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The Contours of a Very Special Border

by Irving W. Levinson, Ph.D.

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Perhaps the best place to begin is with two brief conversations that took place after one of my classes. In the first, a student told me that his family recently sold a part of their portion. Here in the Rio Grande Valley of Texas and México, the term “portion” refers to a grant of land of at least 4,428 acres given to the Spanish settlers who first came to this Valley during the 1750s and 1760s.¹ So this student, barely into his twenties, formed part of a link extending back for more than a quarter of millennium and which crossed five national histories.² The second young man conveyed a grimmer message; his mother’s deportation hearing would be taking place on Thursday morning and so he would not be able to attend class. She had entered the United States without federal authorization decades ago and now was to be separated from her family. Together, these two conversations tell us much about this valley, which remains a unique juncture of the United States, México, and Texas. Perhaps the best way to understand this saga is to begin at the beginning.

The first European settlers who migrated north from colonial México came as part of organized geo-political effort of the Spanish Empire. The Spaniards, deeply worried about the growing French presence in Louisiana, decided to establish a series of settlements along the Rio Grande. This effort began with the 1749 colonization project of Conde José de Escandón. He accepted as settlers only those whom he believed possessed the skills necessary to survive on a frontier in which mobile Apache and Comanche bands outnumbered the token Spanish military

force.³ While each settler received a portion amounting to a minimum of 4,428.2 acres, some received much more. The largest such grant totaled 320,000 acres, or about 495 square miles.⁴ The ranch owners (*patrons*) and their *vaqueros* (cowboys) developed excellent skills in the use of horses and firearms as well as the strength and endurance necessary to perform demanding daily tasks. The ethnic profile thus established survived the subsequent 1848 redrawing of the boundary between the United States and México along the Rio Grande. Today, eighty-eight per cent of those living on the U.S. side of the Valley claim Latino ancestry.⁵ Characteristics of the more traditional and rural Mexican society such as an extended family structure, a strong sense of multi-generational obligations, intense religious commitment, and a fondness for hunting remain quite common in communities on both sides of the river.⁶

Once México gained independence from Spain in 1821, the region embraced the concept of *comercio libre* (free trade). The combination of open access to markets, productive haciendas, and readily available capital supported rapid growth. By 1837, Matamoros, the largest city in the Valley, grew to include 16,372 people.⁷ The 300 or so foreign merchants and entrepreneurs of that city facilitated much of this success by providing both services and financing. While common economic interests tied these foreigners to the most prominent of Latino families, the two groups nonetheless remained apart in several regards. They moved in different social circles and the foreigners did not sit on the municipal council. Even their houses differed. The Mexicans preferred residences with the traditional flat Mexican roof while the foreigners retained the A-frame structures common to their lands of origin.⁸

From 1835 to 1846, a series of armed conflicts undermined this prosperity. These included the civil conflict waged in México between federalists and centralists, the 1836 Texas War of Independence, the French blockade of Matamoros during the 1838 Pastry War, the

unsuccessful 1839-1840 revolt whose organizers sought to unite the Mexican states of Tamaulipas and Nuevo Leon with Texas in a Republic of the Rio Grande, and sporadic warfare with the indigenous tribes.⁹ Throughout this period, the socio-economic structure of the Valley remained intact.

However, several noteworthy changes took place following the conclusion of the Mexico – United States War of 1846 - 1848. First, the foreign enclave in Matamoros acquired significant new wealth by providing logistical services to the United States Army. This group included both Mifflin Kenedy and Richard King, who together would create the King-Kenedy Ranch. Other members of this group included John McAllen (the founder of McAllen), William Neale (an entrepreneur and honorary U.S. consul), and Charles Stillman (the founder of Brownsville). At war's end, they used their newly acquired capital to purchase lands on the north bank of the river. Also, McAllen married a daughter of the Valley's most prominent family of landowners, the Ballis.¹⁰

Their acquisition of land and capital caused little change in the pattern of life that characterized the Valley during the Spanish and Mexican eras.¹¹ These Anglo-Americans sought not to overturn the prevailing socio-economic order, but rather to assume a prominent place within that structure. In doing so, they altered the ethnic composition of the Valley's leadership and subsequently began a new era in the commercialization of ranching.¹² Also, a substantial number of merchants chose to relocate to the other side of the river.¹³

Concurrently, both some newly arrived Anglo-Americans as well as a few of those who previously had resided in the Valley began seizing land owned by Mexican Americans. Their tactics included refusing to recognize the legitimacy of some of the Spanish land titles, conducting court proceedings in a language the defendants could not understand, utilizing the

vagueness of some Spanish land titles to question the owners' right to retain the property, and imposing a new form of taxation that based on the amount of land and not on the value of the assets on that land.¹⁴ Inevitably, violence followed. In 1859, Juan Nepomucino Cortina, a hacienda owner descended from the original settlers, began an armed revolt. Although the forces involved never numbered more than 600 men on each side, the conflict left much of the northern side of the Valley in ruins. Both sides repeatedly crossed into Mexico: the Cortinistas to rest and reequip and their opponents to destroy such base camps. On both sides of the river, Cortina enjoyed considerable support and that support extended as far south as Mexico City.¹⁵ For Cortina had done what the Mexican Army could not do: inflict lethal harm on the Anglo-Americans.

The conflict temporarily ended when Cortina moved to the Mexican side of the border following his defeat in December, 1859 at the hands of a combined force of U.S. Army cavalry and Texas Rangers. However, his raids continued, as did more intense levels of violence. During the thirty year period starting in 1846 and ending in 1876, seven conflicts took place on one or both sides of the Valley. In addition to the 1846-1848 Mexico-United States War and the 1859 Cortina Revolt, these included the 1857-1860 Mexican War of the Reforma, the 1861-1865 U.S. Civil War, the 1862-1867 War of the French Intervention, the cross-border cattle raids of 1866-1867, and the 1876 invasion of México launched from U.S. territory by General Porfirio Diaz.

These wars accentuated ethnic tensions rather than forging any sense of unity. The original failure of U.S. authorities to secure Mexican land rights and the killing of innocents by Texas Rangers dampened stronger feelings of loyalty that might have developed among the Latino population.¹⁶ Perhaps more important, the incessant conflicts led to a disintegration of public order in which criminal organization on both sides of the border often plied their trade

with impunity.¹⁷ The refusal of the Texas government to address such conduct no doubt further added to the fear and resentment felt by the majority of the Valley's residents on both side of the river.

By 1876, violence reached very high levels on both sides of the Valley; organized groups of raiders originating in both México and the United States crossed the river to steal entire herds of cattle. Foremost among them stood Juan Cortina, who by now ranked as a leading political and military figure of northern México. The man who would organize the successful efforts to pacify the Valley was a Mexican: General Porfirio Diaz. Although Diaz had led the victorious army of Liberal president Benito Juarez in liberating Mexico City from the French in 1867, he subsequently turned against the idea that México ought to be governed as a democracy.

Following his loss in the presidential election of 1875, he travelled to the United States, stopping first in New York City to seek financial support in an effort to overthrow the elected government of his country. A critical part of that effort involved obtaining support from very powerful Americans who shared his goal.

At Kingsbury, Texas in February 1876, Diaz met with such Americans to discuss the overthrow of the Mexican government. Those present included Richard King, William Starke Rosecrans, Thomas Pierce, Thomas T. Buckley, James Griswold, and John Salmon Ford.¹⁸ Diaz asked the Americans for financial and logistical support in return for which he promised them both substantial economic concessions and the removal of Cortina.¹⁹ They agreed. Diaz soon received \$624,000 in contributions, with the largest share (\$320,000) coming from the New York Bondholders Committee.²⁰ Arms, ammunition, and horses for Diaz' project soon began arriving in South Texas.²¹ On April 1st, he took Matamoros after encountering only perfunctory

resistance from the largely apathetic 1,000 Mexican National Guard troops stationed there. Subsequently, Diaz overthrew the bankrupt government of President Lerdo de Tejada.

Soon after taking Mexico City, he fulfilled his promises to the Americans. Confronted with an ultimatum from Diaz, the ever-troublesome Juan Cortina accepted first a lengthy jail term and then a comfortable retirement in a leafy suburb of Mexico City. On the American side, a reinforced U.S. Army forced gradually restored a satisfactory level of public order. On both sides of the river, the Valley's cattle culture and old social order continued. "By the end of the nineteenth century, the delta had grown accustomed to the isolated, backward, and neglected role that the surrounding regions were quite ready to ascribe to it,"²² But in the early years of the twentieth century, the industrial technology transformed the socio-economic structure and the lives of many citizens on both sides of the river.

That process began with the construction of railroad lines tying both sides of the Valley to national transportation grids. In 1903, the newly-founded St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico railway began building a line connecting Brownsville to Robstown and followed that project by building additional lines that tied the Valley and the larger Nueces Strip to Houston. In Mexico, construction linking Matamoros with the Mexican national rail grid via Monterrey was completed in 1904. With the subsequent 1910 completion of a railroad spur across the Rio Grande, both sides of the Valley had been tied to an international railroad network. Concurrently, motor-driven irrigation systems were first brought to the Valley. This meant that arid ranch land once suitable only for grazing cattle could be transformed into well-watered crop lands yielding lucrative harvest that be transported by rail to major metropolitan markets. As one scholar of the period noted: "The success of the new agricultural base was assured by tying the delta into the railroad networks of the United States and Mexico."²³

On the northern bank of the river, the production of lucrative citrus, cotton, and grain crops grew very rapidly.²⁴ Landowners not wishing to participate in this transformation could sell their property to capital-rich investors willing to embark on such enterprises. Land suitable for irrigation sold at many times the value of land once used only for hardy cattle.²⁵

This process shattered the socio-economic security of many laborers on both sides of the border. Typically, these cowboys and ranch hands worked on a year-round basis and their managers paid them accordingly. The cowboys' compensation often included houses built by ranch owners for their workers.²⁶ By contrast, the growing of both citrus or cotton required only seasonal labor forces. The shift from the former type of work to the later impoverished many. New ethnic tensions also ensued

When Tejano ranchers divided and sold their land, they often sold to Anglo-American residents arriving from other parts of the United States. As a result "...the bulk of landholding in the delta shifted from Mexican-American ranchers to Anglo-American ranchers, creating great residual resentment in the Mexican-American community in the wake of the sales."²⁷ Many of these settlers possessed no knowledge of Spanish or of Valley tradition. Most often, they viewed the Hispanic majority as a backward people and treated them accordingly. This further worsened relations between ethnicities.²⁸ A variety of political responses emerged.

In some communities, prominent Mexican-American landowners such as Manuel Guerra of Starr County organized opposition from within the dominant Democratic Party. By means of patronage and the exercise of political power, he emerged as the perceived protector of Latino interests. He and his descendants governed much of south Texas as commanders of a corrupt political machine from 1894 until after the end of World War II.²⁹ In others cases, Mexican-Americans acquiesced to Anglo-American political machines that implemented separate and unequal public services, particularly in the educational arena.

A different alternative emerged at the northern edge of the U.S. side of the Valley as ranchers of both ethnicities united to form three new counties. There, the old ranching economy rather than the new agricultural economy prevailed.³⁰ In these new counties, land values and the taxes associated with ranching remained low. There, no groups of migrants from the Midwest would emerge to challenge the local structure of power and demand additional public services.

The economic impoverishment and increasing levels of racism radicalized a small but well-organized group of Mexican-Americans. Manifestations of this included the adherence of small groups to the political theories of Ricardo Flores Magón and sporadic violence against Anglo-Americans.³¹ Inadequate law enforcement compounded this problem as violence became a regular part of life in the Rio Grande delta. The prosecution of capital offenders proved quite inadequate.³²

Often, Mexican-American protests proved of little avail. For example, in 1911, some four hundred leaders of that community gathered in Laredo. Calling themselves the *Congreso Mexicanista*, they called for “an end to educational discrimination, denounced the pattern of officially sanctioned lynching of Mexicans, and urged Texas Mexicans not to sell their land.”³³ These efforts yielded little.

The socio-economic polarization, endemic poverty and substandard educational opportunities also prevailed in the Mexican part of the Valley. During the thirty-four year dictatorship of Porfirio Diaz (1876-1910), the old cattle culture that once prevailed on that side of the river yielded primacy of place to a commercialized and largely mono-crop mechanized form of agriculture based upon the production of cotton and corn. The cowboys and day laborers on Mexican ranches suffered the same sort of economic dislocation as did their counterparts on the United States side of the river.

But in México, two additional factors intensified the impoverishment and polarization. First, the Porfirian regime actively sought the elimination of small landholdings in favor of plantation agriculture. Under Diaz' *terreno baldió* (wasted land) legislation, self-sufficient Mexican ranches producing no surplus could be declared vacant and sold to the highest bidder. This meant that many independent yet undercapitalized ranchers joined the displaced cowboys and day laborers. Also, the Porfirian government never hesitated to inflict the harshest of punishments against political opposition. Tactics employed against the poorer class of Mexicans included imprisonment, internal deportation to the hellish plantations of the Yucatan, and summary execution.³⁴

By contrast, Diaz did not disturb a particularly Mexican sort of political boss known as a *caudillo*. Typically, a typical caudillo's power did not flow merely from control of political offices, but from an interlocking series of bases that also included ownership of substantial amount of land, some form of manufacturing enterprise, financial capital, and a retinue of laborers who served political as well military purposes. In literally dozens of instances during the nineteenth century, these men made and unmade México's national government. Diaz left them alone to dominate their fiefdoms. With the significant exception of the foreigners who would own twenty-five percent of México's land, the caudillos indeed did dominate.³⁵

This combination of political repression and socio-economic polarization took place throughout México. Inevitably, armed rebellion erupted in the struggle we now call the Mexican Revolution (1910 – 1917). That struggle brought about several significant changes to the Valley.

The first was demographic. From 1910 to 1920, the population of the four U.S. border counties increased by 60.66% as Mexicans fled northward to escape the war. Subsequent

stubborn post-war recovery problems in México during the 1920-1930 period fueled a further 103.25% increase in that population.³⁶

The second change that accompanied the revolution proved to be proved all too predictable: a return of violence to both sides of the Valley. In México, rebel and federal forces sought to control border cities such as Matamoros and Reynosa. These places could be used as transit points for war materiel from the United States. On the north side of the river, constant concern about the rival armies crossing the border by accident or on purpose led to a steadily increasing U.S. Army presence.

Tensions rapidly rose following the January, 1915 arrest of a Mexican national, Basilio Ramos, in San Diego, Texas. On his person, local authorities found proclamations calling for a racial war to begin in February, 1915. The dual objectives would be the killing of all adult Anglo-American males and to separate Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California from the United States. Reports of this document, known as the Plan of San Diego, rapidly circulated throughout South Texas, raising already high levels of anxiety among Anglo-Americans.

Then in July, 1915, small parties of raiders originating on both the Texas and Mexican sides of the Valley began attacks on Anglo-Americans. Most famously, a mounted group of seventeen Tejanos and twenty-five Mexicans led by Valley resident, Luis de la Rosa unsuccessfully attacked the Norias division of the King Ranch. During that same month, he led a sixty-man group that derailed the Kingsville-Brownsville train and killed several passengers and crew members.³⁷ Indiscriminate retaliation against Mexican-Americans by both civilians and the Texas Rangers followed with estimates of the fatalities varying.³⁸ Those engaged in these vigilante actions expressed little if any regret.³⁹

Ultimate responsibility for the raids did not rest with radicals on either side of the border, but with Matamoros-based General Emiliano Nafárrate de la Rosa.⁴⁰ Based in Matamoros, he served in the army of the Constitutionalist Party, whose forces ultimately won the Mexican Revolution by defeating the armies of Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata. Two rationales probably guided de la Rosa's actions. By mid-1915, the Constitutionalist sought U.S. recognition and the general apparently believed that in return for a Mexican commitment to end the 1915 raids, the Americans might grant such recognition. Obviously, this depended on the connection between the Carrancistas and the raiders remaining concealed. That concealment remained in place for ninety-eight years and the maneuver worked. Once President Woodrow Wilson's administration recognized the Carranza regime, the raids stopped.

A second series of raids, which began in 1916, were presumed to be in retaliation for the entrance into México of the Punitive Expedition led by General John H. Pershing. These raids ended soon after Pershing reversed course.

Both sides of the Valley devoted the 1920s to recovering from the effects of the preceding decades. In Tamaulipas, considerable change took place due to provisions set forth in new national Constitution of 1917. That document mandated assignment of land and water to every group of villagers who sought them and also stipulated that land taken during the Diaz administration be returned. On a national level, the new regime also established a public school system and instituted preventive health care measure such as mass vaccination of children.

On the American side of the river, the rapidly growing population lived in a system little changed by the tumult on the other side. The political system centered on local leaders whose practices resembled those of the proverbial machine bosses of northern U.S. cities and of the Mexican *caudillos*. Agricultural prosperity did little to mitigate the inferior standards of living

and education under which the majority of Mexican-Americans labored. Schools systems tended to segregate their students along ethnic lines and repeatedly, school districts assigned lower priority and fewer resources to the education of Mexican-American students than they did to their Anglo-American counterparts.⁴¹ This reflected a similar pattern of separation in residential housing. As proved to be case in previous situations, such changes as took place occurred within the existing socio-economic framework rather than in opposition to that structure. This pattern changed substantially after World War II.

Sentiment first catalyzed over the burial of Felix Longoria, a U.S. Army private who died in combat during World War II and whose remains were returned to the U.S. from the Philippines in 1948. He had been a resident of Three Rivers, a town located at the northern end of the Nueces Strip. When the only funeral home in town refused to allow his family to hold a wake on the grounds that the town's white residents would not approve, a political firestorm erupted. Longoria subsequently was buried with full military honors at Arlington National Cemetery. Newly elected Texas Senator Lyndon Baines Johnson played a prominent role in bringing this matter to national attention.

The Longoria affair galvanized a nascent Mexican-American civil rights organization, the American G.I Forum, and older groups such as the League of United Latin American Citizens. A Valley physician, Dr. Hector Garcia, played a critical role in many of the legal and political battles that ensued.

In 1963, Senator Johnson became President Johnson and soon, the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act changed the political and legal landscapes. These removed the final barriers to full Mexican-American political participation. The dismantling of segregated school systems and most of the old political machines followed, often

at the point of a court order. Within a few years, the ranks of the valley's local, state, and federal officials reflected the predominantly Latino ancestry of the Valley.⁴²

Changes also took place in the political environment in the Mexican side of the Valley. In the decades following the end of the Mexican Revolution, political and economic control of much of the nation's life came under the purview of a single organization known by its current name, the *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (Institutional Revolutionary Party, or PRI). The party marketed itself as an umbrella organization capable of including all Mexicans and sought to incorporate both leftist unions as well as rightist business organizations within its structure. Using means such as employment and contracting in the very substantial state sector of the economy as well as economic and physical intimidation, the PRI won every presidential election of the twentieth century. However, disputes within the party, a deteriorating economic situation, and repression culminating in the killing of hundreds of demonstrators at the Tlatelolco Massacre of 1968 in Mexico City weakened this domination. Tamaulipas, like the rest of México, now has three competitive political parties.

Additional post-war changes took place in the educational arena as opportunities opened on both sides of the Valley. In México, the *Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas* created four branch campuses in Reynosa. Similarly, the 1971 establishment of two University of Texas campuses (at Edinburg and Brownsville) and the opening of a multi-campus junior college system facilitated the entrance of significant numbers of residents into the middle class. But perhaps the greatest of transformations took place in the economic arena.

The 1965 *Programa Nacional Fronterizo*/Border Industrialization legislation gave rise to the *maquiladora* industry on the south bank of the river. Under this program, goods manufactured and assembled on the Mexican side of the Valley could be exported or re-exported

to the United States without tariffs. As factories opened, internal migration from other parts of México led to explosive population growth. The seven *municipios* on the Mexican side of the Valley are now home to some 1,342,078 people.⁴³ Although the business communities on both sides of the river fondly attributed such growth to economic opportunity, a grimmer reality also existed.

The Mexican inflation that began in 1976 resulted in the value of the peso tumbling from eight per U.S. dollar to 3,300 per U.S. dollar. That inflation destroyed many of the nation's industrial and agricultural enterprises and also resulted in two complete failures of the banking system. Consequently the northward migration of Mexicans to the U.S. sharply increased. Some of these migrants settled in unincorporated areas of Texas that lacked governments. Few if any public services were available in these areas, which became known as *colonias*. They remain among the poorest communities in the nation.⁴⁴ Their continued poverty and the minimal wages earned by both their residents and many long-established residents in large part accounts for the McAllen metropolitan area having the highest poverty rate (forty-four per cent) of any standard metropolitan statistical area in the United States.⁴⁵ Recent unemployment figures for the U.S. side of the Valley remain significantly higher than for the rest of the state.⁴⁶

Sadly, the chronological part of this essay closes with the same themes as much of the Valley's history: violence and poverty. Starting in the 1960s, the U.S. market for illegal substances grew so rapidly that Mexican narcotics syndicates sought to partition the entire U.S. – Mexico frontier into gang-specific territory. They believed that such an agreement would minimize conflict between them and while maximizing revenue by avoiding competition. This 1989 agreement, sponsored by the recently captured Joaquin Guzman of the Sinaloa Cartel, did not last long. Warfare between the syndicates erupted in the 1990s and continues to this day. In

spite of very substantial efforts by the Mexican Army during the administrations of President Vicente Fox (2000 – 2006) and President Felipe Calderon (2006 – 2012), the conflict continues to extract a fearful toll. Once reliable estimate placed the combined total of innocent civilians, police, soldiers, civic officials and narcotraficantes killed during just the four years from 2008 to 2012 at 60,000. ⁴⁷

Despite a pledge from recently inaugurated President Enrique de Peña Nieto to try news approaches, the situation remains grim. During his first year in office, murders committed in México totaled 17,068. ⁴⁸ One prominent and well-regarded independent organization within Mexican recently concluded that in thirty-four of the forty-three municipalities of Tamaulipas, the level of public safety has declined to the point at which these municipalities can be considered failed states. ⁴⁹ That opinion does not differ greatly from the grim conclusion offered by the U.S. State Department's travel advisory for Tamaulipas: they consider no highway to be safe for travel. ⁵⁰ And yet...

In 2013, the massive flow of commercial and human traffic into the five inland Valley crossing stations of Brownsville, Hidalgo, Progreso, Rio Grande City, and Roma totaled 22,564,121 vehicle passengers, 796,194 trucks, 526 railroad trains, and last but not least, 5,257,626 pedestrians. ⁵¹ Those statistics present a dilemma; reconciling the safe passage of millions of pedestrians and passengers across the frontier with the reality of thousands of drug-related homicides and the U.S. State Department admonitions cited in the endnotes. If more than five million people walk across bridges connecting the side of the Valley each year, then can the Mexican municipalities truly be considered places of failed governance? Conversely, if these communities truly have become places in which there is little or no civic order, then why are

millions of people and tens of millions of vehicle passengers traversing the area without difficulty?

The answer to that question also may be part of the key to understanding the Valley's more than 250 years of recorded history: that human existence can continue under conditions that strike us as contradictory if not impossible. In this case, the millions of peaceful border crossings occur simultaneously with a high level of lethal violence inflicted by transnational criminal organizations that possess the power to interfere with those interactions at times and places of their choosing. In a sense, this situation resembles those that confronted Escandon's pioneers in the 1700s and the inhabitants of both sides of the Valley during the 1870s: daily continues amidst a far higher level of violence that we might consider bearable. While our instinctive response may be that such situations cannot continue indefinitely, the Valley's history suggest that indeed can.

This notion also contradicts our familiar framework for viewing westward expansion of the nascent United States of America at the end of the Revolutionary War. In that paradigm, the wild and untamed frontier gradually becomes a settled border region which subsequently becomes like the rest of the nation. But very clearly, the Valley, at least the U.S. portion, remains quite different from Dallas or Houston, let alone New York or Boston. The frontier-to-modern-urban-place paradigm does not apply.

Similarly, the Valley's history cannot be divided into two clear national categories of Mexican and American. While I certainly have no hesitation at conceding the valid point of historians who argue that the border is a dividing line between two sovereign nations, that division does not extend to other spheres. Economically, ethnically, linguistically, and sociologically, the two sides of Valley still share much in common even though the residents

regard themselves as citizens of two separate nations. So I suggest resisting that which Jouni Häkli and David H. Kaplan, called "...a fixation of geographical imagination in which states are seen as universal limits of territorial space, the domestic and foreign are separate categories, and societies are subordinates to states."⁵² For while each side of the Valley possesses a national history, the two sides also own a joint history.

Indeed the crossing statistics mentioned a few paragraphs ago prove that a strong and steady flow of commerce and individual citizens stands as a central characteristic of life in that place. Thus had been the case for several centuries. Perhaps another great theme of this place's history is that there exists a centuries-long clash between those currents leading to commonality as opposed to separation. The ongoing migration of tens of thousands of minors, both Central American and Mexican, provides an example. For while no official of the Valley called for all of the children to be admitted as immigrants, both those officials and other citizens responded sympathetically and supportively to the situation and did so in marked contrast to many Americans in other parts of the nation.⁵³ As the U.S. Border Patrol chief for the Valley concluded: "

Although the humanitarian crisis we are facing is straining local community resources, your outpouring of support has continued to be both substantial and admirable...The incredible unity and strength I have witnessed in the Rio Grande Valley surpasses anything I've seen in my nearly 30 years of service in the Border Patrol."⁵⁴

Here, history repeated itself. Just as the Mexicans of Tamaulipas had given refuge to Americans fleeing the violence of the U.S. Civil War; Americans of Texas had given refuge to Mexicans fleeing the violence of the Mexican Revolution and now gave refuge to those fleeing Central American violence.

To preserve sovereignty, Mexican officials often refuse to concede even minor U.S. requests, particularly in cases involving crimes committed against U.S. citizens in Mexico. None

the less, while resisting such U.S. overtures, the Mexicans welcome investment. Similarly, the U.S. construction of border barriers and the doubling of the U.S. Border Patrol force in the Valley indicate a desire for separation in the form of blocking the flow of migrants and narcotics flowing northward while simultaneously constructing new border crossing and bridges to stimulate commerce.⁵⁵ Perhaps the Valley's history is best understood in terms of themes that have dominated its life during various eras.

A rigid version of that approach, proffered by the late French historian Fernand Braudel, neatly divided in the past into such eras, or, as he called them, *durees*. He suggested that *durees* could be of three lengths: grand, medium, and short term. For example, the French Revolution could be considered a quest for liberty and equality extending from the 1789 fall of the Bastille to the 1958 creation of the Fifth French Republic.⁵⁶ But I would in response suggest that *durees* really can be of any length.

For the Valley, there exist many such themes: the quest for political power and the equality that goes with that power; the socio-economic polarization that often exists in those agrarian societies based upon large estates; the efforts of so many on both sides of the river to escape from poverty; and the struggle to establish the rule of law in a place in which order and justice of the most basic sort often have been all too lacking. Perhaps the last of these themes emerges as the dominant one.

Over the past two and half centuries, there have been few if any times when the rule of law and the civil tranquility accompanying such a state simultaneously existed on both sides of the Valley. There is no need to summarize here the national wars, civil wars, ethnic violence, and socio-economic conflict previously mentioned. However, the responsibility for the absence of

such a condition, which is the prerequisite for human and societal development, may in large part be laid at the doorstep of governments in both nations.

I close by returning to my two students. Each of them embodies a part of the history of this place. Together, they represent the continuity and the disruption; the hope and the despair, and the permanence and the transience of this place I call home. As Charles Dickens wrote of his own era in *A Tale of Two Cities*; it was the best of times and the worst of times. To fully and accurately and faithfully record such in all time and places remains the highest calling and hardest duty of the historian. In one brief essay, I hope I have in small part done so.

¹ The bi-national Rio Grande Valley consists of both four Texas counties (Cameron, Willacy, Hidalgo, and Starr) totaling 4,316 square miles and eight Mexican *municipios* (Matamoros, Valle Hermoso, Rio Bravo, Reynosa, Miguel Aleman, Gustavo Diaz Ordaz, Camargo, and Mier) comprising 7,155 square miles. The four Texas counties lies at the southeast end of the Nueces Strip, a band of territory bounded by the Nueces River on the north and the Rio Grande on the south.

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<http://www.vallehermoso.gob.mx/2008/municipio.htm>

² The governments that exercised control over his family's portion included the Spanish Empire, the Mexican Republic, the Republic of Texas, the United States of America, the Confederate States of America, and once again the United States of America. A would-be government, that of the Republic of the Rio Grande, did not survive long enough to establish control.

³ This policy applied to much of the northeastern frontier. Given the low priority Spain assigned to Texas and the subsequent devastation wrought between San Antonio and the Mississippi River by Mexico's War of Independence (1810-1820), the 1821 census of Texas recorded fewer inhabitants (3,103) than did the 1777 census. These figures comes from Donald E. Chipman, *Spanish Texas 1519-1821*, (Austin: United of Texas Press, 1997), 241

⁴ Amberson, Mary Margaret McAllen, McAllen, James A., and McAllen, Margaret H., *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant*, (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 51

At least one of the grants proved a bit ironic. In 1805, Spanish authorities granted two members of the Valley's most prominent landowning families, Padre (Father) José Nicolás Balli and his nephew, José Ballí II, an island in the Gulf Coast. Appropriately, this place became known as Padre Island. More than two centuries later, Texas' largest Spring Break beach-and-bingeing debauchery takes place here.

⁵ The terms *Latino*, *Tejano* (Texan), and Mexican-American are not synonymous. A tejano is an individual whose ancestors lived in Texas while México held sovereignty over Texas; a Mexican-American is a United States citizen of Mexican ancestry; and a Latino is a person having ancestry in Latin America or the Iberian Peninsula.

⁶ Of the 1,264,001 Valley residents counted by the 2010 United States Census, 89.98% listed their ancestry as Hispanic. <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qft/48061>, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qft/48215>, <http://quickfacts.census.gov/qft/48427>, <http://qucikfacts.census.gov/qft/48489>.

⁷ Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville*, (Austin, Eakin Press, 1991), 31

⁸ *Ibid.*, 32-33

⁹ The story of the effort to found the now-forgotten Republic of the Rio Grande has been best told in the as yet untranslated monograph by Josefina Zora Ida Vasquez, *La supuesta republica del Rio Grande* (Tampico, Tamaulipas, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas de la Universidad Autonoma de Tamaulipas, 1995).

Two physical reminders of this ill-fated republic survive. One is a flag suspended from the ceiling of the Museum of South Texas History in Edinburg, Texas. The flag bears a field of three equally-sized horizontal stripes. Between those two dark blue stripes is a white one with three dark blue stars representing the three provinces of the planned nation: Texas, Nuevo Leon, and Tamaulipas. The other reminder is a restaurant bearing the stillborn republic's name.

¹⁰ Marriage between the two groups predated the events of 1846-1848. Here, the Balli family history provides several examples. María Salomé Ballí de Garza, born on August 5, 1828, was a child of a marriage between two of the Valley's most prominent Mexican families, the Ballis and the Garzas. When she came of age, María married John Young, a Scottish immigrant who came to Matamoros as a merchant in 1828 and subsequently expanded his activities to other areas, including the colonization of part of the Nueces Strip soon after he was given a grant by the Mexican government. Their daughter, Salomé Ballí de Young, married John McAllen in 1861. This and related matters are discussed in considerable detail in a book written by Mary Margaret McAllen, James A. McAllen, and Margaret H. McAllen; *I Would Rather Sleep in Texas: A History of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and the People of the Santa Anita Land Grant*, (Austin, Texas State Historical Association, 2003), 126-127, 184

¹¹ The image of vaqueros dedicated to the land and their patron remains a part Valley's self-image to this day. As described on the web site of 825,000 acre King Ranch:

The townspeople were in such dire straits that they sold all of their cattle to him [Captain King] in an attempt to survive the drought. A short distance out of town, slowly driving the cattle north toward Texas, Captain King realized that, in solving an immediate problem for the people of Cruillas, he had simultaneously removed their long-term means of livelihood. He turned his horse back toward the town and made its people a proposition. He would provide them with food, shelter and income if they would move and come to work on his ranch. The townspeople conferred and many of them agreed to move north with Captain King.

Already expert stockmen and horsemen, these resilient denizens of the rugged Mexican range became known as Los Kineños – King's people. They and many generations of their heirs would go on to weave a large portion of the historical tapestry of King Ranch. The expert Kineño cowboys now occupy a justifiably legendary place in the annals of the taming of the vast American West. The mystique of the Kineños is alive and well, and descendants of the original Cruillas residents still live and work on the ranch today – providing a vital link with the past and giving the ranch a key aspect of its unique atmosphere.

<http://king-ranch.com/kinenos.html> accessed on July 14, 2014

¹² In later decades, the King Ranch brought about a number of innovations in U.S. ranching, including the introduction of the Santa Gertrudis and Santa Cruz cattle breeds and excellent breeding of quarter horses. The 825,000 acre ranch raises not only livestock and horses, but also harvests cotton, milo, sod, and sugar cane. Other agricultural holdings include majority interest in the largest collection of citrus ranches in the United States. In many regards, the ranch's web site is correct in stating that King invented modern American ranching. www.kingranch.com, accessed on July 10, 2014

In the United States, the term “ranch” applies to a variety of entities both great and small. A ranch can be as small as family-owned space of less than fifty acres with perhaps a few dozen cows or as large as an 825,000 acre holding such as the King Ranch. However in México, a commercial ranch of over 1000 acres producing multiple crops for both ranch use and for sale would be called a *hacienda*. A similarly-sized establishment producing primarily one crop would be called a *plantacion*; and the small fifty-cattle place would be called a *ranchito*.

¹³ Jerry D. Thompson, *Defending the Mexican Name in Texas*, (College Station, Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 20

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 20

¹⁵ As the U.S. consul in Matamoros, Richard Fitzpatrick concluded: “These people were deadly hostile to every American, unless he is a Negro or mulatto.” *Ibid.*, 80.

¹⁶ A former governor of Texas, Edmund J. Davis told Secretary of War William Belknap: “The lives of many respectable and law-abiding citizens of that nationality were taken without cause, and no attempts have ever been made to punish the wrong-doers.” Edmund J. Davis to William Belknap, June, 25, 1875, National Archives and Records Administration. Records Group 94, M-666, 00730-0075 cited by Richard M. Zeitlin in *Brass Buttons and Iron Rails: The United States Army and American Involvement in Northern Mexico, 1868-1881*, 73

Another Ranger captain, J.W. McCloud, similarly stated that innocent people were killed in pursuit of these raiders and is cited by Richard Zeitlin, *Brass Buttons and Iron Rails: The United States Army and American Involvement in Northern Mexico, 1868-1881*. p. 8-17

¹⁷ “As Captain McNelly approached the border, he found the country overrun by bands of armed men, who has assembled for the ostensible purpose of self-protection, but who could scarcely be distinguished either by appearance or performance from groups whose sole object was to plunder and raid.” Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1965), p. 238

¹⁸ Very briefly stated, the positions and background of these men were:

William Starke Rosecrans - former general of the Union Army and organizer of a transcontinental railway syndicate led by the Pennsylvania Railroad.

Andrew Pierce - president of the Texas International Railway and president of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad

Thomas Wentworth Pierce - president of the Galveston, Harrisburg and San Antonio Railroad and Andrew's Pierce's brother.

Thomas T. Buckley - vice president of the Bank of the Republic of New York, a director of the Atlantic and Pacific Railroad, and treasurer of the Cleveland, Youngstown, and Pacific Railroad. Buckley also was one of the founders of the New York syndicate that built the Tehuantepec Inter-Oceanic Railroad.

James A. Griswold - a Bessemer steel heir.

John Salmon Ford – Captain of the Texas Ranger detachment in the Valley during the first Cortina War, Colonel in the Confederate Army, and former mayor of Brownsville
a representative of the New York Bondholders Company acting on behalf of U.S. investors claiming that their loans to Mexican President Sebastian Lerdo de Tejada's government remained unpaid.

John Mason Hart, *Empire and Revolution: The Americans in Mexico since the Civil War*, (Berkeley: The University of California Press), 2002, 50, 64-66

¹⁹ Ibid., 66

²⁰ Ibid., 65,66

Other influential American sympathizers provided additional support. James Stillman, the son of the founder of Brownsville and the owner of twenty per interest in what was then the largest bank in the world (National City Bank of New York), offered Diaz use of his facilities in Bagdad, Tamaulipas. General Edward Otho Cresap Ord, the U.S. Army officer commanding forces in the Rio Grande Valley, did not comply with orders from General Philip Sheridan and William Tecumseh Sherman to halt the movement of Diaz' force on U.S. territory. Ibid., 66

²¹ Ibid., 66-67

²² Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville*, (Austin, Eakin Press, 1991),186

²³ Ibid., 191

²⁴ As of 2012, twenty-five per cent of the land (689,871 acres) on the U.S. side of the Valley was irrigated cropland. http://www.agcensus.usda.gov/Publications/2012/Fall_Report/Volume_1_Chapter_2_County_Level/Texas/st48_2_010_010.pdf

²⁵ One notable example occurred in Hidalgo County, were land that sold for thirty-five cents an acre in 1903 sold at fifty dollars per acre in 1906. Alicia A. Garza, "HIDALGO COUNTY," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hch14>), accessed July 16, 2014. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

²⁶ This relationship, known as *patronismo*, bore considerable resemblance to the nineteenth century U.S. industrial communities known as company towns. However, in addition to offering employment and housing to his employees, a *patron* also was obligated to intervene on his employee's behalf in conflicts outside the workplace and also often mediated disputes between employees. Patronismo was far more paternal than the company town.

²⁷ Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville*, 194

²⁸ “We Texas-Mexicans of the border, although we hold on to our traditions, and are proud of our race, are loyal to the United States, in spite of the treatment we receive by some of the new Americans. Before their arrival, there were no racial or social distinctions between us. Their children married ours, ours married theirs, and both were glad and proud of the fact. But since the coming of the “white trash” from the north and middle west we felt the change, They made us feel for the first time that we were Mexicans and they considered themselves our superiors.”

Jovita González, “America Invades the Border Towns,” *Southwest Review* 15, No. 4 (summer 1930): 469- 477 cited by David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1997), p. 115

Sheriff Emilio Forto of Cameron County cited the “unwillingness of American newcomers to the valley to accept the Mexicans,” *Ibid.*, p. 116

²⁹ Evan Anders, "GUERRA, MANUEL," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgu14>), accessed July 17, 2014. Uploaded on June 15, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

³⁰ Three new counties emerged as the remaining ranchers separated themselves from the citrus growers: Brooks County in 1911, Jim Hogg county in 1913, and Kenedy County in 1913.

³¹ Ricardo Flores Magón (1874-1922) was a Mexican journalist, political organizer, and theorist. Although he began his political involvement as a member of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*, Magón subsequently gravitated towards the doctrines of anarcho-syndicalism. Following multiple imprisonments by the Diaz regime, he fled to San Antonio, Texas. Following the failed effort by a Diaz assassin to kill him, Magón fled to St. Louis, Missouri. Subsequently, he was convicted under the U.S. Espionage Act of 1917 for mailing documents deemed subversive under the terms of that act. He died in the Ft. Leavenworth Penitentiary. For further information, I recommend the book by Ward S. Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution*, (Fort Worth, Texas Christian University Press, 1992)

³² Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville*, 195 - 196

³³ *Premier Congreso Mexicanista, Verificado en Laredo, Texas, Los Dias 14 al 22 de Septiembre de 1911*; and José Limón “El Premier Congreso Mexicanista de 1911: A precursor to Contemporary Chicanismo,” *Aztlan* 5, nos. 1-2 (1974) : 85-106, cited by David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas 1836 – 1986*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1997, p. 116

³⁴ Perhaps the most famous book of the era describing this repression by John Kenneth Turner, *Barbarous Mexico: an indictment of a cruel and corrupt system*, (London and New York, Cassell Publishers, 1911)

³⁵ I explored this topic more full in a chapter entitled “Positively Disastrous: The Comtian Legacy in México” found in the book edited by Gregory D. Gilson and Irving W. Levinson, *Latin American Positivism*, (Lanham, Lexington Books, 2013)

³⁶ During the decade prior to the start of this industrialization of agriculture and transportation (1890-1910), the American side’s population increased by only 8.50%. But during the first decade of this industrialization (1900-1910), that population grew by 57.12%. <http://www.census.gov/prod/www/abs/decennial/>

³⁷ James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 194-204

³⁸ Estimates of fatalities vary and vary widely. The previously cited work of Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp lists the number of Tejanos killed during the 1916-1919 period at 200 with all but twenty of them being innocent. He lists the number of Anglo-Texans killed at twenty. (Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *Boom and Bust: The*

Historical Cycles of Matamoros and Brownsville), 220, General Frederick Funston, who commanded the United States Army's Southern Department at this time, estimated the number of such executions to have been in excess of 150. (James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923*, (Norman, University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 109. However, David Montejano cites Walter Prescott Webb as stating that "between five hundred and five thousand Mexicans were killed in the Valley during the troubles compared to sixty-two American civilians and sixty-four soldiers." (David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836 – 1986* , (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1997), 125

³⁹ Judge Sam Spears of San Benito provided a typical justification: "Every fair-minded man, when brought face to face with a condition where the criminal element is so powerful that the laws of the land cannot be enforced through the courts, must admit that mob violence is necessary to the saving of our population." (James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923*), 109

⁴⁰ The question of who bore responsibility for these raids remained a topic of considerable controversy until the 2013 publication of a well-researched work that used recently discovered primary resources to firmly establish Nafárette's central role: Charles Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Plan de San Diego: Tejano Rebellion, Mexican Intrigue*, (Lincoln, University of Nebraska Press, 2013)

⁴¹ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, (Austin, University of Texas Press, 1987), 191 – 196

⁴² Although the Viet Nam conflict damaged Johnson's reputation in much of the United States, he remains, at least for a generation of U.S. Valley residents, an esteemed figure still spoken of with great respect.

⁴³ *Instituto Nacional de Estadística y Geografía [de México]*, <http://cuentame.inegi.org.mx/poblacion/default.aspx?tema=P>, accessed July 17, 2014

⁴⁴ Reports about colonias appear infrequently in national media. A recent example was a June 29, 2014 article in the *New York Times* titled "Boom meets Bust in Texas: Atop a Sea of Oil, Poverty Digs In."

⁴⁵ <http://bottomline.msnbc.com/news/2011/10/21/8432089-poorest-place-in-us-mcallen-texas-and-heres-why..>, accessed on July 8, 2014

Although several bills have been placed before the Texas legislature to fund civic improvements in these areas, none have passed. Valley counties have spent some funds in these areas, but not nearly enough. For a brief history of the colonias, please see María-Cristina García, "COLONIA," *Handbook of Texas Online* (<http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/poc03>), accessed July 17, 2014. Uploaded on June 12, 2010. Published by the Texas State Historical Association.

⁴⁶ The June 2014 unemployment figure for Texas stood at 5.1% with the respective figures for the McAllen-Edinburg-Mission region and the Harlingen-Brownsville area at 9.6% and 8.8%, Staff Report, *The Monitor*, July 20, 2014, page 6B

⁴⁷ Enrique Krauze, "Mexico at War," *The New York Review of Books*, September 27, 2012, pages 66-69

⁴⁸ Report of the *Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal*, <http://www.seguridadjusticiapaz.mx/temas-de-interes/seguridad/918-los-muertos-de-pena-nieto-ano-uno> accessed on January 26, 2014.

⁴⁹ Report of the *Consejo Ciudadano para la Seguridad Pública y la Justicia Penal* , accessed January 26, 2014, <http://www.seguridadjusticiapaz.mx/temas-de-interes/seguridad/928-segob-no-accept-las-cifras-del-ccspjp>.

The opinion of the *Cosejos* organization also reflected the conclusion drawn by a journalist from a major international newspaper. Jude Webber, "Violence Threatens Mexico's Reforms," *Financial Times*, January 20, 2014, <http://www.ft.com/intl/cms/s/0/5edbf5a-813b-11e3-95aa-00144feab7de.html>

50 “Tamaulipas: Matamoros, Nuevo Laredo, Reynosa, and Tampico are major cities/travel destinations in Tamaulipas - Defer non-essential travel to the state of Tamaulipas.... Matamoros, Reynosa, Nuevo Laredo, and Ciudad Victoria have experienced grenade attacks in the past year, as well as numerous reported gun battles. Violent gun battles between rival TCO [transnational criminal organizations] elements and/or the Mexican military can occur in all parts of the region, and at all times of the day. The kidnapping rate for Tamaulipas, the highest for all states in Mexico, more than doubled in 2012 over 2011, and the number of U.S. citizens reported to the consulate as kidnapped in 2013 increased by 75% over 2012.... All travelers should be aware of the risks posed by armed robbery and carjacking on state highways throughout Tamaulipas, particularly on highways and roads outside of urban areas along the northern border. Traveling outside of cities after dark is particularly dangerous. While no highway routes through Tamaulipas are considered safe, the highways between Matamoros-Tampico, Monterrey-Nuevo Laredo, and Matamoros-Ciudad Victoria are particularly prone to criminal activity. In the past year there have been several instances of U.S. citizens being kidnapped from hotels while attending family or social events (e.g. weddings and funerals). In at least one incident, a member of the traveling party was summoned to the front desk by hotel staff whereupon he was kidnapped. Travelers should consider selecting hotels with adequate security and reputability as well as exercising caution when responding to phone calls or knocks at the door while resident in a hotel. Travelers should stay low-key and refrain from flashing around cash or wearing expensive jewelry.”

The full text may be found at <http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/english/alertswarnings/mexico-travel-warning.html>

51 Research and Innovative Technology Administration, Bureau of Transportation Statistics, United States Department of Transportation statistics for calendar year 2013:

http://transborder.bts.gov/programs/international/transborder/TBDR_BC/TBDR_BC_QuickSearch.html, accessed on July 16, 2014

<u>BORDER CROSSING</u>	<u>TRUCKS</u>	<u>TRAINS</u>	<u>BUS PASSENGERS</u>	<u>PERSONAL VEHICLE PASSENGERS</u>	<u>PEDESTRIANS</u>
<u>Hidalgo</u>	510,706	0	334,477	9,608,996	2,061,995
<u>Progreso</u>	42,761	0	37	2,459,890	757,381
<u>Roma</u>	7,459	0	9,814	1,307,843	259,716
<u>Rio Grande City</u>	27,120	0	0	718,757	53,058
<u>Brownsville</u>	208,148	526	55,170	8,468,635	2,125,476
<u>TOTALS</u>	796,194	526	399,498	22,564,121	5,257,626

52 Jouni Häkli and David H. Kaplan, *Borders and Boundaries: European Borderlands in a Geographical Context*, (New York, Rowman and Littlefield, Publishers, Inc.) 2002), 257

53 “Contrast the mob in Murrieta [California], with the people of Brownsville and McAllen. There Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley offers welcome centers at Sacred Heart Church in McAllen and Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville. The youngest guest: a one-day-old baby girl. The baby and others are being helped by a host of volunteers.

Heroes are emerging. First might be Sister Norma Pimentel, MJ (Missionaries of Jesus), executive director of Catholic Charities of the Rio Grande Valley. She is convening the local faith communities to address the

problem and organizing the local populace to collect food, medicine, children's sweaters and hoodies, men's sneakers, and women's socks and underwear. The city of McAllen is collaborating by providing portable shower facilities and tents for overnight stays."

Statement issued by the U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Washington, D.C., and cited in *The Monitor*, <http://www.themonitor.com/opinion/commentary-a-moral-conscience-moment-in-us-history>, July 8, 2014,

⁵⁴ Kevin W. Oaks, Chief Patrol Agent of the Rio Grande Valley sector, cited in *The Monitor*, June 19, 2014, http://www.themonitor.com/opinion/letter-from-border-patrol-chief-to-rgv-community/article_a2fae9dc-fe49-11e3-beef-0017a43b2370.html

⁵⁵ Conversely, one could argue that the northern movement of both the migrants and the illegal substances would not be taking place were there not a considerable demand for both in the United States.

⁵⁶ Fernand Braudel, *On History*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1980). While *On History* remains a noted theoretical work, this historian's *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Phillip II*, (New York, Harper and Row, 1972) is regarded as his greatest scholarly achievement.

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