The house is illustrated in The Twin Cities, p. 25. Census returns for 1870 indicate that the 700 and 800 blocks of Elizabeth comprised a family enclave of the Dalzell Joseph L. Putegnat, and Frederick E. Starck households (Mrs. Dalzell, Mrs. Putegnat, and Mrs. Starck were daughters of Petra Vela de Vidal Kenedy). In the 1880s and '90s the 900 and 1000 blocks of Elizabeth would become a Powers-Hicks-Combe-Wells family enclave. Such elite family enclaves were not unusual in late 19th-century American cities.

49 Historic Brownsville, p. 139. There is a fine photograph of the Trevino House in the Robert C. Runyon Collection at the Barker Texas History Center.

50 John Henry Brown, Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas, Austin: L.E. Damefi, Publisher, undated (c.1891), p. 722. There are several references to the Hynes House in this profile, more than was usual for such biographical profiles.

51 Calvin Walker's drawing of the northwest side of the Hynes House appears in Historic Brownsville, facing p. 148. There is a good photograph of the front of the house in the Harry Lund Collection at the Barker Texas History Center.


53 Examples are the American Cities series, produced by Andrew Morrison in the 1880s. These included books on Galveston and Houston.
54 The Twin Cities, p. 2.
57 There are good photographs of both of these courthouses in the Runyon Collection at the Barker Texas History Center. The first floor of the Hidalgo County Courthouse still stands in downtown Hidalgo, as does the Hidalgo County Jail.
60 This building does not appear in the 1894 Sanborn Map Co. fire insurance map of Brownsville, but it was in place when the next edition was published in 1906.
61 The Putegnat Building first appears in the 1906 edition of the Sanborn map of Brownsville. The building is visible in photographs published in Brownsville, A Pictorial History on pp. 78 and 89.
62 The Twin Cities, pp. 20-21; and "Death of S.W. Brooks," Brownsville Daily Herald, 16 February 1903, p. 3.
63 There are no Census schedules for 1890, so how Brooks identified himself in 1890 is not known. In The Twin Cities his primary occupation is identified as architect.
64 Martin Hanson, Jr., held the position of County Surveyor of Cameron County on a multiple-term basis. In the 1900 and 1910 Census schedules Hanson identified himself as a surveyor rather than an architect or carpenter.
65 Texas Public Buildings of the Nineteenth Century, Austin: University of Texas Press 1974 p.48; and Robinson, "U.S. Forts on the Texas Frontier," Texas Architect, 36 (May-June 1986), p. 74. Brooks' biographical profile in The Twin Cities attributes to him the construction of "various buildings" at Fort Ringgold (p. 21). The similarity of the Post Hospital at Fort Ringgold to that at Fort Brown is obvious, although the Fort Ringgold hospital lacks decorative detail. The post hospitals at Fort McIntosh and Fort Davis were built on the same plan as those at forts Brown and Ringgold, but received less monumental architectural treatment. Photographs of each are published in Jerry Thompson, Laredo, A Pictorial History, Norfolk/Virginia Beach: The Donning Company, 1986, p. 165; and Larry Good, "Contemporary Lessons from Fort Davis," Texas Architect, 37(March-April 1987), pp. 28-29.
66 Although disdained by architectural critics, the practice of duplicating designs was engaged in by architects. Such prolific 19th-century Texas courthouse architects as F.E. Ruffini of Austin, Alfred Giles of San Antonio, and Eugene T. Heiner of Houston virtually duplicated their own designs in part, no doubt, because the spatial requirements for county courthouses were so similar. The People's Architecture, pp. 112-117, and 128-136.
67 Calvin Walker's drawing of the Gomila-Lorber-Wortman House appears facing p. 169 in Historic Brownsville. The Brulay carriage house and stable is illustrated in Brownsville, A Pictorial History, p. 122. The latter possessed pilasters on bases at its corners and a denticulated cornice.
The Armstrong House is illustrated in *Brownsville, A Pictorial History*, p. 82.

The Twin Cities, pp. 9-10, 20; *Boom and Bust*, p. 161.

*Historic Brownsville*, facing p. 168 and p. 170; *Brownsville, A Pictorial History*, p. 75; and *The Twin Cities*, p. 21.

The Gomila House was interesting because of the way that its spatial organization in a T-shaped plan took advantage of the prevailing southeast breeze. This entailed orienting the principal rooms to the southeast-side-garden. The Kowalski-Dennett and Browne-Wagner houses were designed with versions of this T-plan arrangement to give major rooms southern exposure to their side gardens. Calvin Walker's drawings of the one-story wood cottage at 614 Washington *oric Brownsville*, facing p. 134. indicate that it had a plan arrangement similar to that of the Gomila House and galleries that were detailed in the same manner. The rear service wing at the Gomila House was originally a free-standing building which was joined to the house between 1914 and 1919, according to the Sanborn maps.

There are entries for both of these buildings in *Historic Brownsville*, pp. 48-49 and 98-99. The Sanborn maps indicate that both buildings were added to substantially before achieving their present forms. Another multi-building urban complex which, as the Sanborn maps show, grew incrementally over a series of lots is the two-story brick building at 11th and Washington. It has suffered abusive alteration.

The Alonso, Cueto, and Field buildings are all documented in *Historic Brownsville*. pp. 157-158, 145-146, and 87-93. There are photographs of all of these buildings in the Runyon Collection. It is interesting to note that the little house behind the Alonso Building, which faces 6th Street and which Betty Bay states contained the family's dining room and kitchen, has a denticulated raised panel, like the Elizabeth Street business houses of the 1850s.

The Garza Building is also documented in *Historic Brownsville*. pp. 142-143. In Laredo, Houston. and Galveston, the most prominent surviving corner grocery stores were often built by Sicilian immigrants. Spanish immigrants stood out for their connection to such establishments in Brownsville.


Oddly. there is no record of the burial of Pedro Bouis in the *Records of Interments in the City Cemetery of Brownsville. Texas. Moreover. the 1880 Census listed Pedro Bouis' age as 15.

*Historic Brownsville*. pp. 95-97. There is no listing for James McCoy in the 1880 Census or the 1900 Census. Mateo (also listed as Matias) E. Adame is listed in the 1900 Census as a stone mason who was born in Mexico in 1869 and came to the US in 1872.

*The Twin Cities*. pp. 2-4. Particularly visible in the engraving "View of Brownsville-West from Courthouse" on p. 3 is the row at 12th and Adams. which can also be seen in a photograph published facing p. 49 in *The Cavalry of Christ* and dated to the early 1860s. Examples of this house type are illustrated in the *Catalogo nacional de monumentos historicos inmuebles* for Matamoros on pp. 457-458, 461-464, 485-488, 675-676, and 699-702.

*Historic Brownsville*, p. 67.

The inside front cover of The Twin Cities contains an advertisement for the grocery store of Caledonio Garza, listed at 13th and Madison.


"Mi casita del sur." the Rock, Webb-Martínez, and Celaya houses are all included in *Historic Brownsville*, pp. 171-172, 144-145, and 160.


Two essays that examine the phenomenon of cultural exchange in buildings are referred to in footnote 10.
One way to get at the cultural evolution of an area is to take a look at how the place has been depicted in fictional works over time. Although fiction is, by definition, literally untrue, it generally holds a lot of truth within its imaginary frame. That is as observable for the fictional Rio Grande Valley as it is for William Faulkner's memorable Yoknapatawpha county in northern Mississippi.

The human beings who populate fictional worlds act out of the same human nature that one finds in the real world. Whether the viewpoint of a story is hopeful (romantic) or cynical (satiric), men and women nevertheless are moved by love, hatred, jealousy, friendship, ambition, despair, greed, altruism, and so on. Consequently, the characters in fictional works about the Valley are not unique, but the circumstances they live in are. These characters (and the real people that they resemble) are indelibly conditioned by the place and culture insignificantly or radically as they interact with it. These interactions are the stuff of fiction, of the stories about how people live and what they do and what they think about the world they live in.

Dualism has been a fact of life in the Valley, as it is with all border communities. Deep South Texas is a world determined in large part by a number of dualities, which are sometimes reconcilable, sometimes not: land and water, ranching and farming, urban life and rural life, Mexican culture and American culture, Mexican-American and Anglo-American. Writers focusing on the Valley inevitably work within the dualisms that shape the era that they have chosen to populate. (Brief descriptions of each of their works can be found in the annotated bibliography at the end.)

Geographically, of course, the land of the Valley has been bordered for eons by the ocean to the east and the Rio Grande to the south. These bodies of water have provided jobs and avenues of transportation. In the 19th century, as depicted in Sarah Sanborne Weaver's novel, *The White Buck*, trade centers and urban life were confined to the coastal Brownsville-Point Isabel-Matamoros area, and the rest of the Valley was rural and engaged primarily in ranching, through the grazing of cattle, goats, and sheep. Many of Weaver's characters are ranchers at the western reach of the Valley, on both sides of the river, and she describes several trips, by boat and by horseback, down the river to the towns of Brownsville and Matamoros and the port of Point Isabel. Even well into the 20th century, of course, ranching was the dominant way of life for most of the Valley. Zane Grey touches on ranching and cattle thieving while constructing a long story, "The Ranger," about a sultry maiden kidnapped by Mexican bandits and rescued by a veteran Texas Ranger. And Minnie Gilbert's novel, *Sunrise Song*, offers a brief glimpse of ranch
community life near Mission in 1914-1915, when local ranchers are victimized by bandits and cattle thieves, several of whom are their neighbors. If the Valley had remained largely arid, ranching would still predominate, and perhaps the area would be lightly populated, like the ranchlands of West Texas, New Mexico, western Colorado, and Wyoming.

But ranching eventually was first challenged and then superseded by farming as the mainstay of the Valley's rural economy. Beginning in the early years of this century, traditional ranching practices have been grudgingly displaced by the clearing of vast tracts of brush land, the building of irrigation systems using river water, and the introduction of citrus, grain, vegetable, sugar cane, and cotton farming. Cleo Dawson's She Came to the Valley is one of a number of novels that characterizes the process by which ranch land has been turned, acre after burning acre, into farm land. Dawson's novel records the frontier world that existed with the founding of Mission. (A movie by the same name was later made of the story.) Dawson describes the slick land promoters and their busloads of prospective farmers from the Midwest. Art Stilwell, in Uncovered Wagon, also tells the story of unscrupulous promoters who sell unirrigated lands at outlandish prices to unwitting outsiders dazzled by the lure of the "magic valley." Despite the high-pressured oversell, the Valley's mild climate and irrigated fertility did pay off in lots of land put to farming, and the growers found they needed cheap help to bring in the various crops. As poor Mexicans learned of the opportunities in the fields north of the river, they came in droves, illegally, wading or swimming or boating across (and sometimes drowning in the process). The travails of the illegal migrant, or "wetback," are documented sentimentally in Frank Ferree's Green Fields of Wetback Land and Claud Garner's Wetback. The most effective account can be found in Genaro González's Rainbow's End, which traces the migrant experience through the initial crossing, years of field work, and eventual retirement; only then, at the urging of his daughter and son-in-law, does the protagonist seek and obtain U.S. citizenship. In Río Grande Echoes, Kate Klingeman focuses not on the migrant worker but on one of he entrepreneurial growers, whose outsized ambition leads him to overextend his resources and lose all in an infrequent freeze. His wife simultaneously abandons him for the charm and sophistication of New York City.

Far from the culture capital of the nation, the Valley's cities and towns have grown in this century to offer a modest range of urban job opportunities, such as education and light industry and banking and services, both professional and commercial. Américo Paredes' George Washington Gómez offers a remarkably rich look at life in Jonesville-on-the-Grande (Brownsville) from about 1915 to 1940. The protagonist and his fatherless family come from the brush country and find a niche in town, where young Gómez earns respect in the community through hard work and diligent study, but chafes under the cultural and political prejudice directed at all Mexican-Americans. In Magic Valley, Margaret Bell Houston portrays the social life of Brownsville's elite around 1930, with its dinners and dances and occasional professional entertainment. Hart Stilwell's other Valley novel, Border City, critically details the corruption in Border City's
(Brownsville's) political and business communities from the viewpoint of a disenchanted young reporter. A contemporary version of this perspective emerges in G.F. McHale-Scully's *El Cabrón*, a novel in which the chicanery of politics ends up taking a back seat to the hard breathing of sex. Both of these novels move from Brownsville into Matamoros (for eating, drinking, and dating) and back, as does Earl Thompson's *Caldo Largo*, a story of shrimping out of Port Isabel (set about 1958) that also provides extensive exposure to the seamy side of Matamoros, its prostitution and graft. The most comprehensive account of the Valley's urban world can be found in Rolando Hinojosa's ongoing saga, the *Klail City Death Trip* series. Numbering between eight and eleven volumes (depending on whether Hinojosa's own restructured translations are counted separately), the series introduces a cast of hundreds of Valley residents, with a tighter focus on about a half dozen of them. In recounting events primarily from the 1940s through the 1970s, Hinojosa's Mexican-Texans live their lives, variously narrow and full, within the construct of an Anglo-Texas power network that connects banking and real estate and politics. Although in Hinojosa's Valley the community isn't segregated, either socially or professionally, the Anglos retain and exercise the power that their ancestors had bequeathed them.

The conjunction of different cultures and of different ethnic identities permeates all of the dualities that I have already described, and the cultural and ethnic tensions over the past 150 years account for a particular richness in culture and an often tragic history of prejudice and exploitation. At its best, the blending of Mexican and American traditions has expanded the region's range of values, languages, cultural heritage, and cuisine. All of the novels have details that draw upon these features, providing local color, at the least, and often thematic complexity. But ethnic differences are at the heart of most of these stories, and the cruelty of ethnic stereotyping is the historical fact that has shaped this culture's development.

Ethnic identity in the Valley is really a kind of double dualism, with internal gradations as well. That is, the basic ethnic dichotomy is Anglo and Mexican, but the Mexican identity is itself divisible into its Spanish and Indian roots. Even more gradations are possible; James Michener in his novel *Texas* cites the colonial Spanish government's preoccupation with heritage, reflected in a list of eighty-five racial mixtures, including peninsular (Spanish-Spanish, both parents from Spain), mestizo (Spanish-Indian), mulatto (Spanish-Negro), coyote (mulatto-Indian), and cambujo (Chinese-Indian). Mexican writers have pondered their country's dual heritage, and the problems with identity that have ensued; Carlos Fuentes' novel *A Change of Skin* explores the theme of the Spanish rape of Mexico, or more precisely the Indians' betrayal of their culture, as symbolized by Malinche's secret pact with Cortés. (One need only watch any contemporary Mexican soap opera to observe that the glamorous roles are filled by actors and actresses who look European, while subservient roles are filled largely by those with prominent Indian features.) It isn't surprising, then, to find this identity conflict present in Valley fiction as well.

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Zane Grey's handling of ethnic differentiation follows the pattern of ennobling the lighter-skinned Spanish-Mexican and debasing the darker-skinned Indian-Mexican. In "The Ranger," the ranch foreman and father of beautiful Roseta is a "Mexican of quality, claiming descent from [a] Spanish soldier," while the bandits, led by "the half-breed Quinela," are described as "jabber[ing] like a lot of angry monkeys." When Roseta speaks of her wild streak, she confesses that "I have peon blood in me...My father always feared I'd run true to the Indian." Sadly, Grey takes these stereotypes at face value. But Hart Stilwell's young newspaperman in Border City sarcastically chides a downtown hotel owner for welcoming the light-skinned elite from Matamoros while turning away their darker Mexican-American cousins. Sol, a wise, elderly lawyer and father figure, offers an optimistic projection that perhaps reflects the author's own hope: "The mestizo is a new race—a race in the formative stage. It is the first new race to be produced in many a century, and it may possibly become the most interesting since the Anglo-Saxon assimilated the Norman and emerged as the breed we know as English." Regardless of what the future holds, it is clear that in the past, the Valley mestizo has typically been labeled "inferior" and treated accordingly.

Which leads us to the greatest, and most obvious, duality in the Valley culture—the tension between Anglo and Hispanic. Weaver, Paredes, Stilwell, Garner, Fere, Hinojosa, and González document in detail the history of prejudice and greed. Enterprising Anglos have usurped Hispanic lands, exploited vulnerable Hispanic workers, and parlayed their profits into political power. Rolando Hinojosa has given us his most extensive portrait of the consequences of these developments into modern times in his Klail City Death Trip series, but the other stories lay the groundwork and fill out the picture.

Yet life is change, and the Valley in recent years has reflected the national reaction against prejudice. Hispanics and Anglos continue to marry, Hispanics hold political power, and Hispanics climb the education ladder. Hinojosa's saga and McHale-Scully's novel document aspects of this change, but the story of this blending has yet to be told.

The University of Texas at Brownsville.

Annotated Bibliography

Below is a list of all the fictional works I have found that focus, fully or significantly, on the Valley. Most of these works are novels, but I have included a long story by Zane Grey and collections of stories by Genaro González and Américo Paredes. For each, except for the two works at the end that are yet forthcoming, I offer a brief summary and evaluation. Readers who know of novels not listed here are encouraged to send the names of author and title to me via the English Department, University of Texas at Brownsville, 80 Fort Brown, Brownsville, Tx 78520.

Another action-packed story from the master of the Western, set outside Brownsville about 1920. Vaughn Medill, a 33-year-old veteran Texas Ranger, crosses the river in hot pursuit of Mexican bandits who have kidnapped the young beauty he most admires, and after being captures himself he manages to kill several bandits, escapes, and discovers that his romantic longing is warmly reciprocated. The stereotyping is standard adventure fare—bad guys, good guys, innocent maiden—but the general demeaning of Mexicans is offensive.


Depicts the romantic adventures of a young woman living on a splendid estate outside of Brownsville in the late 1920s or early 1930s. Tamora Conway learns the difference between harm and love and finally reunites with her Mexican mother, who had abandoned the family for "true love" many years earlier. This predictable romance is long on fashion and short on significance.

1943 Dawson, Cleo. *She Came to the Valley.* Austin: Jenkins, 1972.

An account of the founding and settling of Mission, as the Westall family arrives at the site of the new town in 1908 and takes a role in its development over the next eight or nine years. The novel vividly depicts the town's early construction, the high-powered land promotion of the "Magic Valley," and the spillover violence from the Mexican revolution. But the characters act out stock roles, the dialogue often resembles the talk in a dime Western, and some historical details are widely inaccurate.


A proletarian novel of urban working life, set in Brownsville and Matamoros in the early 1940s. The narrator, Dave Atwood, is a cynical young reporter for the Border City (read Brownsville) *News* who falls in love with a beautiful young Mexican and struggles against the corruption of the local power structure. The novel's vein of sentimentality is offset by its sardonic tone, and much of the description and characterization is richly rendered.


Traces the experiences of a "hybrid" young man from Michoacán (fathered by an American prospector) who seeks his fortune as a "wetback" in the Valley in the 1920s. Despite several deportations and shoddy treatment by unscrupulous opportunists on both sides of the river, Dionisio Molina turns his goatherding and farming skills into profits and eventually acquires a faithful wife and American citizenship. Despite its sentimentalism, the success story is reasonably well crafted and entertaining.


A thinly veiled fictional account of Stilwell's youth from the early 1900s into the 1930s, with a focus on the figure who domineered over the entire family—his father, the Old Man. Billy Endicott, the narrator, describes the family's wanderings through South Texas, from the Valley to San Antonio, as the restless, violent-tempered Old Man
initiated one project or another that ultimately failed: from raising citrus trees or grapes or turkeys to picking cotton to sharpening tools for the military in World War I. In words that ring with clear-eyed anger, Stilwell masterfully exposes the Old Man's injurious nature while acknowledging his own efforts to come to terms with the violent stubbornness he finds in his own heart.


Set in the 1940s and chronicles the romance of a Texas Ranger-turned land hawker-turned Texas Ranger and a beauty whose parents ("snowdiggers") he had lured to the Valley from Iowa years earlier. The half-Indian ranger quits the service, settles in Hidalgo with his bride, and uses a windfall inheritance to build a farming empire. His marriage founders on his wheeler-dealer neglect as his empire is destroyed by a hard freeze. This portrayal of Valley entrepreneurship is weakened by stock characterization and such wooden dialogue as "I've been a wicked man, and I know it. I'm not worthy of a woman like you, but I'll shore make you a damn good husband."


A sympathetic portrait of the victimization of "wetbacks" who provide the Valley with cheap farm labor from the mid-1920s to the early 1950s. In a postscript the author appeals for readers' support for Volunteer Border Relief (a charitable organization that he served as president), which had in 1954 "furnished 31,000 penicillin treatments for the eye and skin infections prevalent in the area, food, clothes, etc." The novel dramatizes his humanitarian concern but suffers from weak characterization and clumsy plotting.


An episodic account of Joe Swallow's eventful life from his tenth birthday in 1875 to his marriage, at fifty-five, to the sweetheart of his youth in 1920. Born on the Mexican side of the Rio Grande because of his father's bitterness over the Confederate defeat in the Civil War, Joe ranges from the Valley to Corpus Christi to Denver and back in search of a fortune worthy of his wealthy sweetheart. Despite the story's overall sentimentality, Weaver has fashioned a lively and detailed portrait of this historical era, from the green jays in the brush to a yellow fever epidemic that ravaged northern Mexico.


Later recast in English by the author as **The Valley**, published in 1983 (see below).


Thompson, Earl. **Caldo Largo.** New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1976

An adventure story set in Port Isabel, Brownsville, and Matamoros in the late 1950s. Johnny Hand, the narrator, is a shrimper who works hard, plays hard, and barely escapes with his life while running guns to Cuba to resupply Castro's guerrilla forces. Slickly written with plenty of local color, including shrimp fishing in the Gulf, a wild Charro...
Days romp, and a detailed visit to Matamoros' red light district, the novel suffers from gratuitous sex, and the reader is left with Johnny's moral spinelessness during the story's climax.


1982 Hinojosa, Rolando. **Rites and Witnesses**. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1982. The novelist uses a controlling narrator, testimonial voices, and dramatic dialogue to trace two ancient rites as they effect the Valley: the rite of war (Rafe Buenrostro in Korea in 1950-1951) and the rite of work, or business (the economic power brokers of banking and ranching in 1959). Racist and elitist overtones color both the violence and camaraderie of American soldiers in Korea and the profit-taking of prominent Anglo Valley families. The interplay of these two rituals provides a narrative tension that holds the fragmented parts together.

1983 Hinojosa, Rolando. **The Valley**. Ypsilanti: bilingual Press, 1983. The author's English version of *Estampas del valle y otras obras* (1973). In this first novel in his ongoing Klail City Death Trip Series, Hinojosa adopts the experimental narrative technique of presenting a series of voices and characters to tell a number of stories about the Valley. With no main character, the community itself assumes a central position in this examination of Valley life around 1970. Hinojosa's witty style comes close to, but falls short of, fusing the parts into a fully satisfying whole.

1984 Gilbert, Minnie. **Sunrise Song**. Austin: Eakin Press, 1984. One year in the life of a young Rosita Ramirez in a small community on the Rio Grande near Mission in 1914-1915. The story contains tragedy (the death of her younger brother), travel to Matamoros, brushes with border bandits, and friendship with an Anglo neighbor girl. Despite a thin plot and predictable characterization, the short novel offers an interesting account of local folk wisdom and cultural events, including "Las Mañanitas" (a birthday serenade song) on the occasion of Rosita's quincenieria, or fifteenth birthday.

1985 Hinojosa, Rolando. **Partners in Crime**. Houston: Arte Público Press, 1985. A murder mystery involving Lieutenant Rafe Buenrostro of the Belken County Homicide Squad. From a dead man's body in an abandoned car and a bloody triple homicide in a rural bar, the investigation leads to Barrones (Matamoros) and back and involves large quantities of cocaine. Hinojosa's most conventional novel has a complex, satisfying plot, and the ironic tone fits the context perfectly.

1985 Michener, James. **Texas**. New York: Random House, 1985. The history of this fabled state, from the early Spanish exploration to the machinations of contemporary cultural politics. The Valley comes into focus during coverage of the Spanish land grants from Escandón's Expedition of 1749 and the Mexican War of 1846-
1848. Michener has crafted a sluggish but insightful tome (1,096 pages) that every Texas
should wade through (but not more than once).

1986 Hinojosa, Rolando. Claros vatones de Belken/Fair Gentlemen of Belken County.
Set mostly in the decade of the 1950s, from the return of Rafe Buenrostro and Jehú
Malacara from military service in Korea to their undergraduate studies at the university
in Austin to their teaching careers at Klair City High School. Hinojosa uses his seasoned
narrative technique: a small group of narrators (four here) tell a string of stories and
anecdotes about dozens of people, ranging over three or four generations of Valley
residents. The final sections of the novel, in which the aged Esteban Echevarría reflects
on the Valley he has known while he sits under the mesquite that his father planted upon
his birth, are very moving.

The author's rearranged English version of Klair City y sus alrededores (1976). Three
narrators tell anecdotes and talk with other citizens of the Valley about a whole range of
people and events, mostly taking place between the early 1940s and the early 1970s. The
fragmentary presentation allows for rapid time shifts and apt juxtapositions, but it does so
at the expense of an overall unity.

A saga of the Cavazos family, with a focus on don Heraclio, the father, who comes to the
Valley from central Mexico to escape corruption and violence in the early 1930s and
maintains his ideals and values over the next forty years. While making his living
through field work, both in the Valley and in the North, Heraclio watches his son slide
into the drug trade and his daughter get caught up in American consumerism. This
bittersweet novel captures fully one migrant's experiences in the rural and small town
rhythms of Mexican-American life.

Another experimental work using the narrative technique of multiple narrators, multiple
voices. Twenty-six speakers and Becky Malacara herself speak about her life, focusing
largely on her divorce from Ira Escobar, a hack politician, and her subsequent marriage
to banker Jehú Malacara. Set in the late 1970s or early 1980s, this novel contains
Hinojosa's finest handling of anecdotal storytelling and colloquial language, and the
consistent focus (flavored with each individual's digressions) on Becky keeps the reader
fully engaged.

1990.
Traces the eventful life of George Washington Gómez, or Guálinto, from his birth and
the subsequent murder of his father by Texas Rangers during the Border Troubles in the
teens through his early years and schooling in Jonesville-on-the-Grande (Brownsville) to
his legal career and then return, around 1940. Paredes explores Guálinto's dual identity,
as an American of Mexican descent, and leaves us with the ruthless choice George makes
as an adult. This powerful, vibrant novel was completed about 1940 but remained unpublished for fifty years; we are fortunate to know it now.


Eight stories that examine the texture of small-town life in the Valley, from the Vietnam War era to current times. Moving from boyhood to young adulthood, González presents family crises, initiations into love, and relationships in school. These well-crafted stories reveal the various ways in which the young respond to the values of their family and culture.


Tells the story of a poetry-writing school teacher's misguided campaign for mayor of Brownsville in 1984. As the subtitle indicates, Jack O'Connell's efforts to unseat the politically savvy sitting mayor are frequently overshadowed by his insatiable appetite for sex, booze, and marijuana. With raunchy descriptions of Jack's countless conquests, the novel is reminiscent of Henry Miller's work, but it lacks Miller's powerful reflections on being and his poetic command of language.


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**Endnotes**

4 Grey, p.57.
Illustration of the Stark-Raab Plantation
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Browsville, Texas
Cultura, tradición y folklore; la trilogía mágica que entrelaza el orgullo, el nacionalismo y la identidad de todo ciudadano de una nación.

Los mexicanos nos enorgullecemos de que México sea un país en donde la tradición de las grandes culturas mesoamericanas como la Tolteca, Olmeca, Azteca, Maya y otras más se hayan conjugado con las traídas por los conquistadores desde España, pues de este modo se vieron enriquecidas las primeras y que esa riqueza haya redundado en beneficio de esta nueva raza, el mestizaje, que habita a lo largo y ancho de nuestro país desde Tijuana hasta Chetumal y desde Matamoros hasta Tuxla Gutiérrez, y del Golfo de México, sin olvidar la larga línea divisoria entre la República Mexicana y los Estados Unidos de Norteamérica.

Disfrutar del armonioso sonido de los violines y del guitarrón y los agudos de una trompeta que forman un alegre mariachi con las notas del "Jarabe Tapatío" o una sentida canción ranchera; la redoba y el bajo acompañados de un acordeón de un conjunto norteño con las movidas polkas y el chotis; o poder escuchar las dulces notas de una marimba con "Aires del Mayab" o un danzón, y la no menos popular tambora de Sinaloa llena los corazones de una alegría y de emociones indescriptibles en cualquier lugar del globo terráqueo.

El Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes y sus homólogos los Institutos Regionales de Bellas Artes que se encuentran diseminados en toda la república se han encargado de conservar, dar a conocer y mantener vivo el interés de los ciudadanos por nuestras costumbres, tradiciones y folklore, mismas que no sólo son admiradas y valoradas por ellos sino que son dignas representantes fuera de él, y sea en Europa, Asia y Africa así como en los demás países de América.

La región del Valle de Texas y el Norte de Tamaulipas ha sido siempre un lugar fértil para la cultura; sus gentes se han preocupado y han luchado por que sus descendientes conserven la herencia cultural de sus antepasados hispanoamericanos. El que cada día sea mayor el número de personas que tengan acceso a actividades culturales, ya sea participando o bien como espectadoras, es el fin primordial del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes, pues de esta manera se incrementa la identidad nacional y su amor a las raíces, acciones que redundarán en formar mejores ciudadanos.

Las pastorelas, las posadas, la ofrenda a los difuntos, y tantas otras celebraciones se estaban perdiendo en este rincón de México. Hoy, gracias a diferentes asociaciones culturales, que han fortalecido la activida del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes, están en
pleno período de recuperación para beneplácito de todos los habitantes de Matamoros y del Valle de Texas.

En todos los tiempos nos vamos a encontrar con hombres y mujeres nativos y putativos de Matamoros que al haber tenido la oportunidad de disfrutar de actividades culturales durante su vida se han preocupado porque ésta llegue a los niños, a los adolescentes y a los adultos cuyas aptitudes se deben canalizar de la manera adecuada por personas que cuenten con la capacidad suficiente para transmitir sus conocimientos a los demás.

Correspondió al Ing. Oscar Guerra Elizondo estar al frente de la comuna el año de 1969, quien, contando con el incondicional apoyo del C. Gobernador de Estado, Sr. Manuel A. Ravizé, y con la valiosa asesoría técnico-docente del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes de la Ciudad de México, se inauguraron las actividades del mismo el día dos de noviembre.

Se veían realizados los sueños e ilusiones de los habitantes de este rincón de nuestro país en donde la avidez de cultura y de conocer más y mejor nuestras tradiciones y bailes y música folklórica era como un botón de rosa lista para dar paso a una hermosa flor.

El Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes inicia sus actividades en el local ubicado sobre la calle Abasolo entre Cuarta y Quinta contiguo a las oficinas de la entonces Junta Federal de Mejoras Materiales, misma que años más tarde colaborara para la remodelación y acondicionamiento del local que por muchos años ocuparan el Hospital Civil Dr, "Florencio Anaya Ruiz" y la Benemerita Cruz Roja Mexicana.

Este edificio fue cedido por el Municipio siendo Presidente el Sr. C.P.T Sergio Martínez Calderón en el año de 1972, para que oficialmente pasara a ser de la propiedad del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes, ese mismo año empezó a impartir sus clases en su nuevo hogar.

El Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes es una institución de iniciación artística en donde los alumnos ahí inscritos, aproximadamente de 130 a 140 por semestre, pueden tomar las siguientes opciones: Artes Plásticas en donde se contemplan escultura, dibujo, pintura, artesanías y manualidades; Música, con guitarra y piano; Teatro, enfocado principalmente a teatro infantil; Danza folklórica y clásica además de gimnasia rítmica.

Los alumnos reciben una constancia al finalizar cada semestre y al concluir tres cursos el alumno está capacitado para inscribirse en cualquiera de las escuelas especializadas del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, en donde su preparación se fortalezca, sus horizontes se amplían enormemente y las oportunidades de destacar en el arte son mayores como resultado de un mayor mercado de trabajo.

El Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes como cualquier institución educativa tiene necesidades acordes con la naturaleza de sus actividades y éstas, así como los sueldos salarios de sus 13 (trece) docentes, personal administrativo y de intendencia, se cubren con la participación tripartita del Instituto Nacional de Bellas Artes, el Instituto Tamaulipeco de la Cultura dependencia del Gobierno del Estado, y de la Presidencia Municipal, así como de las cuotas $130,000 - N$130.00.
Remozar y actualizar las instalaciones del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes ocasiono que éste tuvieron que dejar su instalaciones y por un corto período funciono en las instalaciones de la alberca "Ing. Eduardo Chávez", mientras se llevaron a cabo sustanciales cambios a su antiguo edificio; fue en esta ocasión cuando construyeron el patio colonial y en él una concha acústica que ha sido muda testigo de múltiples representaciones artísticas que han sido presenciadas por múltiples personas.

En manos de distinguidas personalidades de reconocida capacidad en el aspecto docente y artístico ha recaído la difícil tarea de dirigir los destinos del IRBAM en el transcurso de su trayectoria como institución dedicada al desarrollo de las habilidades artísticas.

Al ser fundado en 1969 toma la batuta la ameritada maestra coahuilense de nacimiento, pero matamorense por convicción, Martha Rita Prince de Garcia, quien fungía como directora del departamento de Educación y Cultura del Municipio. La maestra Martha Rita se echa a cuestas la promoción y hasta el último día de labores directivas lucha enconadamente por darle al Instituto una imagen de responsabilidad, seriedad, respetabilidad indispensables en toda Institución que desee contar con prestigio.

La estafeta fue entregada al dinámico y conocido artista matamorense Jaime Garza Salinas, quien por más de quince años tuvo a su cargo el acrecentar el acervo cultural de la ciudad. Con la colaboración de la Sra. Sonia Martínez del Villar tuvieron a bien iniciar en el Instituto actividades que empezaron a rescatar tradiciones casi olvidadas para algunos y desconocidas para la mayoría.

El reconocido maestro de educación artística Onésimo Gallardo cubre interinamente la dirección de esta Institución y nuevamente llega el momento de pasar el mando y esta vez recae el honor en un hombre de gran sensibilidad artística el maestro Oliverio Ruiz Miguera, quien desde el primer día luchó y ha seguido la labor titánica cada día con mayor ahínco para lograr que el Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes florezca nuevamente. Atinadamente se rodeó de personas que aman esta noble institución, como la Profa. Martha Rita Prince de García, y con beneplácito vemos que la confianza y el prestigio han ido creciendo en el común y asiduo participante dentro y fuera de sus aulas e instalaciones.

Es reconfortable visitar el Instituto y encontrarnos con personas amables, educadas y al personal diligentemente desempeñando sus labores.

Desde el momento en que el Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes inicia sus actividades se ha preocupado por la vinculación de éste y las diferentes asociaciones culturales que funcionan en la ciudad así como con las autoridades correspondientes y con el sector educativo regional, y es en este renglón en donde se ha participado en las diferentes celebraciones que estos organizan. En la fiestas denominadas "Días del Charro," se inscriben anualmente participantes como candidatas a reina juvenil e infantil, candidato a rey infantil y a rey feo. El Instituto tiene el honor de participar no solo en la gran parada en esta ciudad sino también en el ya famoso desfile internacional. De la misma manera se inscriben candidatas para la celebración de la Feria y Exposición que se efectúa durante el verano, presentando cuadros plásticos y grupo de danza folclórica en los espectaculos
del teatro del pueblo, oportunidad que tiene la institución de llevar tradición y cultura a grandes masas que día a día llenan los graderías. Durante todo el año se van preparando actividades acordes con las fechas para realizar presentaciones dentro de las instalaciones de su edificio, entre las que se encuentran obras de teatro, conciertos musicales, exposiciones de pinturas y esculturas de artistas locales, nacionales y extranjeros, presentaciones de celebraciones prehispánicas, nacimiento, ofrenda a los Fieles difuntos, etc.

Bajo el auspicio de la Secretaría de Educación Pública con su programa enfocado a conservar la cultura y la tradición en la frontera y del IRBAM, al igual que las escuelas de educación media superior y superior dependientes del sistema federal, los habitantes de la ciudad tuvieron la oportunidad de gratuitamente poder disfrutar de presentaciones personales de grandes actores y actrices de la talla de la Sra. Susana Alexander, y del Sr. Joaquín Cordero; música folklórica hispanoamericana y el gustado canto nuevo con interpretes como Tehua, Tania Libertad, Oscar Chávez, Violeta Trigo, sin faltoir las vistosas danzas y bailes regionales de hispanoamérica. Estas representaciones sembraron la semilla de la inquietud que al ser cultivada fructificó al crecer la audiencia en cada invitación y al aumentar el número de alumnos que se inscriban en el IRBAM.

El Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes da cobijo en su seno a organizaciones culturales de gran ascendencia en la ciudad como la Casa de la Cultura y el Círculo Literario "Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda", quienes se reúnen periódicamente y utilizan sus instalaciones para sus actividades públicas.

Por ser la edad mínima para ingresar al Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes seis años, el docente cuenta con materia prima fácil de modelar y eso redunda en un satisfactorio resultado del proceso enseñanza-aprendizaje, pues a esa tierna edad los infantes tienen gran habilidad para desarrollar sus aptitudes.

Cuerpos y gestos llenos de gracia llenan de orgullo no sólo al educador sino también al público cuando disfrutan de cada avance que ellos realizan por mínimo que éste sea.

El Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes es el semillero donde germinan semestre a semestre futuras generaciones que crecerán con una educación en donde se integran el aspecto intelectual y el artístico, lo que hará que en muchos de los casos florezcan individuos realizados no sólo como profesionistas sino también como hombres y mujeres cultos dando como resultado el binomio perfecto para el desarrollo de todas las naciones del orbe en paz y tranquilidad.

Felicidades y mucho éxito en todas las actividades culturales que emprendan alumnos y personal del Instituto Regional de Bellas Artes, pues colaborando en la superación cultural de nuestra región y al preservar y difundir las tradiciones y el folklore de nuestra Patria harán de Matamoros y de sus gentes una ciudad mejor; un Tamaulipas más grande y de México un país en donde sus habitantes en general tengan acceso a disfrutar de actividades culturales en su mismo lugar de origen sin importar lo recóndito que éste se encuentre, pues debemos tener presente que un pueblo con cultura, tradición y folklore es un pueblo rico.
La Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística fue fundada en la Ciudad de México el día 18 de abril de 1833, siendo Presidente Interino de la República Mexicana Don Valentín Gómez Farías, por petición que hiciera el Ministro de Relaciones Don Bernardo Gómez Angulo y el escritor Don José Gómez de la Cortina, Conde de la Cortina, quien fue su primer presidente; Se fundó con el nombre de Instituto Mexicano de Geografía y Estadística, nombre cambiado el 30 de septiembre de 1839 por el de Comisión de Estadística Militar; Este cambio de nombre le motivó al Sr. Gral. Almonte que al ver el poder que había adquirido el Instituto que ya agrupaba a un gran número importante de militares y gobernadores trató por medio de esta maniobra lograr adhesiones para llegar a la presidencia de la república, Por fortuna fue derrotado y en la sesión de 20 de diciembre de 1849 se propuso que denominara Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística.

Por decreto de 28 de abril de 1851, siendo Presidente de México el Sr. Gral. Mariano Arista, da vida a la Sociedad Mexicana de Geografía y Estadística.

En el año de 1868 el día 26 de marzo, siendo Presidente de México el Sr. Lic. Don Benito Juárez, reorganizó la sociedad, tomando en esta reorganización el Sr. José María Lafragua quien ocupaba la Vicepresidencia.

La obra beneficiosa de la Sociedad ha sido su boletín que desde su primer número aparecido el 18 de marzo de 1839 ofrece un acervo riquísimo de noticias variadas acerca de México.


En sesión celebrada en el Palacio Municipal de H. Matamoros Tamp., el día 10 de diciembre de 1969, en reunión convocada por el Sr. Ing. Oscar Guerra Elizondo en su carácter de Presidente Municipal, se solicita la creación de una agrupación que reuna el material suficiente para escribir una verdadera historia de la H. Matamoros, Tam., así como conservar las joyas de valor histórico que se reúnan en un museo que también es solicitado. En su exposición el Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano propone una sociedad que se denomine Sociedad de Geografía e Historia o un Consejo de Historia.

Las personas que se reunieron con el objecto de constituir un organismo que se dedique al estudio de la historia y geografía de Tamaulipas y en especial la de...
Matamoros y que firmaron el Acta Constitutiva de la Sociedad Tamaulipecas de Historia y Geografía el día 7 de enero de 1970, fueron las siguientes:


También se aprueba que sea a partir del día 28 de enero de 1970, aniversario de la erección en Villa de Antigua Congregación de San Juan de Esteros Hermosos con el nombre del insigne patriota Don Mariano Matamoros, la fecha de iniciación de los trabajos formales con el nombre de: Sociedad Tamaulipecas de Historia y Geografía. Se precedió a la designación de la Directiva, recayendo en las siguientes personas:

Presidente: Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano; Secretario: Sr. Emiliano Sáenz de los Reyes; Tesorero: Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo Rodríguez; Vice Presidente: Sr. Florentino Cuéllar; Secretario Adjunto: Dr. Felipe H. Treviño.

En la sesión celebrada el día 8 de mayo de 1970 se tomó el acuerdo que en el membrete de la papelería de la Sociedad, lleve el escudo de la ciudad de Matamoros; también se acordó que la cuota de inscripción sea de 100 pesos y una cuota mensual de 15 pesos. Los estudiantes no pagarán cuota de inscripción y la cuota mensual será de cinco pesos.

El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano presentó, durante este período, un trabajo intitulado “Camilo Manzo 1827-1847” Según consta en el acta de día 22 de enero de 1971, se llevan a cabo elecciones quedando integrada la directiva de la siguiente manera:

Presidente: Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano; Vicepresidente: Sr. Florentino Cuéllar; Secretario: Sr. Emiliano Sáenz de los Reyes; Pro Secretario: Profesor Joel Moreno Ramones, Profesor Gilberto García Grimaldo, Sr. Carlos Valdez Torteya, Profesor Juan Pablo Puente, Sr. Francisco Látigo Vidal, Sr. Filiberto Calzada.

Entre los trabajos presentados en este período se encuentran los siguientes: "Apuntes biográficos de Gral. Juan C. Doria" por el Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano. En este ejercicio se editaron dos números del "Boletín Matamoros Historico" el primer número en septiembre, en homenaje al caudillo insurgente Don Mariano Matamoros. El segundo, en el centenario de su natalicio, contiene también varios trabajos históricos y una crónica fiel de la inauguración del monumento a Mariano Matamoros develado el 13 de junio del mismo año.

La Directiva de la Sociedad para 1972, fue la siguiente: Presidente: Sr. Florentino Cuéllar; Secretario: Lic. Oscar Mario Hinojosa; Tesorero: Sr. Miguel A. Rubiano;
VicePresidente; Prof. Roberto García Grimaldo; Vocales: Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo; Dr. Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda; Prof. Joel Moreno Ramones.

El historiado tamaulipeco Sr. Gabriel Saldivar, autor de la “Historia compensada de Tamaulipas,” se presento ante la Sociedad el día 4 de agosto de 1972, con un trabajo sobre la rebelión de periodista tamaulipeco Catarino Garza en contra del régimen porfirista.

El Sr. Juan Pablo Puente reseno el trabajo “Joventino Rosas y sus obras municales.”

Asistieron a la Ciudad de San Luis Potosí el Sr. Florentino Cuéllar, el Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano y el Sr. Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo, a la formación de la AMEHRCA.

El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano presentó el siguiente trabajo: “En el Aniversario de Maniano Matamoros”2 y “De como celebró la H. Matamoros el Primer Centenario del Natalicio de Don Benito Juárez García.”3

La Directiva de la sociedad en el año de 1973 fue la siguiente: Presidente: Profesor Gilberto García Grimaldo.


En febrero de este año se convocó a un Concurso pro Escudo de Matamoros, resultando triunfado Humberto González, estudiante de danza. El Jurado Calificado estuvo integrado por las siguientes personas: Profa. Ofelia Gutiérrez de Salazar, Dr. Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda, Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano, Dr. Juvenal Rendón y el Pintor Bartolomé Mongell.

La Directiva de la Sociedad Tamaulipeca de Historia y Geografía para el ejercicio de 1974, fue la siguiente: Presidente: Sr. Florentino Cuéllar.

En este ejercicio y gracias a las gestiones de la Sociedad, se trasandan los restos de Don Manuel Mier y Terán a esta ciudad. Tambien son traídos de México los restos de Gral. Lauro Villar, quedando depositados temporalmente en el edificio del Museo Casa Mata, esperando que en un futuro no muy lejano esta Sociedad construya la Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres.

Se asistió a la Reunión de Historiadores de la Provincia en la Ciudad de San Luis Potosí y en la Ciudad de México.

El ejercicio de 1975, la directiva de la Sociedad Tamaulipeca de Historia y Geografía fue la siguiente: Presidente: Prof. Roberto García Grimaldo; Vice Presidente: Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo; Secretario: Carlos Valdez Torteya; Pro Secretario: Prof. Joel Moreno Ramones; Tesorero: Miguel A. Rubiano; 1er Vocal: Lic. Rogelio Arizpe García; 2o. Vocal: Dr. Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda; 3er Vocal: Francisco García Martínez.

Se visitaron varios sitios en la ciudad para hacer un estudio sobre el lugar que reuna las condiciones necesarias para construir la Rotonda de los Matamorense Ilustres.
El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano presentó un trabajo sobre el Himno a Tamaulipas, explicando los cambios que ha tenido en el transcurso del tiempo y quienes fueron sus autores.

El día 2 de mayo de 1975 el Sr. Eliseo Paredes propone a la Sociedad se inicien los estudios correspondientes sobre todos los datos conocidos y relativos a quienes pugnaron porque nuestra Cuidad llevase su nombre y las autoridades que lograrán el decreto No. 12 de fecha 28 de enero de 1826 y demás datos complementarios sobre el mismo tema.

Asimismo propone se investigue a quienes participaron en los hechos gloriosos del 20 al 30 octubre de 1851 y tanto las autoridades estatales como nacionales que le otorgaron a Matamaros los títulos de Heroica, Leal e Invicta.

El día 4 de julio de 1975 se informa a esta Sociedad que la Academia Nacional de Historia y Geografía de México premiara a 4 historiadores tamaulipecos. Lic. Juan Fidel Zorrilla, Director del Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas. Lic. Carlos González Salas, Cronista de Historia Eclesiástica del Estado de Tamaulipas. Prof. Vidal Köbián Martínez, Cronista de Cuidad Victoria, Tamaulipas, y Don Antonio Martínez Leal, Cronista de la Cuidad de Tampico, Tamaulipas. En este ejercicio se propone construir una estatua al matamorense Gral. Manuel González Flores. Entre los trabajos presentados por los asociados se encuentran: Por Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano: "Breves datos históricos sobre la H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas."

El Sr. Florentino Cuellar, "Los descendientes de Don Mariano Matamoros" y un trabajo sobre la Aduana de Matamoros.

La Directiva de año de 1976 estuvo compuesta por los siguientes miembros de la Sociedad: Presidente: Sr. Carlos Vadez Torteya; Vice Presidente: Sr. Emiliano Saénz de los Reyes; Secretario: Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo; Pro Secretario: Prof. Roberto García Grimaldo; Tesorero: Miguel A. Rubiano; 1er Vocal: Sr. Florentino Cuellar M.; 2o. Vocal: Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano; 3er Vocal: Dr. Manuel F. Rodríguez Brayda.

Se asistió al Tercer Encuentro de Historiadores de Provincia A.C. los días 18 al 20 de septiembre en la ciudad de Monterrey, N.L.

Se publicó un libro por don Eliseo Paredes Manzano titulado. "Homenaje a los Fundadores de la Heroica, Leal e Invicta Matamoros, en el sesquicentenario de su nuevo nombre," y otro intitulado, "Conmemoración del CXXV aniversario de los honorosos títulos de Heroica, Leal e Invicta, "libro auspiciado por la Sociedad Tamaulipca de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de Matamoros y Por el Pentatlón de H. Matamoros.

Se publicaron una serie de artículos escritos por el Sr. Don Florentino Cuéllar sobre un viaje a Europa en 50 artículos.

La Directiva del año 1977, estuvo compuesta por siguientes miembros de la Sociedad: Presidente: Sr. Emiliano Saénz de los Reyes; Secretario: Sr. Florentino Cuéllar; Tesorero: Sr. Miguel A. Rubiano.

En este ejercicio fueron homenajeados los historiadores señores Eliseo Paredes Manzano y Florentino Cuéllar al ser recibidos calidamente en la Academia Nacional de
Historia, como Miembros Académicos de ella, Don Florentino Cuéllar disertó en dicha recepción sobre “La Fundación de Matamoros” y Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano “Porque es tres veces heroica la Cuidad de Matamoros.”

Se vuelve a promover la iniciativa de erigir un monumento funeral al Sr. General Lauro Villar y se hace notar que ya existe un proyecto presentado a las autoridades consistente en una Rotonda de Matamorenses Ilustres.

El Sr. Pbro. Roberto Ramírez, en representación de esta sociedad estuvo en el Encuentro de la Sociedad Nacional de Historiadoress efectuado en la Ciudad de León, Gto.

La Secretaría de Educación Pública acepta apoyar la iniciativa de que en las preparatorias se impare clase de “Historia de la Región.”


El Sr. Emiliano Saénz de los Reyes presentó “Estudio de la Poetisa Julia G. de la Peña de Ballesteros,” “Terrenos en que se fundó Matamoros y que fueron dedidos por Don Calixto de Ayala,” “Una calle de mi ciudad: Emiliano Carranza,” y, “Bagdad”.

El Sr. Prof. Joel Moreno Ramones leyó los siguientes trabajos: “Visita a la Ciudad de Matamoros por el Presidente Carranza, 1er Jefe del Ejército Constitucionalista,” “Legado histórico del pueblo Matamorense,” “Tamaulipecas Ilustres: Doña Agapita Ortiz de Méndez, madre del Gral. Pedro J. Méndez,” y “Heroica, Leal e Invicta.”


El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano y el Sr. Miguel A. Rubiano asistieron en representación de la Sociedad a la II Reunión de Cronista de la Cuidad, en Cancun. QR.
El Sr. Florentino Cuéllar presentó los siguientes trabajos: “El Museo Casa Mata y los Historiadores Locales,” 
trabajo en dos partes, “Las Leyes de las casas mas antiguas de Matamoros,” Pensad en la Patria,” 
“Ciudades de México: Querétaro,” “Tequisquiapan,” “La Fundación de Matamoros,” “El Maestro Ignacio M. 
Tequisquiapan, era indio y se vegaba,” artículo en 4 partes, “¿Quién ha sido el mejor 
militar de Tamaulipas?” y los relatos “Leyenda de la mujer desaparecida en la casa La 
Bola de Oro,” y “Los tesoros a veces son para los pobres.”

El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano presentó: “Fundación de la Heroica, Leal e Invicta 
Cuidad de Matamoros,” conferencia dictada en el Departamento de Investigaciones 
Historicas del Texas Southmost College, y “En el CLII Aniversario de llevar nuestro 
pueblo el nombre de Matamoros.”

El Pbro. Roberto Ramirez presento “Conservación de Monumentos Coloniales.”
El Sr. Emiliano Saéz de los Reyes, “La Cruz Roja en Matamoros en los años 40.” El Sr. 
Prof. Andres Cuéllar: “Expansión de E.U. y Limites con México.” El Sr. Prof. Joel 
Moreno Ramones: “La Leyenda del Monolito Azteca,” “Alberto Carrera Torres, 
defensor de los pobres,” “Filosofía de la Historia, version marxista,” “Monseñor o si o 
no.”

Se efectuó en coordinación con la Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas el primer 
ciclo de conferencias de “Historias Regional de nuestro Estado,” del 26 a 10 de junio de 
1978.

En los años de 1979 y 1980, la Directiva de la Sociedad estuvo integrada de la 
siguiente manera: Presidente: Ing. Edelmiro Villarreal; Vice presidente: Pbro. Roberto 
Ramirez; Tesorero: Sr. Miguel A. Rubiano; Vocales: Lic. Roberto S. Cedillo, Sr. 
Emiliano Saénz de los Reyes, Sr. Florentino Cuéllar, Sr. Enrique Villarreal, Sr. Eliseo 
Paredes Manzano.

Las actividades para este año de 1979 fueron las siguientes: Se asistió a la cuidad de 
Saltillo, Coah., con motivo de sesquicentenario del nacimiento del Sr. Gral. Ignacio 
Zaragoza. los trabajos presentados fueron los siguientes: “El Professor José Ma. 
Barrientos,” por Florentino Cuéllar. “Los Oríginenez de Matamoros,” por el Sr. Eliseo 
Paredes Manzano y ‘Si mi hijo se droga...” por el Prof. Andres Cuéllar. En el año de 
1980 se publicaron los siguientes trabajos: Del Sr. Florentino Cuéllar: “El Caso José 
Salinas Haro,” “Dinero de Matamoros para Juárez,” y “La vida Azorosa del 
Matamorense.”

El Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano publicó: “Matamorenses Ilustres,” “¿por que se 
llama nuestra cuidad Matamoros?” En el aniversario CLIV de Matamoros, “Captura 
y defensa del palacio Nacional por el Matamorense Gral. Lauro Villar, en febrero de 
1913,” “Apuntes para la História de San Fernando, Tamaulipas,” y las palabras 
pronunciadas en el funeral del Sr. Antonio de León.”

Profa. Rosaura Dávila de Cuéllar: “¿Es usted ambientalista?” Prof. Joel Moreno 
Ramones: “Matamoros, fiesta y cloaca” y “Si...pero no.”
Se solicitó a la Comisión Coordinadora del programa de Desarrollo Fronterizo CODEF la donación de un terreno para la construcción del monumento donde se depositen los restos del Sr. Gral. Lauro Villar.

La Sociedad presentó en la Biblioteca, “Anurlfo L.Oliviera Memorial,” del Texas Southmost College, al historiador Rodolfo González, con la plática “Mi familias Tamaulipecas y de Nuevo León.”

En 1980 es presentada una solicitud del Sr. Florentino Cuéllar y el Sr. Eliseo Paredes Manzano, para que cada dos años se entregue una presea al Mejor Historiador o trabajo relacionado con este tema.

Después de discutir y estudiar este proyecto se aprueba que la presea se entregara a personas que habiten en los Estados de Tamaulipas, Nuevo León y Coahuila.

El Pbro. Roberto Ramírez propone que el nombre y la efigie que se molde en la Presea, sea la de Don José de Escandón, lo que es aceptado.

La primera Presea José de Escandón se otorgó a Ilustre historiador Lic. Don Juan Fidel Zorilla, el 30 de octubre de 1980.


En el ejercicio de 1982 se llevó a cabo en la H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas, el V Encuentro Nacional de la Asociación Mexicana de Historia Regional, A.C. auspiciado por la Sociedad Tamaulipecas de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de Matamoros, siendo Presidente de este encuentro el Sr. Prof. Jesús Arreola Perez y Secretario el Sr. Ing. Pablo Cuéllar.

La Presea José de Escandón se entregó al Sr. Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano, por sus trabajos de Historia Regional, presentado una plática titulada “Breve Reseña Histórica y Estadística de la H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas.”; la ceremonia de entrega se efectuó el día 13 de noviembre de 1982, en el transcurso del V Encuentro al que asistieron historiadores de toda la República y entre los que sobresalieron los trabajos presentados por el Presidente de AMERAC, Prof. Jesús Alfonso Arreola, posteriormente el Pbro. Aureliano Tapia Méndez, Presidente de la Sociedad Nuevoleonesa de Historia. Geografía y Estadística, presentó la disertación titulada “Cuarto Centenario de las Capitulaciones de Don Luis de Carvajal y de la Cueva,” el Sr. Lic. Juan Fidel Zorrilla, habló sobre “Tradición histórica científica de Tamaulipas,” y para terminar dicha reunión el Sr. Lic. Armando Fuentes Aguirre, popularmente conocido bajo el seudónimo de “Catón” disertó con el tema “Pedro Agüero, soldado popular.”
Al finalizar el ejercicio de 1981, tuvimos la pérdida de nuestro directo amigo y ermerito consocio, Sr. Florentino Cuéllar, cuya irrevocable ausencia ensombreció por varios meses nuestras sesiones.


La Directiva de la Sociedad Tamaulipecia de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de Matamoros, para el año de 1984 fue la siguiente: Presidente: Prof. Andres Cuéllar Cuéllar Asistio a la Primera Reunión Regional de historia Fontera Norte, la cual fue presidida por el Sr. Lic. Juan Fidel Zorrilla. Se nombro una comisión para estar presente en los festejos del Aniversario del Trazo de la ciudad (200 años).

La Sra. Norma G. de Morales presentó el trabajo “Homenaje a Don Lucas Alemán en el CXXXI aniversario de su fallecimiento.”

La Sra. Rosaura Dávila de Cuéllar presentó el trabajo titulado “la visita del Presidente Don Venustiano Carranza a Matamoros en 1915.”

La Presea denominada José de Escandón le fue otorgado al Sr. Lic. Pbro. Carlos González Salas, Cronista de la ciudad de Tampico, Tamaulipas. La Directiva para el año de 1985 fue la siguiente: Presidente: Sr. Emiliano Sáenz de los Reyes. El Professor Alfredo Cuéllar Cuéllar presentó el trabajo titulado “Eulogio Salinas.”


La Presea denominada de Arte y Cultura se estableció en 1987, cuando se presentó la idea de honrar anualmente a las personas que se hubieran distinguido en el cultivo del arte o cultura o a personas o instituciones destacadas en la promoción de las mismas. Aceptada la idea que fue del Sr. Pbro. Roberto Ramírez, se nombró una comisión que se dedicara a redactar un Reglamento y diseño de la misma. La presea es de plata de 4 cm. de diámetro; en el anverso superior aparece el nombre: Arte y Cultura; en la parte inferior, circulando la figura central, el tema: “por el engradecimiento y dignificación de la vida”; en el centro, la efigie de la Diosa Palas Atena. en el reverso de dicha presea, circundando la parte superior aparece el nombre de la institución que la otorga: “Sociedad Tamaulipecia de Historia, Geografía y Estadística”; en la parte inferior: “H. Matamoros, Tamaulipas” y en el centro el nombre del recipiendario.
La primera presea Arte y Cultura fue otorgada el año de 1987 al Maestro Pinto Bartolomé Mongrell Mestre, por su obra pictórica del recipiendario.

La segunda Presea Arte y Cultura correspondiente al año de 1988, fue otorgada al Ingsne Pianista Jorege Isac Peña, y la Presea José de Escandón se le otorgó al presidiado historiado neoleonés Israel Cavazos Garza, quien presentó en dicha ceremonia el trabajo titulado “Aportaciones del Reino de Nuevo León al Nuevo Santander.”


En 1989 se otorgó la Presea José de Escandón al Sr. Historiado y Pbro. Aureliano Tampa Méndez, de Monterrey, N.L. por sus investigaciones y obra historiaca, disertó sobre “El Diario del Obispo Ignacio Montes de Oca de Obregón, primer Obispo de Tamaulipas.”

La Presea de Arte y Cultura correspondió al Maestro Pianista José Luis Aldaz. En el año de 1990 la Presea José de Escandón se otorgó al Maestro Americo Paredes Manzano, Profesor de los Departamentos de Inglés y Antropología de la Universidad de Texas, en Austin, Texas.

Por su precaria salud no pudo estar presente en la ceremonia de entrega de dicha presea, pero por medio de su representante se leyó su trabajo titulado “Estados Unidos, México y el Machismo.”

La Presea Arte y Cultura se le concedió al Sr. Lic. en Música y Director de la Orquesta de Cámara de dicha Facultad, perteneciente a la Universidad Autónoma de Tamaulipas.

El Sr. Emiliano Saénz de los Reyes: “Vida y Obra de la Poetisa Julia de la Peña de Ballesteros,” “Por que Matamoros es Heroica,” y “Los Fundadores de la Heroica, Leal e Invicta cuidad de Matamoros.”


Para conmemorar el Bicentenario de la Revolución Francesa, la Maestra Mercedes González Meza, Maestra de Historia de la UNAM y Profesora de Historia Universal en la Escuela Preparatoria No. 5 de la Cd. de Mexico, D.F., “La Influencia de la Revolución Francesa en América Latina.”

El Profesor Francisco Siga, Licenciado en Historia por la UNAM, Jefe de Clases de Historia de la Escuela Nal. Preparatoria No. 5 e Investagador del Instituto de Investigaciones de la UNAM: “Las consecuencias económicas de la Revolución Francesa.”

La Profa. Alicia Huerta Castañeda, Maestra de Historia por la UNAM y Maestra de Historia Contemporánea e Historia de Rusia en la Facultad de Filosofía y letras de la UNAM: “El Absolutismo Ilustrado en Rusia.”

Para conmemorar el Aniversario de la Revolución Mexicana, el Sr. Ing. Clemente Rendón, una interesante conferencia sobre Doroteo Arango (Pancho Villa). El Sr. Dr. Irineo Rojas Hernández, Director del Instituto Michoacano de Cultura, “Aspectos de la Cultura P’urhepecha.”

La Maestra Rocio Prospero Maldonado, quien ofreció un recital de música P’urhepecha.

El Sr. Profesor Javier Buitrón Maldonado, Director de la Escuela Preparatoria or Cooperación Profesore Sara Robert, de Tula, Hgo., una magnífica conferencia titula de “Tula-Quetzalcoatl.”

El Sr. Profeso Tarquino Arizoco Sanabria diserto sobre “Las costumbres de las tribus indígenas tamaulipecas.”

El Sr. Joseph P. Linck, ex-director del Puerto de Brownville, Texas, habló sobre “La Historia de la Navegación en la Región.”

Ex-Presidente Sociedad Tamaulipecana de Historia de Matamoros.

Notas de Pie

1 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad Tamaulipecana de Historia y Geografía de Matamoros.
2 Periódico el Bravo, días 3 y 8 de febrero de 1972.
3 Periódico el Bravo, días 19, 20 y 21 de marzo de 1972.
4 Periódico el Bravo, días 25, 26, 29 y 31 de enero de 1973.
5 Periódico el Bravo, 3 de febrero de 1973.
6 Periódico el Bravo, 10 de enero de 1973.
7 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad Tamaulipecana de Historia Geografía y Est.
8 Periódico el Bravo, septiembre 25 de 1975.
9 Periódico el Bravo último trimestre de 1976, para terminar en enero de 1977.
10 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad Tamaulipecana de Historia Geografía y Est.
11 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad Tamaulipecana de Historia Geografía y Est.
12 Periódico el Bravo 9 y 10 de febrero de 1978.
13 Periódico el Bravo 17 de febrero de 1978.
14 Periódico el Bravo 4 de abril de 1978.
15 Periódico el Bravo 4 de mayo de 1978.
16 Periódico el Bravo 5 de mayo de 1978.
17 Periódico el Bravo 30 de mayo de 1978.
18 Periódico el Bravo enero de 1978.
19 Periódico el Bravo 13, 15, 16 de enero de 1979.
20 Periódico el Bravo 4, 5, 7, 8 de febrero de 1978.
21 Periódico el Bravo 2 de febrero de 1978.
22 Periódico el Bravo 18 de marzo de 1978.
23 Periódico el Bravo 6 de abril de 1978.
24 Periódico el Bravo 16 de abril de 1978.
25 Periódico el Bravo 31 de enero de 1979.
26 Periódico el Bravo 31 de enero de 1979.
27 Periódico el Bravo 26 de enero de 1976.
28 Periódico el Bravo 5 de marzo de 1980.
29 Periódico el Bravo 24 y 30 de abril de 1980.
30 Periódico el Bravo 21 de enero de 1980.
31 Periódico el Bravo 13, 14, y 15 de enero de 1980.
32 Periódico el Bravo 25, 26 y 27 de enero de 1980.
33 Periódico el Bravo, 30 de enero de 1980.
34 Periódico el Bravo, 26 y 27 de febrero de 1980.
35 Periódico el Bravo, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 y 24 de marzo de 1980.
36 Periódico el Bravo, 5 de abril de 1980.
37 Periódico el Bravo, 6 y 7 de febrero de 1980.
38 Periódico el Bravo, 14 de febrero de 1980.
39 Periódico el Bravo, 3 de marzo de 1980.
40 Periódico el Bravo, 7 de enero de 1981.
41 Periódico el Bravo, 14 de enero de 1981.
42 Periódico el Bravo, 9 de febrero de 1981.
43 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de Matamoros.
44 Periódico el Bravo, 30 de enero de 1985.
45 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de H. Matamoros.
The Reaper

collected by

Peter Gawenda

The first appearance of the reaper or bone man on horseback was during one of the skirmishes of the Mexican War. A letter, late May 1846 from a Private Marx or Max -- either his last or his first name is not known -- described the sighting. The soldier had come with the first troops to South Texas. He had joined the U.S. Army as a musician, but ended up in an infantry platoon. He must have come from somewhere in Arkansas. He also must have spoken some German and some French, because his letter supposedly was a mixture of three languages.

He had been wounded before he came to the border, but he was back on full duty once he arrived. He said that he had received Feuertaufe (baptism of fire) and that he was a real soldier now. He was promised to become a member of the cavalry and started training immediately. Several times, he was involved in skirmishes along the river and then he was sent across the river on a campaign under a Colonel Hays. While close to Monterey they were pursued by Mexican soldiers and his horse was shot right from under him. He suddenly was infantry again. Several of his fellow soldiers were killed and then he saw among the Mexicans one rider -- directly riding over him -- who was a Knochenmann, der eine Sense schwang (a reaper swinging a scythe). He lost consciousness and, being taken for dead, actually survived.

Although he came back across the border, the soldier never forgot the incident and always swore that the reaper had actually saved him. He was still in the army when he fought under a Colonel Ford in September of 1864. It is not very clear but a strong force of Mexicans and French must have crossed into Texas from Matamoros. Marx or Max was now fighting under the Texans while the Mexicans and French seemed to fight for the federal forces. He was over forty at the time of the battle. He was wounded and again lost his horse. When lying on the ground the reaper appeared again riding straight over him saving him by causing the Mexicans to pass him on his left and right sides.

When the Mexican revolution was in full swing and troops were clashing in Matamoros an American mercenary from around San Antonio had several similar experiences right here at the border. In fact, several times the strange horseman had been sighted on several of the former battlefields in this part of the Valley.

Almost eight years ago a Winter Texas was treasure hunting on the Bagdad site when a thunder storm came up. He got hit by some flying debris, fell and then saw the scythe swinging horseman racing toward him. He first thought that he had died, but then realized that he had survived. When he had similar experiences two years later, he knew that the appearance of the boneman meant his survival.
34 Periódico el Bravo, 26 y 27 de febrero de 1980.
35 Periódico el Bravo, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21 y 24 de marzo de 1980.
36 Periódico el Bravo, 5 de abril de 1980.
37 Periódico el Bravo, 6 y 7 de febrero de 1980.
38 Periódico el Bravo, 14 de febrero de 1980.
39 Periódico el Bravo, 3 de marzo de 1980.
40 Periódico el Bravo, 7 de enero de 1981.
41 Periódico el Bravo, 14 de enero de 1981.
42 Periódico el Bravo, 9 de febrero de 1981.
43 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de Matamoros.
44 Periódico el Bravo, 30 de enero de 1985.
45 Trabajo en poder de la Sociedad de Historia, Geografía y Estadística de H. Matamoros.
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During a heavy rainstorm late one evening a truck driver swerved to the left side of the rode when trying to avoid a horse and a rider jumping into his path from the right side on 802. He couldn't believe his eyes when he recognized a skeleton on a horse. He was even more surprised when he realized that his swerving to the left had caused him to avoid a stalled, unlighted trailer on his side of the road. Similar incidents had happened to him on his way to Monterey right after leaving Matamoros and when driving to Corpus Christi. Almost two years ago the same truck driver was coming from the Port driving on International Boulevard around ten o'clock when the same horseman jumped into his path. He slammed his brakes and succeeded in stopping his loaded truck right before four or five horses crossed the street close to El Centro's Supermarket. It was there that the driver told the stories in a mixture of Spanish and English. His truck carried a symbol of a reaper riding a horse and swinging a scythe. He also carried Our Lady of Guadalupe whom he credited with his good fortune.

Another person who relayed a similar story in the late sixties was an older family doctor who had to drive a lot in the Valley. He said, though, that he would never tell the story to anyone from the area as people would lose trust in him. I had to promise him to wait at least ten years before I would ever repeat any of his tales.

One night he was called to a farm to help at a birth. When returning, the horseman crossed his path causing him to brake hard. He recognized that his car had stopped right before a telephone pole which some truck must have lost a short time before because it was not there when he had passed the spot before. At one time the horseman made him stop before he hit loose cattle. At other times he was warned of a flooded creek and concrete debris that was scattered on the highway. His most shocking experience was when on one of his calls he saw the horseman just standing on the side of the road, leaning forward, the scythe hanging down. He happened to check his car clock, it was 11:25 p.m. Taking it as some omen he started racing to his patient. He arrived too late. The wife waited for the doctor at the door and told him that her husband had died at 11:25 p.m. Slightly embarrassed the doctor admitted that he had had many different sightings of the horseman during his lifetime, but that he never dared to talk about them.

No explanation was found for the horseman. But all that can be said is that fearful signs might sometimes be good omens.

The University of Texas at Brownsville.
The Chaperone

collected by

Peter Gawenda

The little courtyard behind Gorgas Hall, next to the Old Morgue has been a meeting place for many young and older people, for students, sight-seers and families. For some it has become a substitute lover's lane, for others a meeting place and for children a playground. You can easily see that paved oddly shaped area when you walk behind Gorgas Hall. It is surrounded by a one foot high wall that can be used for sitting, for lying on or just for resting. Years ago, when air-conditioning did not properly cool the classrooms in the little wooden buildings behind the art building, then instruction was moved to that little plaza. In afternoons or early evenings, some of the college offices even held meetings there. Several big trees provide shade during the day and on weekends when families stop to enjoy the scenery, you will hear laughter, sometimes crying and very once in a while a boy will play his guitar or one of his grandfathers will bring an accordion. Back in the old days and then in the sixties and seventies it used to be peaceful and quiet in the evening, as no one seemed to loose their way into that little area. That changed when the library was expanded and the entrance was moved right across from Gorgas Hall. That office building once was the hospital of the military fort. Today you will see people working in Gorgas Hall late in the evenings and even on weekends.

Usually you can observe couples sitting on the walls, but sometimes students alone reading or studying. Sometimes you will recognize an elderly lady in dark clothing sitting by herself. Her dress almost covers her feet and she always wears dresses with long sleeves. She looks very relaxed, maybe a little pale. Whenever she sits, her old-fashioned purse lies next to her on the little wall. It is usually slightly open and a fancy embroidered handkerchief is sticking out. The lady always smiles at people who pass her, but she never says anything. She has been seen there in the afternoons watching children and students, but also in the evening and at night.

The first one who told me about the lady was a retired teacher back in the late sixties. He had attended college right after it had moved from Palm Boulevard to Fort Brown. He had seen the lady close to the Old Morgue, when he took one of the teenage girls from his neighborhood for a stroll. The description matched that of later descriptions. He remembers, that when he and the girl walked behind Gorgas Hall -- which looked quite different back then -- the lady stood there, looking at them and smiling. They continued walking holding hands but the lady seemed to follow when they moved toward the resaca. The road around the resaca was a caliche road back then. He remembers that he felt very strange, his girl was trembling and started crying. She wanted to go home,
and no matter how he tried to change her mind she insisted on going home. He admitted that he was not supposed to be with her alone away from her house, but he stressed that he did not have any bad intentions. The teacher mentioned that the whole situation was strange. The trembling girl stammered that the lady was her grandmother who had died when she was only three years old. He was angry, afraid and disappointed but felt worse the longer he waited. They finally just started running. They split up once they had crossed what is now International Boulevard. When telling the incident he still remembered the girl's name. He always thought that he had really loved her. The time during the incident was the only time he had ever been able to be with her. Years later, when she went to live with an aunt, he finally decided to marry a fellow teacher.

The lady has been seen by several other people as early as before the turn of the century, so she would be well over one hundred years old today if she were still alive. She had been seen by young people and by older ones. There always seemed to have been some not so good intentions involved by someone. When the lady is observed she somehow seems to fit in. She never was described as looking out-of-place. Nobody has ever heard the lady speak. The clothing is always the same, only the age is described differently, and she seems to be someone different to different people.

The girl who saw her in the early '80s said she looked like being about forty years old. The girl was already a junior. She had an evening class and would always meet with a boy during the eight-thirty break in the cafeteria. One day he talked her into not going back to class but to go to the "wall" and talk for a while. The thought nobody would miss them and they would be alone. The girl felt just a little bit uncomfortable because her father was strict and had told her not to be seen alone with boys. Well, as it was already dark, she thought that she would not be seen, so it seemed all right. They had strolled to the little wall and sat where it was dark. They were talking and he was first holding her hand, then he was putting his arm around her waist. He was holding her kind of tight. In fact, she had to constantly move his hands from where they were not supposed to be.

...and then she saw the lady just sitting there and smiling. The old-fashioned purse with an embroidered handkerchief beside her. The girl knew the lady, but did not know where from. The boy realized that the girl suddenly froze and let her go. He looked to where she was looking but he acted as if he didn't see anything. It was dark. Both stood up and ran back to their classrooms. The girl was trembling and very pale. She thought that she had seen her father's oldest sister who had died more than five years ago in San Antonio. She knew that she was doing something wrong and that someone had helped her stop. From that day on, the boy kept away from her, and they never went out again.

Not too long ago another young couple stopped their meeting on the little wall when a lady in dark clothing seemed to watch them. The incident was relayed by a girl who admitted that she had convinced a boy to skip a class. She was sitting on the boy's lap when he suddenly, for no obvious reason dropped her. He yelled at someone to quit staring and to leave them alone. But wen the girl got up and dusted herself off she saw the lady too. She sat close to them on the little wall. A slightly open purse sat next to her
and an embroidered handkerchief was sticking out. The lady smiled and just continued staring. She did not move. Only when the girl tried to sit down beside the boy, the lady stood up, picked up her purse and then walked straight through the little wall towards Gorgas Hall. When she disappeared both ran back to their classrooms. All the boy was stammering was "mi abuela, mi abuela". The girl mentioned that both grandmothers of the boy had been dead for several years.

Those that have talked about the appearances were usually embarrassed about the incidents and only told them because they knew that they were wrong in doing what they were doing. There also seemed to be a strange coincidence that those whose conscience bothered them recognized someone who really loved them. Three of the girls or women and two of the boys or men referred to her as the Chaperone. Several people have seen her sitting or standing in the office closest to the music building. She seems to look toward the morgue at those times. Nobody seems to know who she really is. The teacher who had initially told the story said he had heard of a girl who had been engaged to a soldier around the Civil War. Before they could get married, he had died in the Fort. She never married anyone else, but prevents others from making the mistake she had made when she was young.

The University of Texas at Brownsville
Illustration of the Field-Pacheco Complex
East Monroe between 10th and 11th Streets
Built circa 1894
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Illustration of the Kowalski-Dennet House
507 East Elizabeth
Built in 1893
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Historia Del Instituto Tecnológico de Matamoros

por

Raul Salinas González and Carmen Mijares Fong

Con motivo de la visita que hizo a esta ciudad el candidato a la Presidencia de la República, el C. Lic. Luis Echeverría A. en Abril de 1970, se le planteó por la Juventud estudiosa y las fuerzas vivas de la localidad la necesidad de la existencia de una Escuela de Enseñanza Superior que realizara desarrollar cultural y economicamente a la Sociedad de nuestra región.

El candidato escuchó con toda atención la solicitud de la Juventud Matamorense quienes con pancartas y de viva voz solicitaban la creación del centro escolar que tanta falta hacían para no tener que emigrar a otras ciudades en busca de nuevos horizontes. Posteriormente se le entregó la petición firmada por el Centro de Estudios Tecnológicos No. 68. (C.E.T. 68) encabezados por el Lic. Humberto Puentes García, por el personal docente y el Profesor Gilberto Grimaldo Mares, por los padres de familia.

Se iniciaron los estudios Socio-económicos de la región por dos funcionarios enviados por la Dirección de enseñanza Tecnológica dependiente de la S.E.P. con una zona de influencia comprendiendo 12 Municipios: Miguel Alemán, Camargo, Matamoros, San Fernando, Diaz Ordez, Reynosa, Rio Bravo, Valle Hermoso, Mier, Méndez, Burgos y hasta Cruillas. Los estudios mostraron las posibilidades de integración económica y desarrollo que representaría el Instituto Tecnológico de Matamoros.

Para septiembre de ese año los proyectos pasaron a manos del Dr. Héctor Mayagoitia Dominguez, director General de Enseñanza Tecnológica en el país y una comisión de maestros, estudiantes y padres de familia planearon viajar a la Ciudad de México para entrevistarse al Presidente electo (Lic. L.E.A.) y recordarle su promesa. Mientras tanto, maestros y estudiantes de la vecina ciudad de Reynosa hacían gestiones para que el instituto Tecnológico se construyera en esa población.

En noviembre, el Senador por Tamaulipas Enrique Cardenas Gonzalez visitó Matamoros e informó a la comunidad del C.E.T. 68, que la construcción del Instituto Tecnológico era un hecho; noticia que conmocionó a la región suspendiéndose el proyectado viaje a la Ciudad de México.

Cabe mencionar que una delegación investigadora de la S.E.P. informó que había el 80% de posibilidades a favor de la construcción del Tecnológico en Matamoros y un 20% en contra alegando que aquí no había Industria pesada, como: Instalaciones Petroleras, Fundiciones, etc. pero Canacintra apoyó el proyecto informando que se instalarían factorías de capital Nacional.

El 12 de diciembre de 1970, el periódico El Bravo publica los integrantes del primer comité Pro-Tecnológico: Presidente Municipal: Ing. Oscar Guerra Elizondo; Senador por Tamaulipas: Ing. Enrique Cardenas Gonzalez, Presidente de Canacintra; Directores de Escuelas y Centros de Estudios de Matamoros Sociedades de padres de Familia comisión

El 5 de febrero de 1971 una comisión de alumnos de la Preparatoria Tec. 68, encabezados por el joven Roberto Gonzalez Gonzalez se entrevisto con el Gobernador del Estado Lic. Manuel A. Ravizé para tratar de apresurar los tramites de construcción, pues estaban proximos a egresar y no querian emigrar. Por su parte el Lic. Humberto Puente García insistía Mpal. solicitaba ayuda moral y económica con resultados favorables.

Una de las objeciones de la S.E.P al proyecto fué que Matamoros tenia bajo porcentaje ocupacional para los Técnicos que egresarian, contrarrestando esto, se argumento que el Instituto Politecnico Nacional se construyo con 30 años de adelanto y vino a acelerar el desarrollo Industrial del país.

En Marzo de 1971 se formó el Patronato Pro-Tecnnológico integrado con todas las fuerzas vivas de la ciudad y recayendo la presidencia en la honorable persona de Don Gregorio Garza Flores, por votación unanime. Quedó integrado como sigue: Presidente Honorario: Ing. Oscar Guerra Elizondo; Presidente del Patronato: Sr. Gregorio Garza Flores; Secretario: Sr. Manuel R. Tapia; Representante del Gobierno del Estado: Sr. Roberto Guerra Cardenas; Representante del Sector Obrero: Lorenzo Méndez Soto; Representante del Sector Campesino: Pantaleon de los Santos; Representante de la F.E.T.S.E.: Guillermo Ojeda Ross; Representante de los Profesionistas y Técnicos: Dr. Victor H. Treviño; Representatne de los Comerciantes y Joyeros: José Islas Ugarte; Representante de los Medios de Comunicación: Sra. Gilma Salinas; Representante de los Maestros y Sector Estudiantil: Lic. Carlos A. García Morín; Representante de la Secretaria de Educación: Lic. Humberto Puente García; Representante de la Federación de Estudiantes: Roberto Gonzalez Gonzalez.

Los anteriores rindieron su protesta en el Auditorio de la Presidencia Municipal y gracias al dinamismo y entusiasmo de su Presidente se contó con la colaboración de muchas personas. Entre ellas el Sr. José Carretero Balboa quien donó las 20 hectareas de terreno donde hoy se encuentran construidos: edificios administrativos, aulas, laboratorios, gimnasio-auditorio y talleres. Los sectores obrero, campesino y demas donaron un día de su haber por servir a la Sociedad.

La lista de Benefactores comprende en pesos nuevos: Ferretería y Plomería Longoria: 1,000; Sr. Guillermo Ojeda: 1,000; Sr. Miguel A. Rubiano: 10,000; Sr. Gregorio Garza Flores: 10,000; Sr. Florentino Martínez: 1,000; Anónimo depósito en Banco Comercial de Tamaulipas: 5,000; Sr. Virgilio Garza Ruiz: 5,000; Sr. Antonio de León: 5,000; Club Rotario de Matamoros: 10,000; Personal del Banco de Crédito Ejidal: 14,085.35; Banco de México: 10,000; Banco de Londres y México: 10,000; banco Nacional de México: 10,000; Instituciones bancarias locales también cooperaron: Banco Longoria: 10,000; Banco de Comercio: 10,000; Banco Comercial Mexicano: 10,000; Banco Internacional (Policarpo R. Tapia): 100,000; Banco Mercantil de Monterrey: 10,000; Banco Financiero
Fronterizo: 10,000; Crédito Monterrey: 4,000; Gas Ideal: 2,300; Maquinaria del Noreste: 3,067.46; UCAMSA: 100,000; Población en General: resto.

En Marzo mismo ya se contaba con medio millón de pesos de los 3 millones que la S.E.P. solicitaba aportara el Patronato, y el 11 de Abil de 1971 ya había 1 millón 300 mil pesos.

Propuestas del Lugar de Instalación del Tecnológico

El Presidente Municipal ofreció un terreno donde estuvo la Escuela Agropecuaria, en el Ejido la Venada, a 5 Km de la carretera a Cd. Victoria a partir de la altura del Aeropuerto pero los estudiantes se opusieron argumentando que estaba muy lejos y tendrían grandes problemas en la transportación. Propusieron que se construyera en el Ejido Buenavista o en la antigua Exposición.

A fines de abril de 1971 el Patronato Pro-Tec se reunió para informar y cambiar impresiones sobre los 3 millones de pesos que exigía la S.E.P. para la construcción y una superficie de 15 a 20 hectáreas. También se acordó protocolizar el Patronato Pro-Tec para facilitar las donaciones de las empresas, ya que les serían descontadas de los impuestos a pagar. En esta reunión, Don Gregorio Garza Flores informó de todas las actividades realizadas a la fecha y se planeó un nuevo plan de trabajo para acabar de reunir los fondos requeridos. Se notificó que el siguiente 7 de mayo estaría en Matamoros el Presidente de la Republica, Lic. Luis Echeverría con quién se tenía una audiencia para tratar los problemas económicos de Matamoros y se aprobaría finalmente el proyecto del Tecnológico.

A fines de abril, la Unión de crédito agriola de Matamoros S.A. donó $100,000 pesos M.N. como contribución de sus socios al progreso de esta región y como signo de gratitud por los beneficios recibidos.

Don Gregorio Garza Flores planteó a la S.E.P. el problema de los 90 estudiantes proximos a egresar de la Preparatoria Técnica y con planes de estudiar carreras similares a las que impartía el C.E.T.68, la respuesta de la Secretaría de Educación Pública fue en el sentido de que los estudiantes por egresar tendrían que esperar a las especialidades profesionales del futuro Tecnológico.

Abril 23 de 1971, el Gobierno del Estado expidió un decreto declarando de utilidad pública la construcción del ITR de Matamoros por ser de interés social, expropiando 5.34.48 hectáreas correspondientes a 2 lotes rústicos: uno de 2.80.48 hectáreas propiedad de Clara, Armando, Víctor Manuel, Ofelia, José Luis, Margarita y Jorge Salazar, y otro de 2.54.00 hectáreas propiedad de J. Gpe. Cantu Alejandro.

El monto de la indemnización de los expropiados la fijó la Dirección General de Obras Públicas del Estado, de conformidad con el decreto indicado de fecha 19 del mes de abril de 1972. El terreno expropiado se agregó a la superficie donada para el I.T.R. por los señores José Carretero y Julio Loza ubicado frente al Ejido México Agrario un poco más al oriente de la colonia Popular.
Abril 27, 1972, los ejidatorios de Matamoros y Municipios vecinos aportaron para la construcción 3 pesos, cada uno por cada tonelada de sorgo; cooperación que se aplicaría también para el Centro de Capacitación Agropecuaria que funcionaría en Río Bravo, Tamaulipas aclarando el Sr. Antonio Caballero, Sr. Gral del Comité Regional Campesino que dicha cooperación sería por una sola vez.

Al día siguiente la Sociedad de Padres de Familia del C.E.T. 68 aporta $2,000 pesos, completando con esta cantidad $16,500 faltándole por entregar $63,500 para completar los $80,000 que se comprometió a aportar. Y siguen fluyendo las aportaciones, ahora el 29 de abril, la Asociación de esposas de Abogados presidida por la Sra. de Valdez Sayas entregó al Patronato $5,000 pesos.

Así, el primero de mayo de 1972 sobre la base de dar servicio a una población estudiantil de 1500 y una planta docente de 200 personas, la Junta de Agua y Drenaje inicia los estudios para dotar de agua potable y alcantarillado a las futuras instalaciones del ITR de Matamoros; es el Ing. Gustavo Adolfo Morales quien lleva a cabo dicho estudio. El 23 de mayo el Arq. Arturo Leduc, delegado en Tamaulipas del CAPFCE, firmó un convenio con la sección local para la construcción de la primera etapa del Tecnológico que deberá iniciarse antes de terminar ese mes de mayo, constará de 12 aulas y talleres para Electricidad, Electromecánica, Mecánica Industrial y Dibujo que se planea estén funcionando antes del primero de septiembre dando servicio a 500 estudiantes. Firman también: el Arq. Mario Clavel Alonso, coordinador de construcciones de la SEP, el alcalde en funciones Sr. Sigifredo García, el diputado Agapito González Cavazos y los Sres. Julio Loza y José Carretero donadores del predio.

Por otra parte, la sección 87 del Sindicato de Trabajadores de la Educación, donde está adscrito el personal que laboraba en el C.E.T. 68 celebró una junta sindical presidida por el Profr. Roberto Pérez Vázquez - Sr. Gral. de dicho organismo y acuerdan donar 1 día de sueldo, que se aplicaría por partes iguales, tanto para el ITR como para el edificio sindical de los maestros, que estaba en proyecto.

El lunes 29 de Mayo de 1972 arriba a Matamoros el Ing. Ignacio López Bancalari para iniciar de inmediato los trabajos de construcción del ITR de Matamoros, que se realizará en 6 etapas de 1 año cada una, con inversiones del orden de 70 millones de pesos aproximadamente, siendo la inversión inicial de 10 millones, según declaró el día 27 el Ing. Mario Clavel Alonso coordinador general de construcciones de la SEP.

Directivos del Instituto Tecnológico Hacen Planes Junto con la Industria Local

Septiembre 3 de 1972: La Dirección del ITR inicio un estudio entrevistándose con Canacintra para determinar en definitiva que especialidades técnicas se implantaran y cuales serán prioritarias, para evaluar las posibilidades de empleo de los futuros egresados. Asistieron a la reunión: El consejo directivo y el comité de Educación de Canacintra. El subdirector del ITR, Ing. Rosalio Juárez Lozoya. El Profr. Leodegario Arriaga, del personal docente del ITR. El 4 de Septiembre, se anuncia las clases nocturnas en el ITR provisionalmente en las instalaciones del CET 68 iniciando el 18 del
mes en curso. Este día el Sr. Mario Alberto Cruz Ayala representante del Gobernador del Estado declarará solemnemente inaugurado el ITR, en un punto de las 11 de la mañana.


Jornadas diarias de 4 a 10 de la noche/5 días. El 5 de septiembre de 1972 el Director del ITR, Químico Andres Ortega Guzman anuncia que se dará título de ayudante de Ingeniero a quien curse 4 de los 8 semestres de que consta el curso por no poder salir adelante con sus estudios. Tal disposición se tomó en un seminario de directores de Tecnológicos en México bajo la presidencia del Srío. de la SEP Lic. Víctor Bravo Ahuja.

El día 24 de septiembre con la anuencia del Director de Educación Superior, Ing. Martín López Rito se llevo a cabo la ceremonia de inauguración oficial del plantel el domingo 24 de septiembre de 1972 a las 10:00 horas, presentandose Sr. Mario Alberto Cruz Ayala, representante del Gobernador del Estado; el Lic. J. Guillermo Villarreal, srio. del H. Ayuntamiento; los miembros del Patronato Pro-Tec., encabezados por el Sr. Manuel R. Tapia; los Directores de todas las Escuelas de Enseñanza media de la ciudad; Padres de Familia; Directivos y docentes; y 667 alumnos. Quienes una vez terminada la ceremonia visitaron las obras de los edificios del Tecnológico.

Entre los discursos de ese día, destaca el emotivo del alumno Roberto Davizon Villagomez quien agradeció a todos sus participacion en la creación de la Magna Casa de Estudios de la Región; desde al Presidente Echeverría que después de 29 meses cumplía su palabra, al Gobernador, a las autoridades locales, a todos.


En el Semestre septiembre 72 a enero 73 se iniciaron en las carreras profesionales los siguientes alumnos: Ing. ind. química: 44 hombres, y 6 mujeres, por un total de 50. En ingeniería: 92 hombres, 2 mujeres, por un total de 94. Total de alumnos en técnicas: 50 hombres, 0 mujeres, por un total de 50. Técnico industrial químico: 17 hombres, 32 mujeres, por un total de 49. Técnico electromecánico: 50 hombres, 0 mujeres, por un total de 50. Técnico mecánico: 49 hombres, 0 mujeres, por un total de 49. Técnico en electrónica: 46 hombres, 3 mujeres, por un total de 49. Técnico en electricidad: 83 hombres, 13 mujeres, por un total de 96. Técnico en adm. de personal: 20 hombres, 30 mujeres, por un total de 50. El total de técnicos es 343, con 265 hombres y 78 mujeres. En el semestre febrero a junio 1993 están inscritos en las carreras profesionales los siguientes alumnos: Ing electromecánica: 308, Ing. electrónica: 315; Ing. industrial: 336; Ing. civil: 89; Ing. química: 79; Lic. en informática: 498; Lic. en contaduría: 453; Lic. en adm. industrial: 158, por un total de alumnos actualmente: 2,326.

Se han titulado los siguientes alumnos, por especialidad: Ing. ind. químico: 87; Ing. electromecánica: 81; Ing civil: 52; Ing. en electrónica: 38; Ing. industrial: 19; Ing. metalurgica: 2; Ing. industrial mecánica: 2; Ing. en producción: 3; ing. química: 2; Lic. en relaciones industriales: 164; Lic. contaduría: 1; Lic. en informática: 1. En total se han titulado: 452.

Instituto Tecnológico de Matamoros.
A Historical Sketch of the Baptist Church in Brownsville and Matamoros

by

Milo Kearney and John Kearney

The 1990s are bringing a new development to the meandering Rio Grande River. The negotiations for a Free Trade Agreement, whether or not they succeed in their proposed form, signal a reopening of the Texas-Mexican border, changing it from a boundary back into what the United States has lacked for so long—a frontier of new opportunity. Of the many groups at the forefront of this new advance of free enterprise southward, few are so suited to the task as the Baptist Church. It is also the group most overlooked and, perhaps, the one most misunderstood. Whatever other images the name might evoke, the Baptist Church has had a long association with the advance of our nation's frontier. Its vibrant presence today in border towns like Brownsville, Texas, offers insight into the Church's cultural roles, as well as into its historic contributions to our national development.

The Baptist faith came to the New World soon after its origins in Protestant Europe. In Massachusetts in 1639, Roger Williams (or, according to others, John Clarke) founded the first Baptist church building in America.1 A century later, Baptist preachers were crisscrossing the Appalachian Mountains. These early itinerant preachers shared all the hardships of the pioneer peoples to whom they preached. Traveling from settlement to settlement with little more than a Bible and a hymnal to weigh down their saddle bags, these men were rewarded with large numbers of converts.2 After having been held in place by English settlement laws, these pioneer peoples exploded westward following the American Revolution, carrying the Baptist faith along with them.3 Membership in the Baptist Church in North America had risen to an estimated 100,000 by the end of 1800.4

The ability of the Baptist Church to take root and grow in frontier climates is attributable to various factors. First, the congregational autonomy and passion for independence which are hallmarks of the Baptist Church reinforce the sort of initiative and growth needed in a fluid frontier setting. The social applications of these religious convictions are held to have been instrumental in feeding the democratic spirit associated with a frontier.5 As a result of the intensely personal nature of congregational doctrine and of divergent cultural and community needs, split-offs from an original church membership occur with regularity, feeding growth.6 Second, the work ethic and spiritual confidence inspired by the teachings of their faith propel members of this denomination onward in a pioneer area. Third, the missionary spirit of the Baptists inculcates a special interest in reaching out to growing communities.

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The founding generation

It was by and with these foundational tools that the Baptist Church entered Texas in the early nineteenth century and reached the Lower Rio Grande Valley at the beginning of the twentieth. Pastor James Hickey, a converted priest from Ireland, had made an early probe of the regional possibilities, first coming to the Brownsville area in the 1850s. In 1860, Hickey opened a school for Bible, English, and arithmetic in Matamoros at the corner of Herrera and Thirteenth Streets. While he was gone from town from 1862 to 1864, Hickey started Monterrey's Primera Iglesia, the first Spanish-speaking evangelical church in Latin America in 1864. Upon his return to Matamoros in 1864, he was joined by a young Scottish pastor, David Grive, who helped to convert and baptize residents. The prospect for a rapid establishment of the Baptist faith locally seemed promising until the effort suddenly collapsed in 1866 when both of the missionaries died of illness within a week of each other.7 Thus Brownsville and Matamoros had to wait until the start of the next century for the launching of its Baptist history.

It was the massive immigration of northern Mid-western farmers with the beginning of irrigation and large-scale farming at the outset of the twentieth century that brought the first significant numbers of Baptists to the region. In 1903, missionary Reverend W. H. Petty was selected by the Southern Baptist Convention's Home Mission Board to launch a Baptist church in Brownsville. The choice of Petty was a good one and all the more crucial since a preliminary effort by an earlier missionary had fallen through. Reverend Petty's predecessor, the Reverend Reid Hale, had been unable to endure the unique difficulties of the Brownsville area. The remoteness and multicultural complexion of the Lower Rio Grande Valley would prove to be an obstacle to many ministers. Reverend Hale had attempted to secure the help of fellow minister W. H. Sowell of Crockett, Texas, who was well received by local residents. The arrangement was for Reverend Sowell to conduct English-language services in the federal courtroom and to give baptism rites in the Fort Brown Resaca, while Reverend Hale led the Spanish-speaking portion of the congregation at the mission house.8 However, a week later, Reverend W. H. Sowell left town, saying that he had to fetch his family from Crockett.9 He never returned to the Brownsville area. Two months later, the following notices appeared in the newspaper:

For Sale - Good organ in good condition - price $25 cash at Baptist Mission; For Sale - Many articles of household goods in good condition, cheap for cash, this week only, at Baptist Mission; For Sale - Fine birdseye maple parlor set good as new. Cost $75 - price $30 at Baptist Mission.10
The next week, Reverend Hale and wife left the Brownsville area. These records indicate the demoralized conditions which must have awaited Reverend Petty.

Together with his wife and three children, Petty reached Brownsville by covered wagon, spending the nights sleeping under the open skies. Moving into a modest cottage on East Levee Street, Pastor Petty proved to be a man of integrity and a superb organizer. He rallied non-Baptist Protestants to join in offering an interdenominational Sunday School program held at first in a private home, next in the Post Chapel at the U.S. Army's Fort Brown, and then in accommodations above a store. An organizational meeting to plan a separate Baptist congregation was held in 1904 with the participation of eight local ladies, the husbands of three of the ladies, and two soldiers from Fort Brown. In 1905, a separate entirely Baptist mission program was started with fifteen members. Then in 1906 the First Baptist Church of Brownsville erected its own frame church on Elizabeth and Eighth Street. It stood as the only Baptist church in Texas south of Corpus Christi, but it would not remain alone for long.

A Spanish-speaking congregation appeared on the heels of the English-speaking church. Native Brownsvillite missionary Toribio Hernandez led a group of thirteen people in the founding of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville on 14 October 1909. Reverend W.H. Petty of the First Baptist Church lent his support. These double foundings contributed in building a bridge between the two cultural-linguistic groups of the area. The history of the local Baptist church was long dominated by these two initial congregations. The early members of the Primera Iglesia lived widely dispersed through the area. Toribio Hernández served as the first pastor, at a little church building at Palm Boulevard and Jefferson. Reverend George Mixim, a dedicated and highly effective bachelor from Zacatecas served as pastor from 1915 to 1956. He turned his attention to the poor and needy, and within the first two months was authorized unlimited use of church funds to help church members in these categories. By 4 August of 1915 there were already 57 church members, twenty-four of them men.

The Interwar Period

E.W. Marshall, First Baptist Church's ninth pastor, serving from 1922 to 1929, led in the construction in 1926 of a new, larger brick church on Elizabeth and Sixth Streets. The Great Depression in the 1930s left the church struggling to pay off its debt incurred to construct this building. An additional financial strain was created by the urgent appeals of the newly completed Valley Baptist Hospital in nearby Harlingen. A source of comfort and pride to Baptists in the Rio Grande Valley, the facility opened in 1925. Due to post-World War I deflation which had made fulfillment of pledges difficult if not impossible, the hospital had a debt of $28,000. The effort to make ends meet was led by Dr. Charles Pierce, the eleventh pastor, and by treasurer Dan Leftwich, a soldier assigned to Fort Brown. Leftwich went from door to door soliciting funds to pay the pastor.
The Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville has proven unusually stable, and its pastors have enjoyed long stays of office. George Mixim set the trend with a term of office of over forty years, from 1915 to 1956. After installing electric lights in the church in 1920, the next year Mixim bought a lot on Adams Street and moved the old church building there. Mixim paid for the building with his own savings. The famous lawyer and historian J. T. Canales helped with the legal arrangements, for which the church presented him with a $36 watch, $35 of which came again from Mixim's pocket.

The Baptist presence spread to Matamoros at the very end of this period. First two, and then other, members of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville moved to Matamoros, which obliged Reverend George Mixim of that church to make frequent river crossings. This prompted Pastor Mixim to open a mission in Matamoros in 1930. When the Quakers left Matamoros in 1933, they turned their property over to Reverend Mixim for the use of this mission. Mixim had formed links to the Quakers by preaching in their church previously. The members of the Matamoros mission asked to be organized into an independent church in 1933, but after a study by a commission headed by Reverend Mixim, the request was denied until "días más favorables para la realización de sus deseos." That day came on 6 June 1937 with the ordination of Adolfo Hernandez Sanchez as pastor of the newly organized Primera Iglesia Bautista of Matamoros. Pastor Hernandez was fresh from a Baptist seminary in Coahuila, newly wed, hard working, and full of enthusiasm. With help from Pastor George Mixim of Brownsville's Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana, Hernandez started the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Matamoros with 125 rounding members. Pastor Hernandez oversaw the construction of the church building and guided the church down to 1949 and again from, 1964 to 1971.

The Post-World War II Period

The post-World War II prosperity allowed a new impetus of growth. An emphasis was placed on Sunday School promotion and in enrolling people in Bible studies. One campaign logo ran "A million more in '54." In 1944, the First Baptist Church debt was finally paid off and its new building dedicated, and in 1949, First Baptist began to hire regular music directors. When Dr. H. Glenn Smith was serving as the church's fifteenth pastor, the First Baptist School was started. It now offers classes from preschool through eighth grade. Under the sixteenth pastor, Billy Lucas, the decision was made to move into a still larger church and property was purchased on Boca Chica Boulevard. The next pastor, Bob Clements, was a native Texan who had lost two fingers as an oil field worker guiding pipes into the ground. In his term as pastor from 1966 to 1981, Clements gave special attention to missionary efforts, which are discussed below. At the end of his term of office, Clements was hit with an unfortunate conjunction of circumstances. The move into the much larger new structure on Boca Chica in 1980 was followed by a peso devaluation which caused a drastic contraction of membership as
businesses closed. More than seventy church leaders were obliged to resettle out of town. This left the church in a terrible financial state, with a shrinking church membership.25

On 23 November 1953, the core of what would become Woodruff Baptist Church was launched on a surprisingly tiny base of merely fifteen charter members. The effort grew out of the concern of Mrs. Kate Olsen to meet the spiritual needs of her children. The Olsens had recently moved to Brownsville from Louisiana as part of the migration of shrimpers from that state at the time. The Olsen's son and daughter, facing the difficult adjustment of children to a new youth group, had not felt welcome at First Baptist Church. Complaining that nobody had welcomed them, they had balked at going back. Concerned to hold her children to a Baptist commitment, Mrs. Olsen had joined with a neighboring family, the Ketchums, to organize what was at first called Northside Church. For the first several months, the tiny group met in the Olsen home on Fay Street, installing seats, a pulpit, and an organ. The church drew on John Woods, the Choctaw pastor of the Southmost Baptist Mission, to serve as its minister. The group soon rented land on Paredes Line Road and built a small frame church on the property. In 1954, they managed to buy their own lot on Woodruff Avenue and built a small brick church there, selling the frame house to First Baptist for use as a Sunday School building.26

In 1953, Portway Baptist Church was founded as an outreach mission by First Baptist Church, with Wayne Leighton as lay preacher. Three teen-agers from First Baptist Church got the mission launched from 1954 to 1956--Homer Lee Hanna, Jr. as the preacher, his girlfriend and future wife Marilyn Crow as pianist, and Kenneth Welch as choir director. Services were held in the home of Roy and Verda Bennett next to where the present church stands. The mission was organized as a church in 1957 with 93 charter members. At the first revival meeting in 1957, thirty-nine people were baptized by Brother Harry Wyckoff in the Rio Grande in one day. The church's first building was half of an old barracks moved from the former Fort Brown to land they purchased next door. After this structure was damaged by Hurricane Beulah in 1967, the present building was constructed from the insurance money, help from the new River Ministry program of the Southern Baptist Convention, and other sources in 1968.27

As early as 1925, members of the Woman's Missionary Society of the First Baptist Church were discussing ways to help local Black families organize a church of their own.28 In the late 1960s, St. James Baptist Church for Blacks was founded. The members sold bricks in order to raise money to construct their church building.29 Baptist members had originally met with the local Black Methodists until their numbers were sufficient to begin a church of their own. After the founding of St. James, many of the Methodists attended services in the new Baptist church. In the latter part of the 1970s, a new church building was built. Today St. James has a congregation of about thirty members. Church services are held twice a month with Sunday School being observed each Sunday.30

Jorge (George) Sáenz served as pastor of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville from 1956 to 1971. Sáenz received his early training in church service from George Mixim and after earning his bachelor's degree in 1951 from Howard
Payne College in Brownwood, Texas, assumed the pastorate at the age of only twenty-six. In this period, the number of Baptist churches in Matamoros began to multiply, thanks to a big push given to them by Pastor Bob Clements of the First Baptist Church of Brownsville. There had been little growth down to when Hurricane Beulah hit the city in 1967. The relief efforts of Clements, as mentioned above, led to his launching a major effort to build new missions. Clements' effort found fertile ground in Matamoros, whose population was swelling with deracinated immigrants from the Mexican interior.

The Present Generation

The short tenure of ministers which had previously typified most of the local Baptist churches has given way to a greater stability of ministerial tenure. Explanations for this vary. One observation points out that the cultural shock for northern pastors coming to the area is lessening with the growth of Brownsville into a true city and that ministers are now better trained professionally. Another suggestion is that the Southern Baptist Convention's stand in favor of inerrancy has lent a dynamic of power to the ministers, rendering them more effective by making them more inspiring to their congregations.

Kenny Lewis has served as minister at the First Baptist Church since 1981. A native of Oklahoma who had accepted Christ at age eight, he had nonetheless developed into a juvenile delinquent. The main influence bringing him back to God was a new pastor who came to his church when Kenny was eleven. Warned about the bad boy, the pastor had reacted by paying Kenny a visit. Finding him waving railroad flares on the roof of his house to a friend at a distance, he made friends and brought the lad into active church participation. Subsequently called by God, Kenny began from age fourteen through high school to preach regularly at a local Baptist church. The terrible test at age seventeen of losing his mother and sister in an automobile accident merely served to draw him closer to the Lord.

Reverend Lewis began his work at First Baptist Church with a dynamism that has never dropped off, at once launching a revival. The debt for the new church building was paid off, and financial solvency was also restored, as Lewis started a policy of the staff not receiving their salaries until all outside bills had been paid. When some in the church wanted to borrow $14,000 to pave the western parking lot, Lewis convinced them to save the money themselves. That night, a special collection brought in $22,000. A commitment never to borrow money was subsequently adopted. First Baptist grew from about 237 attending members in 1981 to almost 700 attending members in 1993. With the swelling of membership, the staff grew to five pastors. Plans for a sanctuary independent of the First Baptist School, a new education building, a prayer chapel, and additional parking on the grounds of the present structure are being pursued. This phenomenal growth has been related to the impact of Kenny Lewis, with his riveting sermons, his no-nonsense adherence to God's word, and his innovations. A wider
audience has been reached since Lewis in 1983 began to broadcast his Sunday morning sermons, at first on local KVMV and later additionally on Corpus Christi’s KBNJ. His fourteen-year-old son John now edits the programs. Reverend Lewis also instituted a family-style Lord's Supper, with people sitting around tables eating a small meal before the service, to draw church members closer together—always a challenge in a large church. The music pastor, Craig Smith, has also attracted attention from the wider community with his spectacular productions of Christian musicals.35

In 1978, Woodruff Baptist joined with Calvary Baptist (formerly Simpson Street Baptist) and under Pastor Gerard Thornton moved into a larger building (previously occupied by Faith Methodist and then by the Brownsville Funeral Home) on Old Alice Road. No longer meeting on Woodruff Avenue, the church found the old name inappropriate and so changed it to Trinity Baptist in 1979. Like its predecessor Woodruff Baptist before it, Trinity Baptist has been beset by various problems. The preponderance of women in the congregation suggests a difficulty in appealing to the entire family. The move by First Baptist to a location near Trinity in 1980 drew away the potential neighborhood constituency of Trinity as it was just getting started. The has also been disadvantaged by the short terms of many of its preachers. In the forty years from 1953 to 1993 it has had thirteen different pastors, for various reasons, including the past financial insolvency of the church. This instability of leadership is one reason for the continuing small size of the congregation, which still numbers no more than about one hundred members, few of whom attend regularly.36

The location of Portway Baptist Church in the close proximity of three large trailer parks and many more recreational vehicle parks has drawn in a large number of winter Texans, who swell the church attendance in the winter months. It has as many winter Texan members (about 120) as it has regularly attending year-round members. In 1984, Portway instituted its own policy of never going into debt. Since 1986, the pastor has been Pat Trobaugh from North Carolina. He was enabled to study at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth only by an unlikely series of opportunities which Pastor Trobaugh attributes to God’s providence. One of the innovations he has brought to Portway is a "Precept upon Precept" Bible study every Sunday evening and Wednesday morning, a rigorous program complete with homework. Others of his innovations include a Winter Texan Appreciation Service, where the winter Texans lead, and a Youth Sunday once a year giving a comparable opportunity to the young people. In 1989, church members, doing the job largely themselves, completed an addition to the church building.37
Isidro Cruz has been pastor of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville since 1971. The son of a Oaxaca railroad worker who was shot to death when Isidro was three years old, he was raised through difficulties by his seamstress mother. From the age of twelve he helped out as a tailor working sixteen hours for six days a week plus part time on Sundays. At the age of eighteen, he was converted by a preacher who had organized a boys' volleyball and basketball team he had joined. Inspired to go into the ministry himself, Isidro managed to receive training in a Baptist seminary in Mexico City and began his pastoring at Azcapozalco. When invited to come to minister in Brownsville, he at first thought the church would be too Anglo, but was reassured that he would be preaching to Mexican-Americans in Spanish. In 1974, the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana moved from its old location on East Adams to its present location on Lima Street in the Southmost area.  

Not all of the local Baptist churches are Southern Baptist. For example, in 1980, the Cameron Park Iglesia Bautista Fundamental was founded by Pastor Victor Alvarez. A native of Brownsville who moved in early adult life to Corpus Christi, Alvarez joined the independent Baptist church of Lester Roloff, known for his radio ministry. He returned to his hometown to start this church. Starting with nineteen members, the church has now grown to 180 people. Bible School is offered two nights a week. The church also houses a Baptist school with three teachers teaching twenty pupils from kindergarten through high school. Pastor Alvarez's idea was to offer Christian education accessible to poorer families. He charges $89 a month per child, with lower rates for those active members who cannot afford that. There is also an American Baptist Association church on Boca Chica Boulevard. Dedicated to church rule of the church in a more democratic fashion, free from control by a convention or by a powerful pastor and deacon body, this church was founded in 1969 as a mission from Arkansas. The church has struggled to survive, rising at one point to twenty-nine members, but having fallen back at present to four.  

The Baptist churches proliferated still faster in Matamoros in this period. There are three principal affiliations of Baptist churches in northeastern Mexico—Convención Bautista Mexicana, the Independientes or Fundamentalistas, and the Bautistas Americanas. While no church of the Bautistas Americanas has appeared in Matamoros, there are now some sixteen churches of the Convención Bautista Mexicana along with sixteen missions, and twenty some churches of the Bautistas Independientes with many missions. While the three Baptist associations in Mexico are all distinct from those in the United States, the local Southern Baptists have helped support the Mexican Baptist Convention churches across the river. The typical Baptist church splits have produced some of the growth in Matamoros, as both Segunda Iglesia in the previous period and Nueva Vida Iglesia about 1990 split off from Primera Iglesia. The churches are growing too fast to guarantee formally-trained pastors for them, especially given the pattern of ministers brought from the Mexican interior leaving again due to difficulties in adjusting to the hot, moist climate and to the Anglicized border culture, with its Halloween costumes, its street-corner Santa Clauses, and its unique American-
influenced dialect. As a result, the churches often use laymen with on-the-job training plus a four-year Bible Training school given by established town pastors for one week per month. The Segunda Iglesia Bautista is presently the largest Baptist church in Matamoros with about one hundred and fifty members (the Mexican churches counting as members only those who actually come to the services). While most of the churches minister mainly to the poor working class that most typifies Matamoros, the Primera and Segunda churches downtown both have more impressive buildings and draw in a wider social spectrum of members.  

Reasons for the Baptist Success locally

The local Baptist Church has been sharing in the boom of the whole Southern Baptist Convention, which has brought a 38% increase in membership in the United States between 1965 and 1989. Additional emphasis on conditions in the Lower Rio Grande Valley came from the Texas Christian Life Commission (CLC), an agency of the Baptist General Convention, whose focus centers on social issues. In the early 1960s, CLC executive secretary T.A. Patterson initiated the River Ministry, a program which increased awareness of border poverty and the special problems of migrant farm workers. In 1972, the CLC publicly criticized the State of Texas for its failure to meet the needs of Mexican-Americans. By 1978, calls for day-care centers, medical clinics, collective bargaining rights of migrant workers, and bilingual education were being issued from the CLC offices. The systems of medical and dental clinics established along the border by Texas Baptists in the early 1980s reflected the Church's continuing commitment to social concerns and only enhanced its popular local appeal.

The Appeal of the English-language churches

Perhaps the greatest single factor in the success of the Baptist Church locally has been the humility of the population, a mood, bred by poverty and insecurity, which fosters an open, unpretentious hunger for God's word unknown in most regions of the United States. First Baptist Church, with the most affluent of the congregations, still contains mainly working-class members, with very few who could be called truly wealthy. Part of the appeal of the Baptist Church is its loyalty to God's absolute law. Most of the local churches adhere to the Southern Baptist Convention, but there seem to be no major doctrinal differences with the local independent Baptists. The small number of members who have left in disagreement with the prevailing concept of inerrancy of scripture have allowed those who remain to consolidate their doctrinal interpretation. This stand is attracting growing numbers of people reacting against the weakening of the traditional stabilizing guidelines for American society. Many of the baby-boom generation have been attracted back to absolute Bible precepts in the face of what often seem unsettling experiments with self-gratification and a controversial toleration of excesses. The tendency of such returnees, influenced as they have been by various
outside doctrines, is to dilute the rigid stand that has allowed the Church to hold to the very standard that is attracting them. This inclination seems to pose little threat locally, given the prevailing vigilance.

The contrast in size between large First Baptist Church and the other, small Baptist congregations has given a choice for those who prefer one size or the other. The small church facilitates the establishment of a mood of warmth, provides accessible pastors, and permits more member involvement in church decisions. On the other hand, according to Pastor Lewis, the American quest for anonymity in an age of collapsing values and traumatic confrontations leads some people to feel more comfortable in a larger church. The greater tailoring of Sunday School and other classes to specific age or gender groups or to special needs and interests, as well as the larger and more polished choir, are among the other benefits of greater size.

Bilingualism in the English-language churches

Brownsville's English-language Baptist churches have been struggling with the question of the best way to address the bilingual heritage of most residents, reflected in the 65% bilingualism with 30% English and 5% Spanish monolingualism of the members of First Baptist Church. About 30% of the 216 members of Portway Baptist Church (not including the Anglo winter visitors) are Mexican-Americans. Portway's growing emphasis on service to the English-speaker, along with an awareness that two languages in one church can form a natural barrier, has brought a recent commitment to English monolingualism there. Its Spanish-language Sunday School class has been discontinued.

Meanwhile, First Baptist's Pastor Kenny Lewis has gone to such efforts to accommodate the Spanish speaker as studying Spanish at a language school in Cuernavaca, Mexico, throwing in some phrases in Spanish into his services, and providing earphones for Spanish monolinguals to listen to a Spanish interpreter seated in a room behind the auditorium. A Spanish-language Sunday School class is available, and bilingual anthems are sung by the choir. This approach has developed in response to intercultural marriages, usually of Anglo men with Hispanic women, and from an acknowledgment of the bilingual flavor of Brownsville's society as a whole. The First Baptist Church of Los Fresnos, immediately north of Brownsville, offers concurrent services in two adjacent buildings, one in English and the other in Spanish. The program for both services are included in the same bulletin. Some families split up between the two services.

The question of an Anglophone church serving a Spanish language segment of its population concurrently has proven to be disruptive at some of the English-language churches. After a period of services in both languages at Trinity Baptist, a collapse of rapport occurred between the two language groups. As a result, in 1989 the Spanish-language congregation left in protest. The quarrel played a role in the subsequent departure of the minister as the remaining group proved too weak to sustain the church.
A return was made to a bilingual policy. In 1992, a partition was erected to accommodate simultaneous services in English and Spanish. The Association director Jerry Johnson is presently serving as interim pastor for the English-language services, while Max Guzmán has been pastor of the Spanish-language half since November 1992. Hailing from Mexico City, Pastor Guzmán's Mexican flock already accounts for about half of the circa hundred-person membership. The Spanish group has experimented with door-to-door ministry. It is felt that the church will become entirely Spanish-speaking, as soon as the Spanish language group is large enough to support the church so that the tiny English-language members can move on. In 1993, Port Isabel Baptist Church was said to also be facing some difficult questions regarding the proper approach to satisfying both the English-language and the Spanish-language communities.

Not just Hispanics, but minorities in general have been given encouragement at First Baptist Church, which has included a black and a Hispanic on the board of deacons. A foreign mission board representative in 1987 remarked that this was the most integrated church he had ever seen. Thirteen different nations of birth were reported at one service in 1990.

The Appeal of the Spanish-language churches

The growth of Baptist membership among local Mexicans and Mexican-Americans is part of a general trend of expansion of evangelical Protestant churches in Latin America in the present generation. Today at least one in five Guatemalans, Chileans, and Brazilians claim some tie to Protestant congregations, most of them evangelical churches with American ties. While Mexico has proven less receptive, Protestantism is growing rapidly there as well.

The only noticeable need for English usage at Brownsville's Spanish-language churches is to accommodate those second and third-generation Mexican Americans who have come to feel more at home with the English language. The Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville uses some English-language Sunday School books, and its co-pastor Andy Galván does some preaching in flip-flop (the peculiar local blend of Spanish and English), but the church mainly cultivates Spanish in order to try to hold their families together around tradition. Those individuals from the Spanish-language churches who prefer to function in English, especially if they are rising in standard of living, tend to move over to the Anglophone churches, leaving the Spanish-language churches to be replenished by the latest wave of immigrants from Mexico. This unintentional pattern of churches grouped by social standing poses a difficult problem for planning church growth, since churches do not want to distinguish people by social class but to produce a brotherhood of Christian souls.

Various explanations have been posited for the appeal of the Baptist Church to growing numbers of Spanish speakers on both sides of the border. In a modern application of the Weber Thesis, it is said that the strong work ethic found especially in
Proverbs and stressed by Protestant Bible study exerts a pull on the large numbers of immigrants hoping to find success through a willingness to labor.\textsuperscript{58} Such an argument may put the cart before the horse; rather than people being attracted to the work ethic and then being changed religiously, they are drawn by the Holy Spirit and then come to want to live by God's word, including His teachings concerning diligence. The whole thesis of a supposed absence of a Catholic work ethic may also be questioned.\textsuperscript{59}

The strict acceptance of Bible teachings offers an anchor in the immigrant's usually unsettling and occasionally tragic world.\textsuperscript{60} The Matamoros churches are the most stringent in shaping behavior, while the Mexican-American churches are less strict, and the English-language churches even less so, but the tendency holds true for all of them. Areas of life affected or debated include a dress and hair code, the eschewal of cosmetics, television, movies, smoking, drinking, and dancing. Women must wear dresses, and dresses of a modest length, to enter the Matamoros Baptist churches, while slacks are allowed at the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville.\textsuperscript{61} While the First Baptist Church of Brownsville is perhaps the least stringent of the lot, not one of its deacons drinks.\textsuperscript{62} Mention might be made of the implication that fundamentalism or a belief in the inerrancy of the Bible encourages anti-intellectualism and fanaticism.\textsuperscript{63} Whatever the validity of the charge, inerrancy is commonly qualified in the local churches by the belief, popularized by the books of J.I. Packer and Gleason Archer, that it is only the original but now lost manuscripts of the Bible which were without error. Nor is even this stand required of all local Baptist church members, although a strong call is made to take the Scriptures very seriously.\textsuperscript{64}

The small size of most of the congregations also gives the poor immigrant a rapid new local set of close friends, with a chance to gain a feeling of self-worth as a church leader.\textsuperscript{65} This observation seems to characterize the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville, whose membership now numbers eighty. The families are close-knit to each other. A great-granddaughter of the founding pastor is still a church member. Pastor Jorge Sáenz was the son of a lady from Mexico who had as a girl been taken in and raised by the previous pastor, Jorge Mixim. Jorge Sáenz's sister is married to Deacon Librado García.\textsuperscript{66} The fissile quality for which Baptist churches are famed has also played a role in the expansion of the denomination with the constant spin-off of new congregations.\textsuperscript{67}

It has been suggested that the conservative political bent of the Baptist Church may provide still another encouragement to its growth among Hispanics in Latin America by winning the tacit favor or at least complaisance of conservative governing establishments. Such commentators point to how U.S.-linked conservative heads of state like Guatemala's General Efraín Rios Montt and Chile's General Pinochet have been Latin America's principal patrons in furthering the spread of Protestantism. It is argued that evangelicals further an American-style interest in individual success rather than government-sponsored collective programs for the poor such as are advocated by Catholic Liberation theology.\textsuperscript{68}
How cogent are such arguments to Baptist developments in Matamoros? At a time when American maquiladoras are encouraged to expand in Matamoros and the local labor movement under Agapito González Cavazos is viewed as an obstacle, the growth of the conservative political views favored by evangelicals may seem more acceptable to some business and government leaders. The American university training of such government figures as President Carlos Salinas Gortari and Matamoros Mayor Tomás Yarrington Rubalcava may have played a role in their greater receptivity to Protestant leaders, who have sometimes been accused of being agents of American influence. There are two Baptists, as well as other Protestants, in Salinas Gortari's cabinet. The great interest placed in NAFTA in Mexico, especially along the border, has created a more open attitude to the Baptists, along with their American associations, too. Political interest in the impact of new religions is not absent; recently a new registration of all church congregations in Mexico has been required, some say to discourage them; others feel the law is intended only to tax them, since the government has recently allowed churches to hold their own property again. The new governor of Tamaulipas has made a move to require the teaching of Maharisha Yogi's Transcendental Meditation in the state schools from elementary through college levels. The latest mayor of Matamoros, Tomás Yarrington Rubalcava, a Catholic of the PRI Party, has proved to be friendly to Matamoros' Baptist preachers, asking how he could be of help and letting Baptist preachers pray for him in his office. Baptists have been employed in the Matamoros city government. The previous PARM Party mayor, Catholic Jorge Cárdenas González, selected a member of the Segunda Iglesia Bautista of Matamoros to be his director of public lighting. The Catholic-linked PAN Party is weaker than both PRI and PARM in Matamoros.

Interdenominational relations

The above-mentioned receptivity to the Baptist Church in government circles in both of the twin cities is based in the generally good rapport prevailing between the denominations locally. The growth of Pentecostal churches has been even more rapid than that of other evangelicals in Latin America, and some of the Baptist churches have been open to innovation in borrowing ideas from the growing Pentecostal movement of the area. At First Baptist, those of the congregation who so wish have been encouraged in clapping or raising their hands while a more charismatic music than that included among the traditional songs in the hymnal is sung. Chuck Colson in his book The Body writes of the need for more cooperation between Protestants and Catholics. Although the spread of Protestantism has awakened competitive hostility on the part of Catholics in parts of interior Mexico, such inter-denominational rivalry is atypical of the Brownsville and Matamoros area. The relative good-will has resulted from several factors. Reverend Dimas Gómez estimates that there are already approximately as many Protestants as Catholics in Matamoros; strength of numbers may help account for the greater acceptance of the Protestant presence. Local Catholics themselves have been influenced by
evangelical thought and modes of worship, so that the differences between the denominations have diminished.\textsuperscript{72}

Local Baptists participate in two local organizations to promote good will between the Christian denominations and Judaism. Pastor Pat Trobaugh of Portway Baptist Church in 1990-1991 served as President of the Brownsville Ministerial Association, which includes Catholics, Jews, Methodists, Presbyterians, Christians, Lutherans, Episcopalians, the Unity Church, and Charismatics, as well as Baptists. Reverend Trobaugh's Catholic upbringing has made him aware of the movement of the Holy Spirit between denominations. The organization meets once a month and sponsors annual Thanksgiving and Good Friday services. There is also a Spanish-speaking Ministerial Alliance in Brownsville. The move of American society into cultivating ever greater toleration has fed such efforts in Brownsville, while there is little Catholic-Baptist contact in Matamoros.\textsuperscript{73}

Church expansion programs

With an estimated 65\% of residents of Brownsville not attending any church (alongside 30\% Catholics and 5\% Protestants) there is ample scope for Baptist evangelization in this city.\textsuperscript{74} Church expansion is furthered by programs of visitation. Beside calls to visitors and absent members from Sunday School committees, First Baptist Church started an Evangelism Explosion program in 1982. Requiring training in door-to-door evangelism for sixteen weeks, with written and oral tests, this program has now certified 146 members of the congregation.\textsuperscript{75} The members of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville celebrate the anniversary of the church founding on 14 October 1909 by knocking on doors at random. Sunday School teachers and a visitation committee also pay house calls on new members each weekend.\textsuperscript{76} The Iglesia Bautista Fundamental of Cameron Park requires each of its members to witness door-to-door every Saturday.\textsuperscript{77} Evangelical churches have generally been effective in reaching out to young people.\textsuperscript{78} In 1915, Pastor George Mixira's Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana organized a Union Juvenil Bautista Mexicana de Brownsville.\textsuperscript{79} Under Pastor Bob Clements, the First Baptist Church launched a summer missions program. This now brings in over five hundred young people from various parts of the United States to conduct twenty-five Vacation Bible Schools in Brownsville. The incoming youth are fed and housed at the First Baptist Church's Missions Outreach Center (MOC).\textsuperscript{80} The Baptist churches give a strong emphasis to their Vacation Bible Schools. Reverend Troubough of Portway Baptist has also started a night high school Vacation Bible School in the summer.\textsuperscript{81}
While all three groups of Anglo, Mexican-American, and Mexican Baptist churches are growing, the Mexican Baptist churches are growing at a distinctly faster rate, while the English-language churches are bringing up the end of the pack. One reason for this is the rapid shift of the population to ever higher percentages of Hispanics to Anglos. Of the two remaining English language Baptist churches, Portway's main priority is serving its neighborhood community, while First Baptist has chosen to grow in size itself rather than throw off daughter churches—a result in part of the town's small population of Anglos, which does not lend itself so well to proliferation into various neighborhoods. However, the sensitivity to the English-speaking Mexican-American has been part of the success of the First Baptist Church under Kenny Lewis. The English-language churches that are rapidly growing up-Valley, in Harlingen, Donna, and Edinburg, appeal to the expanding English-speaking community of Mexican-Americans by having a Mexican-American pastor to whom they can immediately relate. Another reason for the slower growth rate of the English-language churches may be the general moral and spiritual decline that has hit American society in this generation. Reverend Pat Trobaugh suggests that the charge of hypocrisy frequently leveled against American Baptists is often correct and acts as a deterrent to more rapid church growth. This fault, he posits, has its roots in the materialism, dedication to self, and lack of discipline in modern American society. As toleration of faults has permeated the society, discipline has broken down, bringing a loss of virtue which, when coated with a pious demeanor, spells hypocrisy.

The Mexican-American community is somewhat shielded culturally from this impact, while the Matamorense society is still more isolated from it. A stiff standard for the Spanish-language Baptist churches was set from the start by Pastor George Mixim of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana. His church constantly dropped church members for missing services without adequate cause shown and for failing to participate in church work. The most specific statement of church belief came at the request of church member (although later Catholic) J. T. Canales, the eminent attorney and historian. On 20 September 1925, the church voted unanimously to suspend or expel, depending on the seriousness of the offense, those members guilty of divorce, civil suits against fellow members, lack of respect for the name, day, and people of God, profane or irreverent language, illicit professions, improper dress, indecorous hair styles, or any sort of relaxed morals. Those who wanted a divorce had first to receive church permission after a study of Bible law. Reinstatement was not to be allowed until there were both a reform and signs of sincere repentance.

Missionary work is at the heart of the vibrancy of the local Baptist church. The Baptist Foreign Mission Board officially began in Mexico in 1880. In 1904, the first Women's Mission Society of the First Baptist Church in Brownsville was organized with Mrs. H.E. Tucker as President. The group had fourteen members, and plans were initiated to help the Buckner Orphan Home. Efforts to aid this institution would remain a central goal throughout the church's early years.
Mission expansion was given a major early impetus by George Mixim, Pastor of Brownsville's Primera Iglesia Bautista from 1915 to 1956. In the first year of his pastorate, Mixim's congregation began sending contributions to Austin to aid the Convention's missions.\textsuperscript{88} In the single year of 1922, Mixim led in launching two mission churches. Misión Catorce was founded on Brownsville's Fourteenth Street and another mission on the Rancho Las Anacuas north of town.\textsuperscript{89} Reverend Mixim went on to organize Baptist churches and missions throughout the Rio Grande Valley.\textsuperscript{90} His other missions included one on the Rancho Las Veinticuatro near Refugio, Texas, in 1927; the Misión de Olmito in 1928; Misión Veinticuatro in 1928; what was to become the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Matamoros in 1930; the Misión Ramireño in Brownsville in 1930; the Misión Southmost in Brownsville in 1930; the Misión Bautista Mexicana Garden Park in Brownsville in 1930; the Misión del Carmen in Brownsville also in 1930; and the Misión West Brownsville in 1933.\textsuperscript{91}

Mixim's missionary zeal was shared by members of First Baptist. Records of the First Baptist Church for April 1922 report a new mission of fourteen members in the Mexican district of Brownsville, and earlier entries show that this was not the first such effort.\textsuperscript{92} During World War II, Reverend A.F. Johnson of the First Baptist Church secured the backing of the Home Mission Board and managed the purchase of property at Madison and Eleventh Streets for the launching of a Mexican-American mission. As a result, the Templo Bautista began operations in 1945. On the heels of this success, in 1951 Southmost Baptist Mission was organized by First Baptist Church. The mission was placed in charge of Oklahoma-born Choctaw Indian Pastor John Woods, aided by his Choctaw wife. This church subsequently spun off a Mexican mission of its own.\textsuperscript{93}

When Pastor Mixim came to the end of his missionary relay race, others picked up the torch. Jack Kidwell, Pastor of Portway Baptist from 1961 to 1965, formed Portway's first Spanish-language missions, three of them in all (the Portway Mexican Mission, an assumption of responsibility for the West Brownsville Mission, and the Jail Mission).\textsuperscript{94}

The most noteworthy successor to George Mixim as an outstanding local missionary leader was Pastor Bob Clements of First Baptist Church in Brownsville. There were still only three Spanish-language Baptist missions in Brownsville when Clements came to First Baptist in 1966, a decade after Pastor Mixim's ministry had ended, but his push soon launched new Spanish-language missions in Brownsville and Matamoros. First Baptist Church's missions in Mexico grew out of the contact with Matamoros of its Pastor Bob Clements during his charity work across the river in the wake of Hurricane Beulah on 20 September 1967. This experience led him to found the MOC (Mission Outreach Center) and two mission churches in Brownsville, six mission churches in Matamoros, and one in San Fernando to the south. He also built a children's home in Matamoros. Dwight Hendrick, who had assisted Clements since 1966 in the effort coming out of the First Baptist Church, helped to continue the effort after Clement's departure, starting mission churches in Matamoros and San Luis Potosi. Hendrick had left a good job as operator of a steam electric power plant in Los Angeles to serve God in Mexico and was working with his family in the Tehuantepec Peninsula when he was called to Brownsville. A
steady stream of volunteer groups still busses in from points north to help Hendrick's efforts by constructing church buildings, handing out tracts, holding revivals, and showing films. Missions presently supported by First Baptist include the Baptist Deaf Church of Brownsville, the Illinois Avenue Buen Esperanza Church, and twelve Matamoros mission churches, as well as the Valley Right to Life, the Christian Family Counseling Center, KBNR, and the San Luis Potosi mission church. Jerry Johnson, Director of the Lower Rio Grande Missions, helped win outside financing for the above-mentioned effort by begging loudly in the early 1960s for a share of national Baptist mission funds to be earmarked for this area. As a result, the River Ministry was launched in 1967 for this purpose. Originally intended to divert funds to this region for three years, the program achieved such success that it is still continuing today.

More recently, Trinity Baptist Church has supported two missions in Brownsville--the (re-established) Calvary Mission and the Lomas del Rey Mission. The Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana contributes through co-operative effort to foreign, although not to local, missions. Portway Baptist Church is currently supporting two missionaries, one in Matamoros and one in Cd. Victoria. The mission in Cd. Victoria receives 10% of Portway's building fund for constructing its church. Brownsville's English-language churches are still doing major mission work in Matamoros, though not in Brownsville.

The most vigorous effort in founding missions has come from the Spanish-language mission churches themselves on both sides of the river, but especially on the south side. This is part of the general zeal for missionizing that has gripped the evangelical churches of Latin America. The Spanish-language churches of Brownsville are reaching out fast in their own town doing their own mission work there as well as in Mexico. The Iglesia Bautista Fundamental of Cameron Park has spun off four missions, in Alamo, Los Fresnos, Reynosa, and Tampico, as well as giving some support for twenty-four other missionaries around the world.

On the south bank of the river, Pastor Adolfo Hernández Sánchez of the Primera Iglesia Bautista of Matamoros launched that town's own missionary effort by organizing the Primera Iglesia Bautista of Valle Hermoso in 1940, the Iglesia del Divino Salvador (Segunda Iglesia Bautista) of Matamoros in 1966, and the Horeb (Tercera Iglesia Bautista) Church of Matamoros in 1970. The effort has continued to the present. Each of the Matamoros churches has its own outreach programs, consisting of going from door to door, handing out tracts on street corners, holding tent meetings, and showing films. Matamoros' mission effort has outstripped that of Brownsville, with about one new Baptist mission appearing there each year. This effort is growing from the native churches themselves. The growth of the church is due not only to Matamoros being itself a rapidly-growing city, but also to the members' enthusiasm for reaching out through home Bible studies and other recruiting methods. One opinion expressed is that the local Mexicans are more community oriented than the Americans and that this predisposes Matamoros Baptists to a more vigorous evangelism.
The main retarding factor keeping the growth of missions from even greater success is lack of money in this poor area. The offering at First Baptist is over three times that of all the other Baptist churches combined, so that Anglo money is not fully coordinated with the missionary zeal of the Spanish-language churches. The shortage of funds at times results in mission churches bringing in cheaper, but less qualified, pastors, whose lack of qualifications have sometimes disrupted church effectiveness. Some such pastors have proven to lean to a non-Baptist doctrinal bent. In 1990, Camino del Rey followed its charismaticly-inclined pastor into converting to a charismatic church, a development with antecedents in other Valley churches outside Brownsville.107

Politics

The present generation has seen a trend to increasing political activism on the part of evangelicals, including the Baptists.108 The Republican Party has, since World War II, seemed more open than the Democratic Party to political stands championed by the Southern Baptist Church, including opposition to abortion, to sex education in the elementary schools, and to admission of homosexuals into the armed forces. This fact has led to a strong pro-Republican sympathy in Baptist circles. Pastors take care not to endorse parties, merely underlining Bible teachings on certain political issues. Some non-local Southern Baptist leaders have been much in evidence in Republican circles, a development that has exerted an impact on local Baptist opinions, so that it is not unknown for the term "liberal" to be uttered in a negative context in Baptist conversation.

Are such political leanings beneficial to the Baptist Church? On the one hand, churches bear a responsibility to speak out if a society is drifting away from God under the leadership of impious leaders. It has been pointed out that those main-line churches which have adopted a liberal stand on such issues, often at the cost of explaining away Bible teachings as mere curiosities of the time and setting of the writer, have seen their numbers dwindling. Between 1965 and 1989, an 8% drop in membership has been recorded for the Evangelical Lutherans, a 19% drop for the United Methodists, a 21% drop for the United Church, a 29% drop for the Episcopalians, a 32% drop for the Presbyterians, and a 45% drop for the Disciples of Christ.109 From this standpoint, the Baptist Church, which has been winning converts, seems to have benefited from its staunch allegiance to God's word in opposition to recent social trends. The Old Testament prophets provide a precedent of followers of God opposing non-Godly governments.
Yet political involvement is a difficult tightrope to walk. Even if church-backed leaders manage to resist the corrosive effect of power, a danger is felt to exist of "inflexible, improper solutions" being applied out of political naiveté "to complex social problems."

A long-standing local Baptist church leader has noted the former Baptist concern to maintain a separation of church and state in connection with John Kennedy's presidential campaign, and how the stand has now shifted to the other side of the fence. He speaks of a selective use of the scriptures. One particularly thorny issue is how best to address the need for care of the poor and needy. There is a growing awareness of God's call for support of the poor made in both the Old and New Testaments. The Democratic Party has expressed a greater concern for meeting the needs of suffering people through government job programs, social security, and health care; the Republican Party has shown reticence for such schemes. A frequent Baptist response is to acknowledge the admonition of Luke 6:30 to give to the needy while also quoting Paul's rule of thumb in II Thessalonians 3:10 that "if a man will not work, he shall not eat." The Mosaic Law in Deuteronomy 25:19-21, which might be argued to be a type of legislated national law, specifies that part of the field should be left to the poor to glean for themselves. Yet local Baptists generally feel that the government should not hold responsibility for guaranteeing the availability of gainful employment through work projects. There is a widespread distrust among local Baptists of the honesty and efficiency of federal administration of such programs, as well as a feeling that they yield too much power to the central government. It is argued that it is better to help the poor through the churches.

Moneys are set aside for charity. Records of the Woman's Missionary Society of the First Baptist Church are filled with examples of church efforts to improve social conditions. Aid to impoverished families, garments sewn for the Public Health Department, moneys raised for the Valley Baptist Hospital and the Buckner Orphanage Home, as well as scholarship donations for college educations stand as examples of community care in the years before federal welfare. When Hurricane Beulah destroyed so much property in Matamoros, Pastor Bob Clements of First Baptist Church took in truckloads of aid, and started an orphanage and a clinic there, both of which are still in operation. The Rio Grande Valley Baptist Association has a doctor, dentist, and nurse, along with volunteer doctors and dentists, who give free medical care in Mexico. However, they now avoid the American side of the river due to the inequitable liability lawsuit damages that have been awarded to patients and medical associations. When in the late 1980s a great influx of refugees poured into Brownsville from Central America, Portway Baptist was one of the first churches to open its building to house and feed the refugees for one week until the Red Cross was able to take over. Nonetheless, many of the Baptist churches themselves are struggling with financial difficulties, and nobody would claim that Baptist charities are making a significant dent in the crying needs of poverty in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

The proper line of political involvement is an important one to define, for there is a history of political involvement undercutting local church effectiveness--in the 1820s and
again in the 1860s--as churches became outspokenly partisan. In the 1820s, the initial fervor of the Hispanic missionaries to what was then northern Nueva España or Mexico gave way to a famous alliance of the Catholic hierarchy with the *hacendados* and the army in support of the conservative Centralista Party. This alliance brought collapse of church idealism and, as Federalista governments came to power, of the mission system. In the 1860s, the initial spiritual fervor brought to Brownsville by both Protestant and Catholic missionaries was undermined when partisan feelings ran high in the civil wars running simultaneously in the United States and Mexico. This conflict led to a bitter feud between pro-Dixie Reverend Hiram Chamberlain and the Yankee missionary Melinda Rankin in Brownsville's Presbyterian Church, to the expulsion of Reverend Daniel Shaver from the town's Episcopal Church (for his pro-Union views), and to oppression of the pro-Imperialista Catholic priests by Juarista governments in Matamoros. The Baptist Church was born in sixteenth and seventeenth century England as part of the Free Church movement, which strove to free the Church from secular influences which had tainted its purity of spirit. It would be an irony if a determination to embrace the divisions of secular political parties should undo that original resolve locally now.

The Spiritual factor

From the Christian point of view, all of the above factors pale in importance before spiritual considerations. The bottom line for a believer must be whether God is moving in a congregation. Psalm 127:1 warns, "Unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it." Likewise, Paul in Ephesians 6:12 says, "We wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places." The suggestion has been made that just as the presence of God's spirit has drawn members to one church at certain times, so the absence of it has underlain the failure of others. There has been an unusually high rate of pastor turnover in some churches. One problem has been the lack of spiritual strength of some pastors to overcome cultural difficulties. Northern American pastors coming to Brownsville are often ill at ease with so Mexicanized a culture, while interior Mexican pastors coming north to Matamoros and Brownsville find the culture too Anglicized. Not all pastors have shared Ruth's attitude when among foreigners of "Thy people shall be my people" (Ruth 1:16). Yet even those pastors who have reached out have sometimes been chagrined by the complexity of the situation. When Reverend Trobaugh introduced a touch of singing in Spanish at Portway Baptist Church, he was surprised to find the idea met by a negative reaction on the part of some of the English-speaking Mexican-American members of the congregation. In other cases, the natural tendency of a congregational church government to be critical has led to pastoral dismissals and church splits. Some small churches have seen a large family or a clique of two or three families controlling the church causing other members to become discouraged.
The recurring major sacrifices involved in maintaining a church testify to the power of God. The lot of the pastor is an especially difficult one, upholding as he must a spirit of love and perceived doctrinal loyalty in the face of constant and contradictory criticism from all directions. He must deal practically with the demands of institutional growth while realizing that these needs may not always be synonymous with spiritual growth, and facing a tug-of-war between his legitimate concern to provide properly for his own family's needs and a typically chronic shortage of funds and security. In view of the financial difficulties of the Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville, its pastor George Mixim on 19 October 1927 voluntarily renounced his $25 monthly salary and said he would accept whatever amount the church could afford any particular month. Pastor Jorge Sáenz, a later preacher at the same church, supplemented his meager income by teaching in the public elementary schools. It is particularly sad to read of how one of the pastors at First Baptist Church in the first half of the century had been looking with such longing at an unobtainable new suit in Perl Brothers that the magnanimous Jewish store owner-Sam Perl, took pity on him and gave it to him as a present. Trinity Baptist has suffered from such major debts in the past that its public utilities bill once went for months without being paid. Nor could its pastors be paid half the time, so that they had to turn to such outside pursuits as photography or selling insurance to make ends meet for their families. When Trinity's parsonage was built, the church fell into debt with disputes over the accounting of the money. The Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Brownsville has been strained to find means to bring what was a $54,000 debt for the construction of four Sunday School rooms in 1984 down to a $7,000 debt by 1993. The Matamoros pastors are frequently too poorly paid to support themselves from their salaries; a few have been forced to work at night or to derive additional income from the wife's employment. However, most of them get by through being accustomed to living humbly without cars, televisions, or air conditioning. Only one of the Matamoros Baptist churches has an air conditioned chapel--the Templo Horeb.

In the light of so many problems, the great progress of the Baptist Church locally may well be described as miraculous. Despite the inevitable human shortcomings, Pastor Dimas Gomez speaks of how he has seen church prayer answered with the healing of a cancer patient, the transformation of an alcoholic into a strong church member, and the total recovery of a woman who after a car accident was told she would never again walk or talk.
Conclusion

The basic definition of the term "Baptist" often seems to lose focus upon close inspection. Strong belief in individual freedoms, especially regarding biblical interpretation, have sometimes fragmented the Baptist Church. Sweeping generalizations concerning the social or political directions of the Church as a whole are elusive, given the autonomous character of each congregation. What, then, defines a Baptist as such in contemporary Brownsville? Reverend Kenney Lewis offers an answer that is twofold. Foremost is the Baptist's personal conviction in accepting Jesus Christ through study of the Bible as God's word. Coupled with this is a strong commitment to share the Christian message of God's Love. Given these dual principles as a basis for definition, the reasons for the relative vibrancy of the Baptist Church on today's Brownsville frontier become apparent. Emphasis on individual responsibility in matters of faith joined with a confidence in God's protective guidance has proven to be well suited for these twin cities.

The visible proliferation of U.S. commercial concerns into neighboring Matamoros leaves little doubt that new horizons are at hand. Yet Reverend Lewis' response addresses frontiers other than the one which may be opened by the Free Trade Agreement. The advance of modern theories and technology can bring with it severe disorientation in the less tangible frontiers of the human spirit. Baptist acceptance of the Bible as the basis for all inspiration provides an anchor to those alienated by the continual redefining of political and social values. In a society grown increasingly impersonal, the sharing of Christian fellowship undoubtedly helps to fill a communal void. With these and other problems and promises, the twentieth century draws to a close, while on the Lower Rio Grande, the Baptist Church is girded to be a part of the future.

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The Libraries of Brownsville: A Historical Survey

by

Daniel L. Nutter

The history of libraries in Brownsville has been unusually interesting for the various types of unique institutions that had been formed to meet the community needs. When the new 4.95 million dollar Brownsville Public Library on Central Boulevard opens its doors in early spring of 1994, this will bring an end to the city-college joint library, the last known such partnership in the nation. With the city's fast growing population now over 110,000 and the college emerging to become a major university it was inevitable that the two components, in order to best serve their clientele, should be separated.

So, under the leadership of the city library board it was proposed that the City Commission petition to call a bond election for the purpose of building a new public library. The election was held in August of 1991 and was carried by the unanimous consent of the citizens of Brownsville. The division of these two components should not be interpreted as an end but a means of providing a broader base in serving the needs of the academic and public clientele of the community.

In its 150 years Brownsville was never without a source to fulfill its literary needs. In her letters from the book The News from Brownsville: Helen Chapman's Letters From the Texas Military Frontier, 1848-1852, (Coker, pp. 70, 130), edited by her great-great grandson Caleb Coker, tells of receiving the latest books of the day by boat from New Orleans. Her husband William was the first quarter master of Fort Brown and both were influential founding citizens of Brownsville. She also mentions the establishment of a library of books ordered by the Sunday School, sponsored by the Episcopal Methodist Church, South.

It is believed that the old Toll House, recently moved from its location near the International Bridge and renovated on the campus of the University of Texas at Brownsville, at one time housed a library for the fort. (Aikens Interview)

Like all frontier towns Brownsville devoted its early years to establishing itself on the outer-edge of the Texas frontier. Around the turn of the century there was a movement in the nation among women's organizations to establish public libraries as part of their civic contribution to their communities.

The Learner's Club (hereafter cited as the Club), a women's literary society, in 1906 took on as a project to establish a library. (Edman) The library was first housed in the offices of Captain William Kelly on Levee Street, with his daughter, Miss Anna Kelly as the first librarian. An investigation in 1907 was made into the method of acquiring a Carnegie Library which were being built in communities across the nation by a
foundation established by Andrew Carnegie, noted industrialist and philanthropist at the
turn of the century. (Edman) The investigation evidently was not productive.

In 1912 the library moved to the Dalzell Building, from there it was moved to the
Stegman Building in a space provided by the Elks Lodge. Later in 1916, it was moved to
the Celaya Building on Elizabeth Street across from the then popular Miller Hotel,
sharing space with the Brownsville Herald. During these formulative years the library
was known as the "Learner's Library" (Library Bears Famed Name...) and was kept open
by members of the Club who were assigned to be librarian for the day. During World
War I with the help of local women's clubs a reading room was established for the
military personnel at Fort Brown. (Learner's Club minutes).

With the support of the city the library became a public library in 1924, being
maintained by the Club. The same year the library moved upstairs in the city hall on
Market Square. (Browne Interview) A library building was constructed by the city in
1928 next to the Fire Station No. 1 on Adams Street. It was here that the library spent the
next twenty-six years until its merger with the college library. During its tenure at this
location the library collection grew, new programs were initiated and hours of service
were expanded. The hours opened included Sunday mornings to accommodate the
military personnel of Fort Brown.

In his book Twin Cities on the Border (Chatfield, p. 16.), W.A. Chatfield refers to the
growth of the city's support of education with the newly completed school building on
9th and Jefferson Streets, including $2,500 in funds for a library. Today, the Brownsville
Independent School District has full service libraries maintained by professional
librarians; two librarians in each of the high schools, and one in each of the middle
schools and large elementary schools. The smaller elementary schools share librarians
proportionate to their size.

The establishment of Brownsville Junior College in conjunction with the high school
in 1926 in the old red high school building on Palm Boulevard. (Kearney, pp. 14, 17.)
Both schools shared library facilities until the separation of the college in 1949 when a
portion of the library was moved to the north wing of Gorgas Hall. The new campus was
established on the grounds of Fort Brown when it was closed following World War II.
Mrs. Betty P. Dodd, current president of the public library board, was a student at this
time and remembers helping with the move into the new quarters. (Dodd Interview) The
college then changed its name to Texas Southmost College.

In 1954, an arrangement by contract was reached between the College, the City, and
to an extent Cameron County, whereby the libraries be merged into a city-college library
located in the south wing of the city's new Jacob Brown Civic Center, the location of the
present day Stokeley Hall. (Kearney, pp. 14, 17.) The new library was named the
Zachary Taylor Library in honor of the founder of Fort Brown and hero of the Mexican
War, who later became the 12th president of the United States. The name was later
dropped due to sensitivities from across the river. (Aiken Interview)

The library grew rapidly, and soon became overcrowded for lack of space for both
patrons and materials. To make room for seating, part of the materials had to be stored in
other buildings throughout the campus. Mr. Bruno Homeyer, director of the library, published a brochure explaining the crowded conditions with the need for a larger library building. ("The Hunger to Read") The new library building was built north of the civic center on the college campus facing International Boulevard and opened in 1966, with an additional expansion of a second floor in 1975. The library was named for Dr. Arnulfo L. Oliveira, the first Mexican-American president of Texas Southmost College and the first president of Pan American University at Brownsville in 1980 after his untimely death. (Gonzales Interview)

This author recalls having a conversation with Mr. Homyer at the library section meeting of the Texas State Junior College Association meeting in San Antonio in the early 1960s. He told of the city-college library concept, which had been dubbed the "Brownsville Experiment" among the library profession. He also stated how pleased he was with the new building's progress.

With the need for upper-division and graduate offerings in the Lower Valley, Pan American University in Edinburg established a branch university, Pan American University at Brownsville in 1973. (Kearney, pp. 14, 17.) The University leased space from the college and administrated its own library budget, turning over the materials purchased to be catalogued and housed in the main library collection. In 1991 the university changed its name to the University of Texas at Brownsville as a full member of the University of Texas System, the next year it went into a partnership with Texas Southmost College. After the partnership was formed, all of the academic funding was merged into one budget. In 1990 the library was expanded to double in size of 90,000 sq. ft. Mr. Thomas LaFleur is the director of the library.

During the construction of the new city library building the library board set up temporary office headquarters in a warehouse on Kings Highway for preparations in moving into the new facilities. Mr. Ruben Rendon was hired as the first director of the new library.

The future of libraries in Brownsville will be just as unique as its past. With the 21st century on the horizon ushering in needs to support a fast growing population, an expanding economic base, the Free Trade Agreement, the expansion of the port, and an emerging major university.

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Los estudios de genealogía son, fundamentales en partes importantes de la historia. Creo que cada uno de nosotros debemos dar más importancia a nuestras familias tanto por el lado paterno como el materno. Conocerse a sí mismo tratando de identificar y conectar con aquellos seres que no conocemos y que son parte de nuestro árbol genealógico. Hacer verdadera historia no es don que todo el mundo tenga, ya que la historia propiamente dicha requiere la visión coordinadora y explicativa de los sucesos que sólo es privilegio de pocos. Las investigaciones genealógicas están al alcance de todos, porque todos formamos parte de nuestra propia genealogía. ¿Qué es la genealogía? Es el estudio de nuestra familia, ir trazando, la relación de hijos a padres, abuelos, bisabuelos, tatarabuelos, tíos etc. etc...

Algunas veces, no conocemos a aquellos a quienes debemos la vida porque no hemos puesto interés en saber e investigar quiénes fueron nuestros ancestros, qué hicieron, de dónde vinieron, cómo y en dónde estuvieron. ¿Cómo se llamaban? Cuando tomamos interés en la investigación genealógica de nuestra familias vamos a paso a paso, año tras año buscando y encontrando datos, nombres, fechas y vamos poniendo todo en orden, haciendo una maravillosa arboleda viviente, en un bosque, en una selva encantada de seres espirituales, que aun cuando se diga que ya murieron, siguen viviendo en su posteridad, positiva y realmente inmortales. El estudio e investigación sobre nuestra propia familia nos lleva por un camino interesantísimo y es entonces, cuando uno comienza a apreciar y a querer a esa familia tan desconocida hasta hoy para nosotros.

Nos sentimos orgullosos cuando encontramos hechos admirables, que ellos realizaron y tratamos de tenerlos como modelo y ejemplo para seguirlos. Y cuando tropezamos con individuos de nuestra familia cuyos hechos no han sido honorables, los compadecemos, o tratamos de entenderlos y perdonarlos. "Todos los pueblos que han sido grandes y han dejado huella en la historia de la cultura humana, han rendido culto fervoroso a la historia de sus familias." Como ya dije, la genealogía es una de las más valiosas ciencias auxiliares de la historia, por esa razón me he propuesto a deslindar, investigar y estudiar a mis ancestros, quienes fueron algunos de los primeros pobladores de estas regiones tanto por el lado norte de México como al Sur de Tejas.

Aquí comienza la historia por el año 1585: - diría yo que es un viaje a través de los siglos. La ruta que tomaron mis antepasados fue muy difícil al llegar al Nuevo Mundo, o a la Nueva España. ¿Por dónde entraron? No sé todavía pero sí sé que estuvieron en Zacatecas, Querétaro, Coahuila, llegaron a Monterrey; probablemente vendrían con Don Diego de Montemayor o más bien con Don Martín de Zavala. El Capitán Martín de
Zavala fue a repoblar la abandonada ciudad de León y por los archivos aparece el título de, "Villa de San Gregorio de Cerralvo," el 5 de diciembre de 1629. (Lo menciona Del Hayo, "Don Martín de Zavala y la Minería en el Nuevo Reino de León" Humanitos N. de N. Leon #4, 1963) Cerralvo fue la primera población del Nuevo Reyno, se le tituló cuidad de Leon (hoy Cerralvo) por don Luis de Carvajal y Cueva. por 1582. Caodereyta fue fundada en 1638. En la dicha Villa de Cerralvo se mantiene situada la Guarnición de doce soldados y su capitán, de los veinte y uno que con su capitán hay en dicho Reyno, de cuenta de su Majestad. Sí sé que fueron primeros pobladores de la Villa de San Gregorio de Cerralvo y el apellido Salinas.

También sé que tuvieron que pelear y tratar de sobrevivir en su larga trayectoria por entre las montañas infestadas de animales salvajes y con indios de todas clases que los asaltaban a cada momento. En mi investigación con unas familias Salinas, me los encuentro en el índice de investigaciones matrimoniales de la diócesis de Guadalajara, en las provincias de Coahuila, Nuevo León, Nuevo Santander y Texas de 1653-1750, de Raúl J. Guerra, Nadine M. Vásquez, y Baldomero Vela, Jr. También los encuentro en los protocolos del archivo municipal de Monterrey de los años 1700-1725 por el Sr. Don Israel Cavazos Garza y dice así...Estos son soldados del presidio de San Gregorio De Cerralvo.

(1035) VIII, fol. 50, no. 23: El alferez Nicolás García, sargento Antonio Palacios, Antonio Salinas, "que entró en la plaza de José Salinas" Bernardo de Benavides, Gaspar de Treviño, Miguel Salinas, Juan de los Reyes, Francisco Vela, Juan de los Santos García, Juan de Benavides, Juan García y Juan de Olives, soldados del presidio de esta villa, confieren poder al capitán Gaspar de Larrañaga, ensayador y balazario de la Real Caja de la ciudad de Zacatecas, para que cobre en aquella sus sueldos adelantados, correspondientes a 1706 y que son 6,150 pesos, 750 del capitán y 450 de cada soldado anuales. Lo piden porque, "a causa de las muchas operaciones que se han ofrecido y ofrecen en esta frontera, contra los indios de su contorno, estando siempre en guerra viva, con las armas en la mano, estamos faltos de caballos, armas y vestuarios y otros peltrechos." Ante el capitán Juan Guerra Cañamar, alcalde mayor y capitán del presidio, quien actúa también como otorgante: Testigos, Antonio García de Sepúlveda, Nicolas de Chapa y José de Benavides. Villa de San Gregorio de Cerralvo, 21 de octubre de 1705.

(1036) VIII, fol. 52.no.24: El alferez José de Treviño, Antonio Zambrano, "que entró en la plaza...de Nicolás Zambrano, su padre." Bernabé López de Jaén, Juan de Reyes, Antonio De Treviño, Francisco García, Blas de los Ríos y José Sánchez, soldados del presidio de esta villa, confieren poder al capitán Gaspar de Larrañaga, ensayador y balanzario en la ciudad de Zacatecas, para que cobre de la Real Caja de aquella ciudad, sus sueldos adelantados, de 1706, que son 4,350 pesos en plata, 750 del capitán y 450 de cada soldado, al año. Lo piden porque, "a causa de las muchas operaciones que se han ofrecido y ofrecen en esta frontera, contra los indios de su contorno, estando siempre en guerra viva, con las armas en las manos, estamos faltos de caballos, armas, vestuarios, y otros peltrechos." Ante el capitán Antonio Leal, alcalde mayor y capitán del presidio,
quien actúa también como otorgante: Testigos, alférez Juan Pérez el Mozo, alférez José de Herrera y Matías de Herrera. Villa de San Juan de Cadereyta, 21 de octubre de 1705.

(1037) VIII. fol 53, no. 25: El sargento mayor don Antonio López de Villegas y doña María González Hidalgo, su mujer venden al alférez José González Hidalgo, 6 caballerías de tierra, en jurisdicción de la villa de Cadereyta y que la otorgante hubo del sargento mayor Pedro de la Rosa, su primer marido, quien a su vez, las hubo por compra a Rodrigo Nores, vecino que fue de este reino. En 130 pesos, en reales. Ante el gobernador don Gregorio de Salinas Varona, capitán de caballos corazas, Testigos, Lic. Marcos González, bachiller Marcos González y Maya y capitán Don Diego de Iglesias. De asistencia, capitán Juan Esteban de Ballesteros y Antonio Ventura de Mardones. Monterrey, 2 de enero de 1706. Rodrigo Nores casado con Úrsula de Salinas. Antes de estos datos me encontré el nombre de un Pedro de Salinas que nace por el año 1585 en Francia y quien fuera el fundador de este apellido (Salinas) al nuevo mundo, él casó con Doña Ángela de Solís y tuvieron cuatro hijos y fueron: Pedro, nació 1621; Antonia, casó con Luis Pérez en Monterrey en 1665; Ana Salinas de Solís; Úrsula Salinas de Solís, casó con Rodrigo Nores en 1650. Pedro Salinas de Solís, casó pero no se encuentra con quién, los hijos que tuvieron fueron: I. Francisco Salinas n. 1640, casó 1670, con Anastasia de Olivares Trevino; II. Joseph de Salinas n. 1640, casó 1665 con Ana Isabel Martínez Benavidez; III. Rosa Salinas casó con José Pérez; IV. Antonio Salinas casó Juana García; V. Luisa de Salinas Casada, Juan Garza; VI. Miguel de Salinas Casada, Antonio de Cervera.

Investigando, me encuentro en varios libros y por casualidad con quienes se casaron algunos de los hijos y nietos y las ocupaciones que tenían. Muchas de estas familias, aparte de que fueron soldados y pobladores, de Cerralvo, Saltillo, Cadereyta y demás pueblos cercanos, habían venido a trabajar en las minas, pero como no les fue muy bien, se enrolaron con las caravanas de cientos de familias que se van al nuevo Santander con Don José de Escandón. Este poblamiento de Nuevo Santander provienen de diversas regiones pero nacidos en la Nueva España.

Siguiendo investigando me encuentro algunos de las familias Salinas que salen de Cerralvo y llegan a la Villa de Camargo; ya en el año 1764 me encuentro en la lista de soldados y pobladores los mismos nombres de los soldados de Cerralvo en 1700 y se casan y quedan ligadas estas familias con los mismos nombres y apellidos. En el censo que se tomó está un José Salinas, casado con Petra Longoria, tiene tres hijos y son dueños de cinco caballos. Todas las familias tenían que anotarse en la revista que se hizo y decir con quién están casados, cuántos hijos, cuántos caballos, cuántas armas, escopetas, cuchillos, etc., cuántos sirvientes o esclavos traían con ellos. Casi siempre, el hombre se casaba a los 19 o 20 años, la mujer de los 13 a los 19 años.

Aquí es cuando la ganadería surge predominantemente en la economía, pues la minería como dije resultó muy débil y la agricultura en su mayor parte de temporal, tuvo escasa importancia. El caballo era uno de los medios de comunicación, la carreta o el burro. Sus casas eran construidas de zacate y lodo, más bien eran de adobe, con puertas de piel de venado, con techos de hojas de palma o de carrizo con zacate, las paredes eran
palos entrelazados y enjarrados con lodo encalado para que no penetrara el aire helado invernal o el calor sofocante del verano, al adobe le agregaban pencas de nopal para que la baba hiciera un pegamento mas resistible y se juntara mas el lodo con el zacate. Las familias casi siempre estaban juntas y se movian todos para los mismos pueblos para protegerse. Las mujeres fueron verdaderas companerias del hombre, valientes y trabajadoras siempre alertas a una embestida salvaje y a la vez atendiendo sus labores propias de mujer: cuidando a sus hijos y consolando y estimulando a sus esposos en las arduas labores del campo. Sufridas companerias de aquellos colonos. Los muebles eran toscos hechos por ellos mismos de madera de mesquite.

Existen documentos oficiales que describen los asaltos, saqueos y destruccion de las rancherfas de nuestros antepasados por los salvajes. Algunos de los indios, que se encontraban por Cerralvo en 1740 eran diversas tribus de indios por ejemplo: Toreguaros, Tortugas, Pajaritos, Aguatinejos, Cocolotes, Cueros quemados, Paysanos, Carrizos, Pupilispiaulis, Meriquillos, Zacatiles, Nazas, Venados, Malaguecos, Tobozos, Zenisos, Zelayos y muchos mas. Nos encontramos los mismos apellidos en los libros de registro de matrimonio y Bautismos en Camargo, Mier, y Reynosa. Ya hemos viajado muchos siglos para llegar a Matamoros y seguir siendo tambien de los primeros pobladores en los dos lados del Río Grande.

Mi personaje historico de la familia Salinas, es Don Miguel Salinas quien fuera dueño del cuartel llamado Fuerte Brown. Miguel Salinas, casado con Doña Gertrudis García de Matamoros, este señor vivía al lado norte del Río Bravo, en la sección a la orilla del Río Bravo en donde tenía sus propiedades. Este terreno era parte de las cuarenta leguas de tierra que fueron donadas por el gobierno español en 1781 a Don José Salvador de la Garza y denominado"Espiritu Santo" que fueron 284,415.8 acres. En estos terrenos entran D. Feliciana Goseascochea de Tijerina ella y sus herederos, D. Ma. de los Angéles García de Tarnava, Ramón Lafón y herederos, Estefana Goseacochea y herederos, Don Manuel Prieto y heredero y Rafael García Cavazos y su esposa, Doña María Josefa Cavazos y sus herederos y muchos otros nombres. Nunca se ha podido deslindar el enredo de cual parte pertenecía a quién y se supone que Dona Josefa Cavazos en 1833 vendió parte de su propiedad a una Sra. María de Jesus de Escamilla. Luego la Sra. Escamilla le vende estas propiedades al Sr. Miguel Salinas; cuando apareció el general Zacarias Taylor en el año 1846 en marzo habló con Miguel Salinas y se hizo un contrato en el cual el gobierno Americano ofrecía pagar $1.50 por día por toda la propiedad de Miguel Salinas y le ordenaron que se saliera de su parcela y sus hijos también, todos tenían sus propiedades alrededor. El gobierno se apoderó de las propiedades y nunca pudieron pagar a los herederos del Sr. Miguel Salinas la suma que se había depositado. El valor de la propiedad en 1853 era de 50,000.

En 1885 el congreso apropió la suma de 160,000 para que se comprara la propiedad que para esta fecha era conocida como la reservación del Fuerte Brown, Texas. El gobierno dijo que no pagaría si el titulo de las propiedades no estaba limpio, para estas fechas todavía no se podía distinguir quiénes eran los propietarios; lo que sí sé es que el Sr. Charles Stillman sí obtuvo una buena cantidad de dinero por propiedades que no eran
de él y con ese dinero estableció un banco de dinero en el estado de Nueva York. Ha habido muchos pleitos en las cortes de Estados Unidos para aclarar los títulos de las propiedades y hasta la fecha nunca se ha hecho nada. La cuidad de Brownsville se apoderó de las propiedades y luego se las paso al Colegio de Texas Southmost para establecer un colegio de dos años. Mientras tanto los herederos del Sr. Miguel Salinas estamos esperando cinco (5) centavos cada uno porque son miles de personas distribuidas por todo el continente encluyendo algunas familiares que viven en México, España, Francia y Alemania y otros lugares.

Para terminar mi investigación sigo buscando y encuentro líneas directas al primer Salinas quién fue Don Pedro De Salinas casado con Angela de Solís y son exacto doce generaciones incluyendo al Sr. Presidente de México, hoy 1993, Don Carlos Salinas de Gortari a quien lo encuentro en dos líneas directas de él y dos líneas directas de mi familia Don Carlos entra por Don Joseph Salinas quien casó en 1700 con Michaela Camacho y Don Jose Miguel Salinas quien casó con Doña Antonia de Cervera, e hijos de Don Joseph Salinas, casado 1665 con Doña Ana Isabel Martínez Benavides. Mi familia por parte de mi abuela paterna conecta con Don Miguel Salinas, casado con Doña Antonia de Cervera, por un hijo Miguel Salinas, casado con Ma. Matilde de Olivares, y Don Carlos entra con otro hijo Don Gabriel Salinas, casado con Doña Tadea Gregoria Reyes Vela. La otra conexión es por Don Antonio Salinas, hermano de Miguel y José y casado con Doña Juana de García, por la tatarabuela de mi madre su padre fue Don Francisco Javier Salinas casado con Doña Quiteria Villarreal.

Toda esta investigación no tiene fin nada más un descanso temporal, pero me encontré estas palabras dichas por el Sr. Don Ezequiel A. Chavez.

"Todos los hombres sintamos y entendamos y veamos clara y definitivamente, que cuantos vivimos: los de ayer, los de hoy, los de mañana, los vivos y los muertos, todos somos real y positivamente hermanos porque todos somos hijos del mismo Padre Nuestro que esté en los Cielos." El árbol genealógico de la familia Salinas se encuentra en poder del autor de este artículo.

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Familia Pacheco

por

Maria Luisa Rojas de Pacheco

En toda época y en todas las sociedades siempre han existido individuos o familias que han contribuido al mejoramiento y engrandecimiento de su comunidad. Algunos de estos individuos muchas veces han dejado sus raíces y patrimonios para enfrentarse a lo desconocido y arraigarse en nuevas fronteras.

Qué mejor ejemplo nos muestra la historia que la colonización del nuevo mundo. Innumerables familias abandonaron la poca o mucha seguridad que su patria y su comunidad les brindaba para afrontar nuevos retos. Cualquiera que fuera el motivo, estos individuos demostraron valor, determinación y coraje. Una de estas familias llevaba el nombre de Pacheco.

El nombre Pacheco se deriva del latin "franciscus" que es hombre libre. Pacheco es un nombre antiguo de los romanos que pasó a Portugal donde el apellido Pacheco originó. El apellido se encuentra en toda España pero es particularmente prominente en Andalucía.

En la historia de España durante el siglo quince aparecen Alfonso, Juan y Rodrigo Pacheco, hijos del reconocido Marqués de Villena. En 1440 "se elevaba en silencio un nuevo personaje, don Juan Pacheco de linaje mixto, portugués, palentino y andaluz, ambicioso y hábil." Juan Pacheco, el "todopoderoso Marqués de Villena", fue "partidario de Alfonso V de Portugal."

Como algo peculiar en el siglo quince en España se acordó el matrimonio de Diego López Pacheco, primogénito del marqués de Villena con Juana de Luna y en 1812 en los archivos matrimoniales de Matamoros, Tamaulipas se encuentra el matrimonio de un José Antonio Pacheco con María Damacia Luna. Desafortunadamente estos últimos perdieron a su primer hijo José Carlos Pacheco en 1813 y una hija Tomasa en 1813.

En la historia de Texas entre el siglo 17 y 18 figura un gobernador español Rafael Pacheco. A principios del siglo 19 figura otro Rafael Pacheco llamado Chambalia, pero este era un jefe Indio en el condado de Bexar.

No sabemos si hay relación entre los Pacheco mencionados pero a mediados del siglo 19 aparece el nombre de Serapio Pacheco en la comunidad de Matamoros. Poco se sabe de los primeros años de Serapio Pacheco. El era un español de Santander que llegó a México siendo apenas un joven de diez y séis años. El entró al mundo de los negocios con el algodón, las pieles y los implementos agrícolas. Serapio Avello Pacheco se casó con Juliana Canales en Matamoros. De la unión surgieron Andrés, Manuel, José, Miguel, Refugio, y una hija, Sofía Elodia la cual murió al dar a luz.
Cuando Don Serapio murió, quedó Doña Julianita, como era llamada, viviendo muchos años en su finca en la esquina de la calle Abasolo y Octava, rodeada de los múltiples negocios de su marido.¹¹

De los hijos de Don Serapio destaca Andrés, nacido el 10 de noviembre de 1876. Andrés Pacheco reinó como uno de los grandes hombres de negocios en Matamoros hasta su muerte.¹² Andrés fue ampliamente conocido en México y Texas y fue un factor importante en incrementar el comercio internacional.¹³ Don Andrés era un nombre muy emprendedor. Tenía una despepitadora, Algodonera "La Victoria," S.A.¹⁴, negocio que todavía estuvo en pie muchísimos años después de su muerte.

Don Andrés también tuvo la primer fábrica de hielo en Matamoros y el hielo lo transportaban por ferrocarril a los pueblos vecinos. En aquellos años figuraba un verso compuesto para él: "Andrés Pacheco se ganó el cielo pues a Matamoros le dio una fábrica de hielo."¹⁵ La fábrica de hielo estaba ubicada en la calle Galeana, entre las calles Nueve y Diez.¹⁶

Al lado de la fábrica de hielo Don Andrés tenía un negocio de pesca. Los pescados grandes los congelaban en bloques de hielo para exhibirlos al público y obsequiarlos a los buenos clientes.¹⁷ Don Andrés era un comerciante en abarrotes al por mayor. Uno de sus establecimientos era "El Vesubio" en la calle Bustamante.¹⁸ Don Andrés compraba "toda clase de Pieles, Lana, Cerda, Cera, y productos del país en general, así como bronce, latón y cobre."¹⁹ Don Andrés tenía también panadería y un negocio de juguetería fina de la cual llevaba muñecas francesas a sus hijas.²⁰ Entre sus múltiples propiedades en Matamoros figuraban las cuatro esquinas enfrente del mercado Juárez²¹ y lo que es ahora "México Agrario"²².

Andrés Pacheco Canales se casó con Rafaela Leal, hija de Juan Leal y Tomasa Rodríguez, en Matamoros. Andrés y Rafaela tuvieron una familia muy numerosa, un total de catorce hijos. Sofía Elodia, su primera hija murió a los cinco años de edad. Su hermanito menor Ramiro, de aproximadamente cuatro años, enfermó al poco tiempo. El niño no comía y vivía sumergido en sus pensamientos. Los exámenes médicos nunca indicaron algo anormal y los doctores recetaron distracciones para el niño. En su empeño por ver a su hijo sano y feliz Don Andrés y Doña Marcela hasta un pony le compraron al niño. Desafortunadamente todo fue inútil y el niño murió al corto tiempo. Como nunca encontraron los médicos una explicación, siempre se dijo que el pequeño Ramiro había muerto de tristeza por la muerte de su hermanita.²³

Don Andrés y Doña Rafaela tuvieron después dos varones a los cuales llamaron Ramiro, pero también murieron en la infancia. A consecuencia de esto, Don Andrés desistió en tener un "Ramiro Pacheco" en su familia.²⁴ Sus otros hijos consistieron de Andrés, Homero, Ninfa, Alfonso, Elodia Sofía, Oliva, Cesar, Ciro, y hasta unas gemelitas Consuelo y Esperanza.

La Revolución Mexicana de 1910 forzó a muchas familias acomodadas del sur del Río Bravo a volver a instalarse en la región al norte del río. Los Pacheco fueron una de estas familias y en 1913 Don Andrés estableció a su familia en Brownsville.²⁵ En Brownsville don Andrés expandió sus operaciones de Matamoros. El exportaba cada año...
gran volumen de implementos y maquinaria agrícola a México e importaba gran cantidad de pieles y algodón. Don Andrés ayudó a financiar el ferrocarril local del Southern Pacific, el Hotel Jardín, el Brownsville Country Club y el puerto de Brownsville.

Don Andrés compró una propiedad en la calle Doce y Jefferson donde la familia vivió por muchos años. La casa con puerta de hierro, candiles y cortinas lujosas fue el escenario para múltiples fiestas y actividades sociales. En una ocasión cuando el gobernador Neff de Texas visitó Brownsville, Oliva, la pequeña hija de Don Andrés declamó para darle la bienvenida. Después de la reunión oficial don Andrés agasajó al gobernador Neff en su casa. (A pesar de una activa vida social, Don Andrés siempre se abstuvo de fumar y beber).

En frente de la plaza de Armas en Matamoros, Don Andrés tenía el Hotel Moctezuma que era administrado por su hermano Miguel. El lujoso restaurante del hotel contaba con una orquesta que frecuentemente amenizaba las fiestas de la familia Pacheco en Brownsville. En esos años el puente internacional de Matamoros-Brownsville cerraba a las doce de la noche y Don Andrés cruzaba a los músicos antes de la media noche para que fueran a deleitar los acontecimientos sociales de sus hijas. Los músicos tocaban toda la noche y regresaban a Matamoros al abrirse el puente a las siete de la mañana. A esa hora la familia Pacheco se dirigía a la Inmaculada Concepción a oír misa de siete.

Don Andrés fue un hombre de dos mundos, dos países donde trabajaba, socializaba y convivía. A pesar de que vivían en Brownsville, cuando Doña Rafaela iba a dar a luz toda la familia se trasladaba a Matamoros por varios meses. Ciro, el más pequeño de los hijos, fue el único que nació en territorio americano.

Don Andrés nunca quiso que sus hijos perdieran o olvidaran sus raíces mexicanas. Sus hijos aprendieron bien la lección pues cuando Alfonso y César se unieron al ejército americano durante la segunda guerra mundial, se negaron a servir como residentes americanos y lucharon como voluntarios mexicanos en el Batallón 201. Los dos jóvenes se destacaron en su labor: Alfonso, al tener la delicada, y secreta misión de interceptar mensajes enemigos, y César al recibir el "corazon púrpura" por arriesgar su vida por otros compañeros.

Los niños Andrés, llamado "Chito", y Homero aunque estuvieron de internos en Monterrey, estudiaron su carrera profesional en la Universidad de Rice en Houston. Ciro, el más chico también recibió educación profesional, pero en la universidad de A&M en College Station. Don Miguel, hermano menor de Don Andrés, también fue un hombre destacado, pero el entró al mundo de la política en México. Don Miguel fue diputado del estado de Tamaulipas, debido a lo cual trasladó su residencia a la ciudad de Victoria. Don Miguel nunca se casó y constantemente invitaba a su hermano Andrés y a su sobrinos a visitarlo. Era común ver a toda la familia de Don Andrés trasladarse los fines de semana a Victoria a visitar al tío Miguel.

Cuando Don Andrés empezó a tener problemas de salud, aceptó ir a Villaldama a consultar a un reconocido médico, sin imaginarse que jamás volvería a su querida tierra. Después de vivir varios meses en Villaldama, Don Andrés Pacheco Canales murió en 1927. Muchos años después falleció Don Miguel en la ciudad de México.
Doña Rafaela, una mujer inteligente y vigorosa, que siempre había apoyado a su marido en todos los aspectos de su vida, tomó los aspectos de su vida, tomó las riendas de los negocios, junto con su hijo mayor, "Chito".35

Un mundo inolvidable y toda una época llegó a su fin cuando un incendio consumió la famosa finca de los Pacheco alrededor de 1942. Afortunadamente nadie se encontraba en ella, pues Doña Rafaela se hallaba fuera de la ciudad visitando a su hija Esperanza. Como Doña Rafaela estaba delicada de salud y tenía la constante preocupación de sus hijos Alfonso y César en el frente en Alemania, nadie la enteró de la quemaza para evitarle una fuerte impresión. Era tal la aflicción por sus hijos que le pidió a Dios que por favor los regresara con vida, aunque ella se quedara sin casa. Sin ella enterarse Dios le cumplió su petición. Alfonso y César regresaron con vida, pero para encontrar que su madre había fallecido el 29 de noviembre de 1944.36

Al quemarse la casa en la calle Doce la familia se trasladó a una finca en la calle Monroe. En ese edificio se encontraba el H.M. Field Comercial Company, una compañía formada en 1906 por Henry Field. La compañía se disolvió en 1919 siendo Andrés Pacheco el presidente. Ese mismo año Don Andrés compró la finca y en una sección tenía una cuerería y en otra sección arados y otros implementos agrícolas. Desde 1919 hasta el presente la finca ha pertenecido a la familia Pacheco.37

Con la ausencia de sus padres Chito tomó las riendas de los negocios familiares, e igual que su padre, sabía disfrutar lo que la vida le ofrecía. Un amante de la caza, organizaba cacerías que duraban meses y a las cuales asistían entre cien y doscientas personas.38 Andrés Jr., "Chito" falleció el 19 de diciembre de 1948 después de su hermano Ciro que había fallecido el 10 de enero de 1947. Los dos fallecieron igual que su hermano Miguel, sin haber contraído matrimonio. Después de la muerte de Chito murió Homero en junio de 1958 seguido por César en 1966.

Alfonso fue quien se hizo cargo de los negocios de la familia al morir su hermano Chito. Don Alfonso siguió los pasos de su hermano, su padre y su abuelo y destacó en el mundo de los negocios y la sociedad. Durante el auge del algodón fue presidente de la Asociación Algodonera y estuvo el Sr. Presidente Adolfo Ruiz Cortinas durante su visita a Matamoros. Alfonso se casó con Irma García Champion y tuvo siete hijos: Sylvia Guadalupe, Alfonso, Irma Rafaela, Andrés, María Margarita, María Cecilia y Carlos Manuel.

Las hijas de Don Andrés también hicieron su aportación. Oliva, la hija menor de Don Andrés fue presidenta del club Triple L, "Little Lovely Ladies" una organización social que existía en Brownsville. Bajo su dirección se organizó el primer baile de gala que promoviera los "Días del Charro," que en ese tiempo empezaban con el propósito de unir las ciudades fronterizas de Brownsville y Matamoros. Personalidades de ambas ciudades asistieron a tal evento en el Brownsville Country Club. Oliva también fue la mano derecha de Alfonso por muchos años, en la algodonera.39

Ninfa aportó al orgullo familiar con su destreza manual. Aprovechando su facilidad para tejer y bordar, tuvo durante años una fábrica de ropa fina "Kewpie Dress Company".
En la fábrica se confeccionaban vestidos para niñas con bordados a mano, los cuales se mandaban a Nueva York a la reconocida firma Lord and Taylor.Actualmente viven tres hijas de Don Andrés: las señoritas Ninfa y Oliva y la Sra. Esperanza Pacheco de Coindreau. Hemos visto una pequeña parte de la historia de una familia que trasladó sus raíces, creció, desarrolló y formó un imperio. Una familia que estando en la cúspide tuvo tragedias, las superó, y aportó algo a la sociedad donde vivía. Y sin olvidar las palabras celebres de Tito Livio:

Hay épocas, hombres y acontecimientos, sobre los cuales la Historia, Maestra de la Vida, es la única que puede dictar su juicio definitivo; los contemporáneos y los testigos oculares, sólo deben escribir lo que han visto y oído, sin olvidar que son pueblos suicidas, aquellos que no aman su pasado.

Notas de Pie

3 Ibid., p. 453
4 Ibid.
5 Ibid., p. 291.
9 *New Encyclopedia of Texas: Men of Texas*, s.v. "Andrés Pacheco."
10 Oliva Pacheco, interview held at South Padre Island, Texas, November 1992.
11 Ibid.
12 Idem, NET, p. 2918.
13 Ibid., pp. 2917-2918.
15 Raquel de Rodríguez Brayda, interview held at her home in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, November 1992.
17 Oliva Pacheco.


19 Surge, 26 March 1919.

20 Oliva Pacheco.

21 Ninfa Pacheco, interview held at South Padre Island, Texas, November 1992.

22 Andrés Pacheco, son of Alfonso Pacheco Leal, interview held at his home in Matamoros, México, November 1992.

23 Oliva Pacheco.

24 Sylvia Pacheco, daughter of Alfonso Pacheco Leal, interview held at her home in Brownsville, Texas, November 1992.


26 NET, pp. 2917-2918.


28 Oliva Pacheco.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid.

34 Ibid.

35 Ibid.

36 Alfonso Pacheco Leal, interview held at his home in Matamoros, Mexico, before his death.

37 Betty Bay, p. 91.

38 Carlos Pacheco, son of Alfonso Pacheco Leal, interview held at his home in Brownsville, Texas, November 1992.

39 Oliva Pacheco.

40 Ninfa Pacheco
Filomeno Garcia vs. Josiah Turner: The Case of Soliseñito Banco and the Elimination of Bancos on the Rio Grande River

by

Antonio N. Zavaleta

Through most of its history the Rio Grande River (Rio Bravo in Mexico) has meandered lazily toward its terminus at the Gulf of Mexico. One hundred miles to the West of its mouth the river flows through limestone banks and high escarpments before descending to the fertile delta soils of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. Most of the time the river flows peacefully, but as its Spanish name suggests, from time to time it overflows its banks cutting off old meanders and creating new ones. The one hundred years between the 1850's and the construction of the massive Amistad and Falcon dam projects saw the river flow out of its banks almost every year. The result of the changes in the river's course was the expatriation of at least one hundred parcels or "bancos" of privately owned land that were "cut-out" from one nation's jurisdiction to the other's. When the water receded, not only land but also houses, livestock and people found themselves living on "the other side." Thus American land owners found that their farms were now located in the Republic of Mexico. This would occur when the river overflowed it banks to the north. Conversely, Mexican land owners discovered that their land was suddenly located on the American side when the river rolled to the south.

The hearty Mexican rancheros and determined Anglo farmers who worked the porciones and parcels along the river banks in the past realized that this brave river experienced periodic and sometimes devastating wet and dry seasons. People along the river have always lived at the mercy of the cycles of weather that produced times of draught, and the times of flood. The destinies and fortunes of the families who live along international rivers have always been tenuous (Horgan, 1957).

Today we understand the forces of change that formed the Rio Grande River Valley's geographic features and supported its long forgotten cultures (Zavaleta, 1989). From the time of its earliest European description, the area has fascinated dreamers and would be empire builders. Few physical features in North America have had the ability to maintain public focus and controversy over the centuries like the river which forms most of the southern boundary between The United States and Mexico.

As seen from above, the river valley of the Rio Bravo extends some 50 miles to the north and south around the present river channel. The valley landscape is marked with the vestiges of its ancient history. Snaking across the valley on both sides of the present river are hundreds of miles of former river beds called esteros or resacas. The Spanish term resaca reveals in its literal meaning the redraft or alternating wet and dry cycles which the old river beds experience. All of our valley resacas are actually former channels of the river. In the centuries before the existence of nation-states, imperialism, and manifest destiny, the annual shift of the main channel of the river a half mile

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northward or southward from its course was little cause for concern. However, the river's status as an international boundary established between the United States and Mexico in 1848 has been a constant source of quarrels between the two neighbors.

During the 17th century, in the early years before organized Spanish colonization of the lower river, land was owned in huge tracts by absentee landlords. The land owners view of their world from central Mexico contained no inkling of life on the northern frontier. Spanish colonization of the lower river came at a time when the infant Anglo nation to the Northeast was evolving its political and philosophical identity. Competition for the area was driven by the young nation's drive to forge new frontiers and to realize their nationhood. Few people recognized that shortly after the beginning of the 19th century, the passions of independence would launch an era of political and military turmoil often centered along the river.

The Mexican American War established the Rio Grande River as the international boundary between The United States and The Republic of Mexico with the singing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. Fort Brown, an American Army installation, had been built on the north bank of the river near the Santa Cruz bend across from the Mexican city of Matamoros, Tamaulipas. The frontier town of Brownsville, Texas was founded shortly after in 1850. Just to the North of the Fort the plans for Brownsville were laid out in typical North American fashion. Brownsville's initial streets were plotted with scientific exactitude in a perpendicular latticework.

One of the most important results of the 1848 Treaty was the agreement to establish an International Boundary Commission to oversee both natural and man made changes along the river. During the years 1849 to 1856 the first survey of the international boundary was completed. The Emory-Salazar survey's primary purpose was to fix legally the location the Rio Grande River channel as the international boundary. For more than one hundred years, the Emory-Salazar survey has remained the standard with which Rio Grande River channel movement is documented.

The establishment of the International Boundary Commission and the publication of the Emory survey formed the basis of land claims and other legal battles to this day. Today the IBWC rarely takes up actual boundary disputes because the course of the river rarely changes. However, major infrastructural improvements in the form of dams which today fix the banks of the river and the international boundary were not present until the mid-twentieth century. During the period from 1848 to the late 1950's the constantly changing river channel produced non-stop international intrigue regarding the ownership of land. This important aspect of the Rio Grande's story is unknown by most and yet is the basis for one of the most fascinating and complicated chapters in the river's history.

The first legal claim regarding the ownership of land as a result of a shift in the international boundary was filed by J. W. Magofin of Fort Davis, Texas. Magofin wrote to Commissioner Emory on October 10, 1856 seeking a legal opinion regarding the "elimination of bancos." A banco was defined as a bank of land that was cut-out by a shift in the channel of the river and circumscribed on one side by the former river channel. The former river channel now without a continuing flow of river water became
dependent upon rains and thus entered an endless wet and dry cycle. Thus, resacas were formed. The river's first one hundred years as an international boundary (1848-1948) witnessed periodic and formidable changes in the river's channel, Table 1. These changes formed the basis of the IBWC's major work during the late 19th and early 20th Centuries. One of the IBWC's major functions was to decide upon the elimination of bancos. Literally to recognize their origin, location and national sovereignty.

Between 1848 and 1900 some 58 bancos had formed on the lower Rio Grande. By the 1930's the number reached nearly 100. The almost constant change in the course of the river prompted the need for amendments to the treaty between Mexico and the United States in 1853, and then again in 1884. The 1884 Convention described what the IBWC considered an international boundary and the fact that it could be composed of a combination of land and water. Consider the following excerpt:

"Notwithstanding any alterations in the banks or in the course of those rivers, provided that such alterations be effected by natural causes through the slow and gradual erosion and deposit of alluvium and not by the abandonment of an existing river bed and the opening of a new one. Any other change, wrought by the force of current, whether by the cutting of a new bed, or when there is more than one channel by the deepening of another channel than that which marked the boundary at the time of the survey made under the aforesaid Treaty(Emory Survey), shall produce no change in the dividing line as fixed by the surveys of the International Boundary Commissions in 1852; but the line then fixed shall continue to follow the middle of the original channel bed, even though this should become wholly dry or be obstructed by deposits"(IBWC, 1910).

The Boundary Commissioners met once again in March of 1889 to facilitate the accord reached in 1884. Beginning with the 1889 meeting, the International Boundary Commissions(IBWC) of The United States and Mexico met regularly to hear land appeals. Both nations agreed that the commission's final decision on land disputes would be respected by both federal governments.

The Journal of the Joint Commission on the "General Subject of Isolated Bancos in the Rio Grande" was taken up again on January 15, 1895 at a meeting held in San Antonio, Texas. At this meeting, the course of the Rio Grande was divided into three "divisions." The first division ran from El Paso southward to Presidio del Norte, the second division continued southward from the Presidio del Norte to Rio Grande City. The third and final division continued from Rio Grande City to the mouth of the Rio Grande River on The Gulf of Mexico, a distance of approximately 241 river miles. It was within these final 241 river miles that the greatest number of bancos were constantly created. The following is an excerpt from the 1895 journal:

"...The course of the river, passes through such low alluvial bottoms where the earth has little consistency, with such slight fall, that the channel of the river is
ever changing from right to left, always eroding the concave bank and depositing on the convex in low as well as high water, though of course the changes are more marked during the high-water stages. These erosions are greater where the water in its tangent from its curve strikes the bank at the most obtuse angle, ceasing when the angle becomes so acute that the water is more readily deflected by the consistency of the earth, so that when the curve has formed almost a circle, the radius of which is dependent on the consistency of the earth and the volume and velocity of the water, the erosions practically cease and the river turns upon itself in a circle and forms a cut-off, leaving the land so separated in something like the shape of pear or gourd" (IBWC, 1910).

In 1905 so many bancos had been created that the 1884 convention which protected the "rights of property in respect to lands which may become separated through the creation of new channels;" and the statement that indicated that, "such lands shall continue to be under the jurisdiction of the country to which they previously belonged," were no longer realistic. By the turn of the century each country had lost between 2,000 and 3,000 acres of land. Therefore, in 1905, the IBWC met to "eliminate" the 58 bancos identified in the 1884 and 1898 conventions:

"Between the mouth of the river and its confluence with the San Juan River the boundary line between the two countries shall...follow the deepest channel of the steam...and the dominion and jurisdiction of so many as the aforesaid fifty-eight (58) bancos as may remain on the right bank of the river shall pass to Mexico, and the dominion and jurisdiction of those of the said fifty-eight (58) bancos which may remain on the left bank shall pass to the United States of America." "The citizens of either of the two contracting countries who, by virtue of the stipulations of this convention, shall in the future be located on the land of the other may remain thereon or remove at any time to whatever place may suit them, and either keep the property which they possess in said territory or dispose of it. Those who prefer to remain on the eliminated bancos may either preserve the title and rights of citizenship of the country to which the said bancos formerly belonged, or acquire the nationality of the country to which they will belong in the future. Property of all kinds situated on the said bancos shall be inviolably respected, and its present owners, their heirs, and those who may subsequently acquire the property legally, shall enjoy as complete security with respect there to as if it belonged to citizens of the country where it is situated" (IBWC, 1910).

Fifty eight bancos were eliminated in 1905. A small banco of land (60 acres) located up-river from Brownsville on Josiah Turner's Galveston ranch was not included due to the fact that it required further investigation. The early 1900's a Mexican citizen claimed that the land on the American side of the river was actually Mexican land and sought its
elimination. The Turner case brings into play an interesting combination of area history, culture and national identity. The following excerpts are taken from the original proceedings of the Turner in 1910-11. Figure 1, describes the dynamics of river movement in the area in question.

Report of the American Consulting Engineer, Mr. Follett.

"My name is Josiah Turner. I am eighty-three years of age. I have lived at what is known as the Galveston Ranch, La Feria tract, Cameron County, Texas, since the year 1851. I am the owner of the land surrounding the Banco Soliseño, and of the banco itself. Relative to the strip of land lying directly west of the Soliseño Banco and which, it is claimed by Filomeno García, pertains to Mexican territory, I desire to say that in the year of 1865 after the first overflow of the Rio Grande, a part of the Galveston Ranch, which at that time belonged to my father-in-law, Don Anastacio Treviño, was cut off and thrown onto the Mexican side--about forty acres of the upper potrero. The land was recognized as Don Anastacio's, even after being thrown onto the Mexican side.

Afterwards Emilio Fernandez contracted to buy it from me for two hundred dollars but paid me but one hundred. Then for a long time he refused to pay me the balance, feeling that as the banco was on Mexican territory but under American jurisdiction, it would be hard for me to enforce my rights. About 1885 or 1886 the river took another cut and threw almost the entire banco onto the Texas side again, leaving a few acres only on the Mexican side. Immediately upon seeing my own land coming by to me through nature's agency, I took possession of it and have held ever since.

There is no truth in the statement that the piece referred to was ever Mexican territory, except as an avulsive fragment of American soil; and the history of these bancos will bear me out in the assertion that this peculiar action of the river has occurred at other places along the Rio Grande."


"My name is Hilario Treviño. I am 63 or 64 years old and live in Las Rusias Ranch, Texas. I knew Don Anastacio Treviño. He was my uncle. I know that Anastacio gave Jesús García permission to plant a small piece of land on the Mexican side which had cut from Texas, Jesús loaning him 100 pesos for the privilege."

"My name is Desiderio García. I am 72 years old and I live in Galveston Ranch, Texas. I don't remember when Soliseño banco cut off. I lived in Soliseño banco from 1860 for about 16 years. During that time, a piece of Galveston ranch cut over to Mexico. It was above Soliseño banco, and was cut off a few
years after I began living on Soliseñito. I do not know whether the river destroyed it, or what became of it, because I was not here for a few years. I was here in Soliseñito banco when Soliseñito banco cut off and know when it was cut. Jesús García and Emilio Fernández were planting it before it cut off under permission from Josiah Turner. I have heard that a piece of the Texas banco was left on the Mexican side when the Soliseñito cut off but I have never seen it. Soliseñito is the same land that was formerly cut from Texas" (IBWC, 1910).

Report of Mexican Consulting Engineer, Mr. Zayas.

"There is a banco in the lower Rio Grande which we denominated Soliseñito. This Soliseñito banco existed when the survey of 1897-8 was made, but was not taken into consideration then for the reason that the American Consulting Engineer had some information furnished him by Mr. Josiah Turner, the proprietor of Galveston Ranch, situated in the vicinity and just West of Soliseñito banco to the effect that the formation of this banco was caused by an avulsive change of the river which segregated land, then American, which had remained on the Mexican side after another avulsive cut which had caused its separation from the American side, and which had gained accretion with the gradual movement of the river towards the left bank, accretion which, according to said Turner, is today the "Soliseñito" banco by virtue of the last avulsive change which occurred in 1887. For this reason it did not appear in the survey of 1897 as subject to elimination from the effects of the Treaty. The data appears in the once under your worthy charge relating to the claim presented by Señor Don Filomeno García.

In January of this year(1910), while the writer was engaged in the study of the new bancos in the lower river in company with the American Consulting Engineer, Señor Filomeno García presented himself in the camp of the Mexican Section to inquire if the Commission would then proceed to investigate matters relating to the "Soliseñito" banco. This circumstance, together with that of having this banco on the list amongst those we were to study, and also having received instructions from the Mexican Commissioner to investigate whatever cases were presented during our study, caused me to confer with the American Consulting Engineer and propose to him the investigation of this case.

The American Consulting Engineer advised me that in 1898 when proposing eliminable bancos this was not taken into account for the reason that it was a banco cut from American and not from Mexican land, as is the case with bancos found on the left bank of the river. Desiring however, to begin actively the study of the land, he promised me to make whatever investigation was necessary the engineering sections arrived at the place.

This same day I proceeded to the place and was there joined by Filomeno García and his witnesses Angel García Rivas, Jose Longoria García and Manuel
de la Rosa. We found there the American Consulting Engineer accompanied by
the witnesses sent by Mr. Turner, but not him. We examined the land on the
Mexican side where, according to Mr. Follett's statement to me, he believed had
been land anciently segregated from Texas. We examined with the witnesses all
the channel, very clear in parts, of the river in 1897-8, which we recognized by
some portions left of a fence that then existed. The American Engineer several
times asked the witnesses where was the piece of land and the channel which
surrounded it which had cut from Texas in 1865. None of the witnesses of
either party knew anything of it and looked from one to the other without
comprehending. After repeated explanation the witnesses of Filomeno García
stated that undoubtedly a piece of land was cut from Texas which remained on
the Mexican side. Asked concerning the actual situation of this land they
unanimously stated that it did not now exist, much less at this place, since the
river had carried it all away and even continued to destroy Mexican land more
to the South as it moved toward the Mexican side for many years. Filomeno
García agreed that the high land actually corresponded, if it existed, with the
land on the American side but in reality the river caused it to disappear
completely in its movements to the South and again to the North. That in this
last movement it went so far to the North as to become what is now the channel
which surrounds the Soliseñito and until it ate part of the abandoned channel of
the large Soliseñó banco, and that after this, in 1886-7, the land claimed was cut
and which is now called Soliseñito. In this visit to the camp the witnesses
presented by Turner did not show the Texas land in Mexico. In our study on the
American side there was no uniformity in the declarations of the witnesses of
Mr. Turner, and the introducer of the witnesses, a young man by the name of
Longoria, got very often all mixed up so far as to reply to everything "I don't
know" and finally refused to reply further. On the contrary, everything stated by
the witnesses presented by Filomeno Garcia corresponded and was confirmed
by that stated by the ancients, witnesses of Mr. Turner, to the effect that there
was no Texas land on the Mexican side when the land in question cut, and I
verified this as being the same as stated by Garcia, who showed some ebony
posts, part of one nearby, which all knew he had planted in company with his
father when they cultivated the land. All of the witnesses were contestants. At
the termination of the meeting Mr. Follett again insisted that he be shown the
Texas land on the Mexican side, which was said to be there, and carried his
impatience at the vacillations of Longoria and his witnesses to such a degree as
to indicate disgust, terminating by stating to one of his assistants and to all
present there that since there was no land and the witnesses of Turner had
cleared up nothing, we would proceed to project the traverse of the Soliseñito,
considering it as eliminable."
"I respectfully assert the above in order to make known to the Mexican
Commissioner my personal conviction that the failure to recognize Soliseñito as
an eliminable banco would be an injustice and that any hypotheses of a different character which might be made in order to prove the contrary would be nothing more than a twisting of the truth, and it would be desirable that the Commission should examine without loss of time the proprietor of Galveston Ranch, now very old, the only witness favorable to his claim, in order that I may fully justify the fear that I manifest respecting the failure of his moral faculties. The witnesses of Filomeno Garcia did not deny that Mr. Turner may have rented land to the persons mentioned, nor said they anything to the contrary to his having given or returned the money to the widow of Jesus Garcia; the only thing that they affirmed is that the individual who cultivated the land that passed to Mexico at the first cut stopped doing so for the simple reason that the river destroyed it completely two years, more or less, after it cut. As a matter of fact since the cut took place Mr. Turner has not occupied the land during 19 years or more until 1885-6, when he says the river turned and cut, making it pass to the American side and leaving a few acres on the Mexican side. I believe, therefore, to admit what is proposed by Mr. Turner, would be to establish a precedent which would in the future complicate even more the already complicated banco matters, whose simplification was essential to the object of the treaty of May 20, 1905.

I have to state in conclusion that I am profoundly convinced that the Soliseñito banco was separated from Mexican territory and that it is of the class comprehended in the boundary treaties and classified as eliminable."


The IBWC met in Mercedes, Texas in March of 1911 to decide the Turner case. The banco in question (60 acres) was relatively small compared to the average size for lower Rio Grande bancos of about 150 acres. In the end, the aged Mr. Turner seemed confused and mixed statements about Turner banco #22 which was cut from the U.S. to Mexico in 1891, and Soliseño banco, #23, which was cut from Mexico to the U.S. in 1859. All three bancos are in the area of Turner's Galveston ranch.

The IBWC Decision

"A review of the reports of the Consulting Engineers shows that they are of one opinion that the land in question was cut from the South to the North side of the Rio Grande by an avulsive change of the river, the abandoned channel around the land being clearly defined, thus giving every indication that it is a banco cut to the American side. The American Consulting Engineer in his report states that his first opinion was that this land was a Mexican banco and went so far as to join with the Mexican Consulting Engineer in laying a traverse around it, but upon going into the matter further he came to the conclusion that such was not the case, but that it was accretion to an American banco cut back from the
Mexican side. The Mexican Consulting Engineer was unable to concur in this opinion of the American Consulting Engineer and reported that in his opinion the Soliseñito tract was a Mexican banco and subject to elimination. The American Consulting Engineer bases his conclusion that it is a part of an American banco cut back to the American side upon information obtained by him during the banco survey of 1897-8, from Mr. Josiah Turner and others that the land in question was United States soil; that in 1865 a small banco was cut from Turner's ranch to the Mexican side of the river; that about 1886 a portion of this land, with considerable accretion, was cut back to the American side of the river forming what is known as the Soliseñito banco, and that Mr. Turner still had a small piece of the original American banco lying on the Mexican side of the river. The Commissioners agreed that it was not necessary to take testimony in this case as their own examination of the physical condition of the land, together with the maps, made it possible for them to arrive at a decision, especially as it had always been the experience of the Commissioners that testimony of witnesses as to the movements of the river, even for a short period back, was almost wholly unreliable. Therefore, it was agreed that the land known as Soliseñito was, in the opinion of the Commission, a Mexican banco and subject to elimination under the treaty of 1905 for the elimination of bancos in the Rio Grande.

Therefore, this journal, together with the map of the Consulting Engineers showing the traverse in the abandoned channel around Soliseñito, will be forwarded to the two governments and upon its approval a copy of same will be furnished the Consulting Engineers with instructions to monument this banco in the same manner followed in the monumentation of bancos Nos. 1 to 58, and report accordingly. This banco will be numbered eighty-one."

The date of the decision in this case is April 8, 1911.

Observations

This short examination of the elimination of bancos on the lower Rio Grande has selected the Turner case and Soliseñito banco to demonstrate a little known but important chapter in Matamoros-Brownsville history. The dynamics of national identity, family fortune, land and water rights, the physical displacement of people to a neighboring country and dual citizenship all add to our understanding of lower border culture as it exists today.

In 1884 the IBWC first considered maintaining the international border along a line which would run through the middle of the original river channel, even though it might be a dry resaca. The Treaties of 1889 and 1895 abandoned that idea in favor of the more reasonable "elimination of bancos" concept. Elimination removed the land inventory from the country of origin to the country where the banco of land was currently present.
Elimination also maintained the legal rights of citizenship and ownership. In 1905 the IBWC met to eliminate 58 bancos. Simply stated, the land on the right bank of the river was to revert to Mexico and the land on the left bank to the United States.

In our example case, Mr. Turner had lived on the land since 1851, had married into a Mexican family and claimed that the land in question was originally U.S. land which had been cut to the Mexican side and then back to the U.S. side of the river. However, during the 20 intervening years between its loss and return to the U.S. side, Turner made no attempt to claim the land nor did he farm it. During this time a Mexican citizen Filomeno García from the Mexican community of Soliseño had taken possession of the land and had farmed it with his sons and other community members.

Mr. Zayas, the Mexican engineer felt that Mr. Turner had been acting opportunistically in claiming the land after the river cut it back to the American side in 1885. During the years that passed between 1885 and 1895, the IBWC developed policy which provided for the elimination of bancos and the recognition of the rights of those who possessed and worked the land at the time of the cut. Therefore, in 1911 the IBWC decided to eliminate the banco, to name and number it (Soliseño #81), and to recognize the Mexican the claim of Filomeno García. The decision was appropriate and was subsequently honored by the governments of both countries.

IBWC records also report the case of the Benavides banco in which a Mexican citizen named Mainero had been publicly embarrassed in having to apply for a permit of access to his own land once it was cut to the other country. The IBWC asked, "would these accretions change the boundary line and add to the jurisdiction of the banco, or would the boundary line remain unchanged and the accretions go to the adjacent owners fronting on the river and consequently to the opposite jurisdiction?" In this case the title to Mr. Mainero's land was transferred to American registry and he was granted access and dual citizenship.

There are approximately 30 bancos of land in the area of Matamoros-Brownsville which were eliminated by IBWC treaty. Many of these bancos bear family names which are today readily recognizable in both communities. Local bancos bear names like Treviño, Celaya, Benavides, Fernandez, Combe, Canales, Lozano, and many others. Other area bancos bear place or ranch names which are also recognizable to local citizens. Familiar banco names include Las Rusias, Las Prietas, Los Tomates and others.

This article has only dealt with the elimination of bancos on the lower Rio Grande in the area of Matamoros-Brownsville through 1911. It should also be noted that the river continued to overflow its banks and to change directions through the 1940's. Numerous changes in the course of the river resulted from the 1933 hurricanes and from annual spring floods. The annual overflow of the river's banks was not controlled until the middle 1950's. "Old timers" will recall that the 1950's was a decade of severe draught in the lower Rio Grande Valley.

Examination of Table 1, indicates that between 1855 and 1910, the river underwent cycles of movement from north to south and then back from south to north. For example, in the period between the 1850's and the 1880's the river seemed to cut out
more land from Mexico because it rolled more often to the south. During the period from the 1890's to the 1920's, the river seemed to more often move to the north cutting off land from the United States. Most of the familiar bancos within the city limits of Brownsville today, Los Tomates, Lozano, Morales, Jerónimo bancos, and the Fort Brown hotel area, were cut from Mexico in the 1920 and 1930's. The banks of the Rio Grande at Brownsville and Matamoros in 1900 were about 16 feet above low water and there had never been an overflow. In the late 1890's, the river rose 13 feet above low water, this was a level higher that the river had risen in the past quarter century back to 1875. This high water condition placed Fort Brown and downtown Brownsville in serious jeopardy. The army engineers at Fort Brown were prompted to construct defensive works on the reservation opposite Los Tomates (in Mexico) and in front of the American artillery barracks, Santa Cruz point and the Fort Administration building. While the Mayor of Matamoros officially protested the construction as aggressive, the IBWC found the activity to be necessary. In fact, as we know after that decision was made around 1898, major changes on the river cut out large chunks of Mexican land to the U.S. side now within the city limits of Brownsville.

Further examination of 1903 IBWC tables indicates a transfer of 5,572 Mexican acres to The United States including 2,500 acres of arable land, 95 jacals, 2 houses, and 289 Mexican citizens. Mexico conversely gained 3,392 acres of U.S. land, including 1,038 acres of arable land, 34 jacals, and 78 U.S. citizens. The table also indicates that 17 of the 23 U.S. bancos were cut during or since 1880, while 13 of the 35 Mexican bancos were formed in the same time. As indicated above, the table supports my contention that the river tended to move south for a time after Emory's survey, and then reversed its trend and began to move to the North (1903 IBWC). Early 20th Century IBWC survey maps indicated the inevitability of future bancos being formed by the river above Brownsville. "The bends Emory found have been lengthened and the resulting river is very crooked, with several bancos imminent" (IBWC, 1903). In addition, the distance down stream from Soliseflo banco toward Brownsville was considered to be the "worst condition found along the whole river." The twisted nature of the river channel had great potential for the creation of bancos in the future.

Indeed, the Rio Grande river continued to defy international boundaries through the end of the 1940's. Today we often wonder about the seemingly odd mixture of out of place surnames found along the lower river not knowing where they came from. In studying river geneology we discover that families often have members living on both sides of the river right across from one another. Further examination reveals that family lands were separated some time in the past by changes in the river's course, but that the lands remained under their control. As the decades pass, and as land was sold, families lost track of the fact that they have members only a few hundred yards away. Most people do not realize how our border history has been driven by the natural history of the Rio Grande River.

The University of Texas at Brownsville
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Banco Name</th>
<th>IBWC No.</th>
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Special thanks to Mrs. Julia Monsees and to Mr. Bruce Aiken who kindly allowed me access to the original IBWC documents in their possession.
Figure 1
Dynamics of river movement in the area of Soliseñó Banco
Figure 2
Location of Soliseñito Banco relative to Soliseñio Banco
Illustration of the Fort Brown Courthouse and Jail
part of Historic Fort Brown Complex on the
UT-B Campus
first built in 1904 for the Quartermaster Commissary
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas
Teatro de la Reforma

by

Alfonso Gómez Argüelles

Perdí a mis padres y he llorado mucho;
más con el alma, que con los ojos;
pero si los cierro y al Cielo imploro
yo los veo a ellos...
¿con el alma?...¿con los ojos?

Así voy perdiendo también los mundanos
tesoros que fueron;
porque me cambiaron,
y me enriquecieron;
porque si mi espíritu aún enaltecen
fueron gran tesoro,
pero se perdieron.

Ahora comparto con almas sensibles
un grato recuerdo,
y un cierto vacío.
No es precisamente la sala o la silla,
el telón corriendo, o el palco o pasillo;
no las escaleras, ventanas, balcones...
¡No!
Porque eso lo tengo,
en esto no yerro...
paradoja extraña, si los ojos cierro.

¿Qué es eso entonces,
que vanos esfuerzos no pueden decir,
ni con mil palabras...
y que mil personas de almas sensibles,
no han logrado juntas describir?

Eso es ...lo creo...lo sé...
lo tengo por norma...
Es el alma de un teatro...

El Teatro Reforma.

Porque yo imagino que al Teatro Reforma se le construyó,
porque en la distancia,
un grupo de almas sensibles quisieron tener una gran estancia;
para convivir...para conversar,
...para saludarse...para emocionarse;
dónde platicar...dónde lucirse y admirar;
dónde cortejarse...dónde enamorarse ...
y hasta criticar.

Porque yo imagino que en aquel entonces las almas sensibles que sólo tenían una catedral;
por aquel entonces sólo una parroquia, pequeña, sencilla;
quisieron alocarse,
y hasta "acelerarse" como se dice ahora ...
...para conocerse...para "no quedarse."

Y llegó Peeler, el gran arquitecto, europeo, audaz,
constructor él mismo, ¿sería locuaz?
En aquel entonces la conversación equivalía al cine, radio y televisión.
Estoy por asegurar que su conversación hacía gran armonía con su profesión, alguna norma seguía, y con ambas construyó.

Y construyó un teatro de logros intangibles ...

...logró cultivar la esencia de aquellas almas sensibles.

Ahora compart con otras almas sensibles un grato recuerdo, y un cierto vacío que todos queremos llenar.
Están los cimientos se dice,
pero considero que lo material,
tarde o temprano se pierde;
que hasta el mismo cuerpo humano,
como material, lleva inherente,
que al polvo vuelve...irremediablemente.

Luego de reflexionar quiero dejar asentado
que a nadie debemos culpar;
por cambios o destrucción,
lo material fue afectado.

Los verdaderos cimientos allí están:
son un grupo de damas y caballeros
de almas sensibles
que van a diseñar y construir
una gran estancia;
para convivir...para conversar
...para saludarse...para emocionarse;
dónde platicar...dónde lucirse y admirar
...dónde cortejarse...dónde enamorarse
...y hasta criticar.

El Bravo, Matamoros.
Illustration of the Church of the Immaculate Conception
12th Street and East Jefferson
Built in 1854-1859
Courtesy of Don Breedon Art Studio,
Brownsville, Texas