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# *The Ghosts of Mier: Violence in a Mexican Frontier Community during the Nineteenth Century*

JAMIE STARLING

On April 23, 1852, Ramona de la Peña became a widow for the second time when she buried Eusebio García at the Inmaculada Concepción Parish of Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas. The priest who conducted the burial, Father José Luis Gonzaga García, had ministered to her family over the previous thirteen years and baptized five of the couple's children. He christened their youngest, Gregorio, about a year earlier. On the day of the burial, the priest wrote a sacramental record that described Eusebio García's death "in the hands of the Americans" (*en manos de los americanos*). He was one of eight Mexicans who died in a conflict that swept across adjacent areas of Texas in the early months of 1852 and among the over two hundred killings recorded in Mier between the Mexican War of Independence (1810–1821) and the French Intervention (1862–1867).

Mier and its neighboring towns date to the foundation of the Nuevo Santander colony under José de Escandón from 1749 to 1767. Over the following century, other frontiers overlapped with that of Spanish-Mexican colonists in the region. Plains Indians such as the Comanche, Lipan Apache, and Kiowa raided Mier's surrounding ranches, especially after Mexican independence in 1821. At the same time, Anglo settlers and African American slaves reached Texas, and by the 1840s, American expansionists set their sights on Mier and its surroundings. The lower Rio Grande became a multifaceted contact zone that simultaneously witnessed lucrative trade, cultural exchange, intermarriage, and harrowing acts of brutality. The records of the Immaculate Conception Parish of Mier contain many accounts that attest to the contact and conflict that marked this frontier.

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This study examines parish records as a “vernacular history” of violence in a Mexican frontier community during the nineteenth century. Priests in Mier ministered to grieving families, served as chaplains and peace negotiators, and made their parish a hospital for the sick and wounded of all sides. They also chronicled the grim toll of Native American raids, civil wars between Mexican factions, and conflicts with Anglo-American armies and vigilante bands. Mier’s church archives reveal reactions to policies from distant capitals, and how the community implemented or resisted change through everyday acts. These church records often place large historical processes in intimate terms and vividly illustrate how ordinary people such as Ramona de la Peña and her family members and neighbors faced momentous transformations.

Ramona de la Peña’s birth and death coincide with major transition points in Mexican history; her birth marked the last days of the colonial order in Mier. Fray Antonio del Álamo, a Franciscan friar, baptized Peña as an *española* (of direct Spanish descent) on August 30, 1812. In the previous two decades, the parish recorded no violent deaths of *vecinos* (Spanish-Mexican “citizens” of the town), with Indian raiding largely taking place to the west. For instance, a daring Lipan Apache raid in 1790 ransacked Laredo and killed a party of twenty soldiers. The *villas* farther down the Rio Grande remained calmer during this period. However, the long Mexican War of Independence ended this era of peace for *mierenses* (residents of Mier).

Miguel Hidalgo’s revolt against Spanish officials in Guanajuato on September 16, 1810, spread north a year later with Juan Bautista de las Casas’s uprising in Texas. After the failure of these rebellions, Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara of Revilla, immediately west of Mier, continued the struggle against royal authority in exile in the United States. His recruitment of hundreds of Mexican exiles and American volunteers on the Louisiana frontier marked an auspicious beginning to U.S.-Mexican relations. The Spanish crushed his force at the Battle of Medina, near San Antonio, in 1813. General Joaquín de Arredondo restored royal authority over New Spain’s borderlands until the collapse of Spanish control of Mexico in 1821.

In a pattern that repeated in later conflicts, the Mexican War of Independence arrived at Mier in the form of Native American raids, as frontier defenses spread thin and relationships with Indian nations fell asunder. Historian Brian DeLay notes that the reemergence of smallpox during this decade “disrupted and fragmented” Comanche society and

led to increased raids for captives and livestock. On January 10, 1815, parish records noted the deaths of Simón Gómez and Benito García from an Indian assault. These raids struck at ranches around the periphery of Mier. On July 15, 1816, Guadalupe González de García fell “on the Granudo Ranch, where the Comanche Indians killed her”; this attack left Nicolás García a widower. Indigenous raids killed two more *mierenses* in 1816, another three in 1817, and seven in 1818. This violence steadily abated through the following years, and Mexican independence brought a respite from raids at Mier. From 1822 to 1826, priests logged no deaths “at the hands of Indians” at Mier.

Mexican independence brought significant political transitions for *mierenses*. Subjects became citizens with the overthrow of Spanish rule in 1821 and Mexico’s short-lived empire in 1822. States that emerged in the 1824 Mexican Constitution such as Tamaulipas (formerly Nuevo Santander) exerted considerable autonomy in a federal union. Priests at Mier ceased to use caste signifiers such as *español* and *mulato* in parish records by 1822, and some Afro-Mexicans such as Antonio Zapata, of nearby Revilla (renamed Guerrero after independence), became locally influential political figures. Although women such as Ramona de la Peña enjoyed few specific rights after independence, they asserted an identity as *ciudadanas* (citizens of the nation and state), *vecinas* (citizens of the town), and *dueñas* (freeholders) who retained their property rights and surnames even in marriage.

Mier witnessed economic changes with Mexican independence, and as Ramona de la Peña’s family lived in the heart of the community, they had a close view of these transformations. Downriver, Matamoros rapidly grew into a thriving port city with foreign merchants from the United States, France, and Great Britain, nations that had commercial and imperial interests in Mexico. As North America’s market revolution reached the lower Rio Grande, Mier developed cottage industries for a growing export market. Manuel Mier y Terán, a Mexican official who inspected the Texas and Tamaulipas borderlands in 1828, described an “industrious people” in Mier who mostly lived in “solidly built homes” of sandstone. “In almost all homes,” Mier y Terán observed, “one sees women constantly employed in weaving serapes and quilts, for which they enjoy a well-deserved reputation for quality.” Mier was a stop on trade routes between Texas and the trade centers of Monterrey and Saltillo and stood near the western terminus of the river traffic that centered on Matamoros. Although trade and domestic manufacturing

increased, *mierenses* remained tied to the ranching economy that emerged in the colonial era. Cattle brought a degree of wealth to some ranchers, but the livestock, numbering as many as three million head along the lower Rio Grande in an 1835 report, made tempting targets for raiders and rustlers of many origins.

An influx of merchants and travelers augmented Mier's close-knit population of settler families. Ramona de la Peña's first marriage was to Miguel Guerra, who had no previous baptismal or census records in Mier. Priests described their first two children, María Gertrudis, born in 1832, and María Jacinta, born in 1834, as "legitimate daughters" of Guerra and de la Peña, even though no marriage record for the couple exists at this parish. Their last child together, Miguel Guerra Jr., died two days after baptism on November 7, 1836, as a posthumous son. However, no burial record for the elder Miguel Guerra is evident in local parish archives. A little more than two years later, de la Peña remarried to Eusebio García, a *vecino* of Mier, on January 11, 1839.

Ramona de la Peña's marriages took place against the backdrop of increased Indian raids, the Texas Revolution of 1836, and collapse of federal authority along the northeastern border. From 1827 to 1835, the Mier Parish recorded six deaths "at the hands of Indians." From late 1836 through 1839, killings attributed to Indian assaults in and around Mier increased to thirteen. In 1840 alone, eleven *mierenses* died in fighting with Native Americans. This violence ebbed over the following years, with five such deaths "at the hands of Indians" in 1841, five more in 1842, and three in 1843. These conflicts coincided with increased pressures on Comanche from Anglo-American settlers in central Texas as well as the recurrence of smallpox with epidemic waves in 1839 as well as 1848 and 1851. War with Texas and the subsequent increase in Indian raids brought more troops to the borderlands after 1836. Bloodshed between soldiers, often poorly paid recruits far from their homes, struck Mier. On February 1838, an unknown assailant killed Captain Juan Marín of Aguascalientes, and in June of that year, Ramón Medrano, a soldier from Morelia, Michoacán, similarly died of a "gunshot." *Soldaderas*, women who performed duties ranging from domestic labor to paramilitary tasks, experienced the hardships of frontier duty. In July 1838, María Guadalupe of the Guanajuato Battalion "died of a violent stabbing." A month later, a soldier from the same unit, Florencio Estrada, died "of stab wounds by his fellow soldiers."

By 1839, the Mexican northeast simmered with discontent against

the conservative regime that dominated Mexico. Despite *norteños*' (northerners') unease over the revolt in Texas and the spread of Indian raids, their commercial interests in trade with the United States and widespread resentment of tariff policies from Mexico City fueled violence across northern Mexico. In late 1838, Jesús de Cárdenas, Antonio Canales, and Antonio Zapata began an open revolt and quickly gained control of the northern sections of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, and Coahuila. In the midst of this uprising, Luis Gonzaga García became the parish priest of Mier and, with his superior Padre Rafael de Lira of Camargo, witnessed the resulting conflict. In November and December 1839, seven residents of Mier were among the dead in what Padre Lira termed "the War of the Federals."

In January 1840, these northeastern insurgents formed a government, commonly termed the Republic of the Rio Grande (*República del Río Grande* or *República del Norte*). In March of that year, the Mexico City newspaper *El Cosmopolita* cast the "republic" as a guerrilla band who used "execrable tactics that Canales and Zapata employ of running with their brigands, hiding in the brush, and refusing to face battle in the open." *El Cosmopolita* added that its leaders were "shameless traitors," and its forces were "disgraced Mexicans who have dared bring foreign scoundrels to aid in their aims of theft and pillage...they only count traitors, rogues, and the 'usurpers of Texas' as allies." Fundamentally, the "Republic" began as a *pronunciamiento* (pronouncement) in the pattern of similar declarations in Mexico and Hispanic America during the nineteenth century, rather than an effort at permanent secession. Historian Andrés Reséndez, in a discussion of the upheaval that swept much of northern Mexico at this time, found that "many radical federalists harbored secessionist ideas if there were no other recourse." The founders of the Republic primarily argued for a return to the Constitution of 1824 that Santa Anna abrogated in 1835. However, at the time, Mexico faced a threat not only from Texas but from the "Pastry War" with France. The Republic of the Rio Grande alienated Mexicans who abhorred disunity in the face of foreign foes. The insurgents' military gains evaporated after a decisive defeat at Santa Rita de Morelos, Coahuila, on March 24 and 25, 1840.

The Republic of the Rio Grande collapsed quickly over the following months, and the region's clergy played a part in its dissolution. In July 1840, Padre Lira noted the mass burial of thirteen men who fell in a recent battle near Mier. Weary of this violence and wary of Texas

expansionists, the priest sent an open letter to General Antonio Canales. Lira implored the rebels to lay down their arms by invoking the threat of foreign conquest. He wrote that if Mexicans continued “shedding each other’s blood in torrents, they [Texans] will gladly lend us a helping hand...for they wish not only to appropriate to themselves the beautiful and fertile lands of Texas, but to rob us of as much more of our beloved Republic as they can.”

Canales reconciled with the central government forces led by Mariano Arista, a general from San Luis Potosí with an extensive military career in the Mexican north. Padre Lira marked the peace with a sonnet in honor of the patron of the Camargo Parish, Saint Anne (*Santa Ana*), extolling, “only her hand could have freed this unhappy and unfortunate people from the lash of fratricidal war.” Canales became an officer in the Mexican Army after his truce with federal forces and later became a governor in Tamaulipas. Jesús de Cárdenas, the erstwhile president of the Republic of the Rio Grande, held this office a decade later. Such rapid shifts in loyalties took place in a volatile political landscape where ideological divides or personal feuds between rivals often dissolved when shared opponents emerged. The emergence of new threats from Texas brought renewed unity to the northeastern borderlands after 1840.

As Mexico struggled to hold its northern frontier, the Republic of Texas (sovereign state 1836–1846) under President Mirabeau Lamar sought to extend its boundaries along the breadth of the Rio Grande. Lamar’s term culminated in the Santa Fe Expedition, an 1841 effort to claim northern New Mexico that resulted in the capture or death of about three hundred Texans and the bankruptcy of the republic’s treasury. Mexico began to reassert its authority in the north through two “invasions” by Rafael Vásquez and Adrián Woll that briefly seized San Antonio in 1842. In response, President Sam Houston of Texas ordered the Somervell Expedition, which made Mier a central battleground in this struggle. Houston ordered seven hundred men under General Alexander Somervell to take “such towns above Matamoros as you think proper.” However, Houston warned that Somervell was to “use every precaution against surprise by the enemy,” for “the slightest check to our forces, or defeat, would be most disastrous to Texas.”

After his capture of Laredo, Somervell marched across the Rio Grande and took Guerrero, twenty kilometers northwest of Mier, on December 19, 1842. At that point, he decided to turn northward to avoid a large Mexican army. Nevertheless, three hundred of his soldiers refused to

withdraw and formed a militia under William Fisher. Fisher's militia reached Mier on December 23 and took the town without resistance. Two days later, Mexican troops under Pedro de Ampudia and Antonio Canales attacked the Texans. On Christmas Day of 1842, Father García made an unusual note in a burial entry for Jacinto Carrillo; he was unable to take confession from the dying man "for the war with the American goddamns (*los godames americanos*)." The following day, Fisher surrendered to the Mexicans after sustaining about thirty casualties. A number of the survivors escaped, but Mexican soldiers detained 176 militiamen. President Houston held that those who broke with Somervell and marched to Mier defied his orders. The Mexican government concluded that these captives were not prisoners of war and decreed the execution of every tenth man. Mexican soldiers executed seventeen of the Texans, who drew lots in the "Black Bean Episode"; most remaining survivors went to prisons in Mexico until their release over the following months.

This victory against the Texans inspired expressions of national pride across Mexico. In a dispatch from Mier, dated December 27, 1842, General Ampudia declared that the Texans "paid a high price for their daring, surrendering themselves in a humiliating fashion." This victory also allowed for reconciliation and a reaffirmation of Mexican identity in the restive northeast. Antonio Canales wrote of the Texan prisoners, "I wanted to shoot these rogues, who had no right to live, but General Ampudia is more compassionate than it appears." Only months after condemnation as traitors, Canales, Cárdenas, and other surviving participants of the Republic of the Rio Grande returned to nationwide favor through their defense of Mier.

In the midst of this wave of nationalism, the clergy at Mier attended to the combatants from both sides. Two veterans of the expedition, William Preston Stapp and Thomas Jefferson Green, described an episode where their medical officer, Dr. William Shepherd, saved Padre Lira from being shot by a Texan who aimed his rifle at the priest. Father Lira reciprocated by providing the doctor with a "horse and some money." Green's narrative describes how the parish church of Mier became a makeshift hospital in the final week of 1842 as priests attended to 136 Mexicans and 23 Texans who lay wounded on its floor after the battle. However, Green contended that Lira's display of benevolence hastened the Texans' decision to surrender at Mier. In Green's account, General Ampudia sent the Texans a flag of truce, summoned them to surrender, and swore that "we should be treated with all of the honors and



consideration of prisoners of war...the priest of Camargo, Padre de Lira, pledging the holy Catholic religion to their observance.” Green contended the Texans’ surrender was the result of Lira’s solemn promises: “The Texians, ever credulous, as brave men are, surrendered, while still they had formidable means of resistance at their hands.” Although Green implied that Lira’s presence at the settlement was a ruse aimed to gain the Texans’ trust, Lira had earlier experience in peace negotiations and saw firsthand the consequences of battle when he buried the dead and attended to survivors.

In the wake of this conflict with Texas, Mexican warfare with Comanche Indians returned across the northeast by 1844. *Mierenses* were among the many dead at a battle that took place in Nuevo León in 1844. On October 25, Padre García reported “soldiers and vecinos of this town fell in battle against the barbarous Indians at the La Salada station (*paraje*)” near China, Nuevo León, and were buried at the “Ramírez Ranch.” The dead included a second lieutenant, a sergeant, and two privates, and six *vecinos* from Mier. Beyond the increasing violence with Indians and Anglo Americans, criminality added to the insecurity of the borderlands. Padre García’s vivid description of a murder revealed these precarious conditions. In January 1844, Justo Zamorano, a cart driver from Matamoros, was bound for Texas through the environs of Mier when an associate robbed and murdered him. According to Father García, “one of his travel companions robbed him and burned his body down to a pile of ashes.”

The Santa Fe and Mier Expeditions represented victories for Mexico but prompted Texans and their allies to push more forcefully for their republic’s annexation by the United States. The election of Democrat James Polk as president of the United States in 1844 set in motion Texas statehood and a broader confrontation on the Tamaulipas frontier. In early 1846, Polk dispatched General Zachary Taylor to lead an army across the Nueces River and assert Texas’s claim on the northern bank of the Rio Grande. On April 25 a skirmish between Mexican and U.S. troops near Matamoros gave Polk and his supporters in Congress the pretext for a declaration of war against Mexico on May 13, 1846. By that time, Taylor’s army had already fought Mexican troops under General Mariano Arista in larger battles near Matamoros. U.S. forces, numbering some two thousand soldiers, advanced upriver to Camargo, east of Mier, and encamped through the summer as they awaited provisions and reinforcements.

Taylor sought to placate Mexicans in occupied lands with pledges to defend them against Comanche raids. However, the lower Rio Grande experienced little relief, despite Taylor's assurances. Some of the most intense raids in Mier's history took place as two thousand American soldiers encamped only a few miles to the east. In July 1846, Father Luis García listed the deaths of eight *mierenses* in three daring attacks. On July 15, Rafael Arce, Apolonario Peña, Pablo Barrera, and Hilario Ramírez died in a raid, and on July 24, Rafael Saldaña and Dionisio García fell in an attack. Three days later, Father García denounced a "disgraceful" assault that took the lives of two infants, one-year-old María Teodora Cuéllar, and Benito Cuéllar, born seventeen days earlier. The Comanche captured their mother, Victoriana Hinojosa, and "several other Christians" from "Sabinos, on the other side of the Rio Grande." Hinojosa's remains were found in September, after she died "in the fields far from here, killed by 'barbarous Indians' (*indios bárbaros*)." These attacks took place when, according to U.S. Army soldier Frank S. Edwards, the fields near Camargo became a sea of "canvas houses" for American soldiers and Mier's storefronts bore signs such as "Rough and Ready Eating House," "Hot Coffee and Cakes," and "Good Segars."

The U.S. invasion brought vigilantism by irregular American troops to Mier. The U.S. military was far from a unified body at this time, and some of the volunteer forces that accompanied Taylor's professional army had little interest in becoming the "champions" of Mexicans. In the wake of the U.S. invasion, armed "volunteers" from Texas and other state militia companies killed Mexicans with near impunity. Frank Edwards vividly described the devastation that these irregular fighters wrought. In his account, Texas Rangers were mostly made up of men who "have been prisoners of Mexicans, or, in some way, injured by Mexicans," thus they "shoot down every one they meet. It is said that the bushes, skirting the road from Monterey [sic] southward, are strewed [sic] with skeletons of Mexicans sacrificed by these desperados." At Cerralvo, Nuevo León, Edwards witnessed the execution of a Mexican "supposed to be one of [General José] Urrea's lawless band," adding that this charge was "a cloak to cover their insatiable desire to destroy those they so bitterly hate." According to Edwards,

...the rangers tried him by a court-martial; and adjudged him to be shot that very day. As the hour struck, he was led into the public plaza; and five rangers took their post a few feet off, as executioners. The condemned coolly pulled out his flint and steel, and little paper

*cigarito*; and, striking a light, commenced smoking as calmly as can possibly be imagined and—in two minutes—fell a corpse, with the still smoking *cigarito* yet between his lips. I did not see a muscle of his face quiver, when the rifles were leveled at him, but he looked coolly at his executioners, pressing a small cross, which hung to his neck, firmly against his breast. I turned from the scene sickened at heart.

Parish records corroborated this account of extrajudicial shootings. In April of 1847, Father García described the killing of two men from the “Ranch of Peñitas.” The “Americans took Juan Pérez and Ambrosio de los Santos as prisoners (*presos*) from their home” and summarily shot them. Likewise in October of the same year, José de Jesús Barrera died, “shot by the Americans,” a league away from Mier and south of the Rio Grande. These killings continued after the conclusion of the U.S.-Mexico War in February of 1848. In April of that year, Father García listed the death of José María Guerra of Mier, whose remains were found “far from here on the coast.” The priest described Guerra’s killers as “American volunteers.” Similarly, in October of 1848 “American volunteers” shot and killed Vicente and Cristóbal Hinojosa of Mier “on the coast” without offering sacramental care.

Father José Ponciano de Jáuregui’s description of a Mexican federal soldier’s execution in Mier in 1837 contrasted with accounts of violence at the hands of irregular and vigilante forces. José Antonio Moreno, the priest wrote, “received aid and all sacraments before his death by firing squad.” William Stapp’s account of the executions he witnessed after the Mier Expedition added that spiritual absolution was an integral element of the process, as those “under sentence of death are condemned to penance and solitude during the last three days of life.” Thomas Jefferson Green’s account of the death of Mier Expedition prisoner Ewen Cameron, despite the prisoner’s bravado, attests to these clerical functions at executions. According to Green, Cameron scoffed at the priest’s offer to take confession, proclaiming, “I believe that I have lived an upright man, and if I have to confess, it shall be to my maker.” Nevertheless, in Mier’s sacramental records, other *americanos* sought salvation from these priests. In July of 1847, a soldier in Taylor’s army named “Juan” in the Mier burial registry “asked to be baptized with holy water as he died.” Luis García even administered sacraments to one of the dreaded Texan volunteers, identified as “José Tomás Guillermo,” who “declared himself to be a Catholic Christian” as he lay dying of fever (*fiebre*) in August of that year, as the war raged.

After the war, other U.S. soldiers embraced the Catholic Church in Mier to pursue marriage and a permanent place in a borderlands community. Despite the animosities of war, Mexicans at Mier became familiar with Anglo and European newcomers as neighbors, business partners, and family members. Cecilia Rodríguez and her husband Nicodemus Flores, both *vecinos* of Mier, experienced these new dynamics at their homestead in Salineño, close to the Sabinos Ranch west of Mier. They married at Mier in 1832 and baptized their youngest son, Felipe de Jesús, there on February 11, 1848, just as the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo transformed these everyday journeys into international affairs. In addition to their five children, in the 1850 U.S. census their household consisted of two local workers, Jesús Treviño and Luis Sáenz, and two boarders, John Vale, a Swedish-born veteran of Zachary Taylor's army, and Thomas Harris, a clerk from Pennsylvania.

Vale further integrated into the new community when he married Juana Zamorano Sáenz of Mier. After the diocese of Linares in Nuevo León conducted the obligatory prenuptial investigation for a foreign convert, Father Francisco Benavides registered "Juan Vele" as "originating in Goteborg, Sweden." Vale was previously a *vecino* of New Orleans for three years, and six years a resident of Roma-Los Sáenz, Texas, and "son of Juan Vele and Cristina Svenson." This careful documentation was critical to the marriage process, as people of foreign or "vagrant" origin faced obstacles in marriage. Antonio Peña and Antonio Canales (most likely not the local strongman) served as witnesses. Inter-marriage between Anglo and European men and Mexican women formed a pillar of what David Montejano termed a "peace structure" along the Texas-Mexico border. While this structure hardly brought complete peace to these communities, it created a framework for cultural and racial fluidity. Settlers such as John Vale won access to kinship networks and new mercantile clients with marriage. Juana Zamorano Sáenz's extended family held the grants that formed the community of Roma-Los Sáenz. Vale's progress from a boarder on a subsistence farm valued at seventy dollars in 1850 to a prosperous merchant a decade later, with five thousand dollars in real estate and the same amount in personal assets, indicates how access to social capital translated into hard cash for new arrivals.

These increased movements of people across the Rio Grande brought peril in the form of an especially virulent cholera epidemic that ravaged the region in 1849 and struck Mexicans, Americans, and Native Americans without regard for the newly drawn borders. In April of that year alone, Father García attributed nearly 110 deaths in his parish to cholera.

Overall, the 255 deaths that took place that year exceeded the number of burials registered at Mier during the war years of 1846 (193 deaths), 1847 (219 deaths), and 1848 (184 deaths). “Fever” struck the region with frequency, with yellow fever especially virulent across the region through the nineteenth century. Infant mortality was high, and the deaths of young children, often of *mocezuelo* (infantile tetanus and other infections), accounted for a large percentage of burials. A very small minority of burial records merely ascribed deaths to old age (*véjez*).

The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo did not bring an end to cross-border violence along the Rio Grande. Indeed, the arrival of the U.S. border to the northern edge of Mier compounded the insecurity of frontier life. Filibusterers, smugglers, bounty hunters, and Indian raiders all saw opportunities with erratic law enforcement and weak judicial institutions on both sides of the newly drawn border. In 1849, Mexican authorities in Camargo arrested a smuggler and brought him to Mier for trial, prompting a band of Americans to assault these agents in Mexico to “recover the cargo.” In January 1850, Mexican forces thwarted a similar effort by “forty Americans from Roma” to seize contraband near Mier. Downriver in the same month, American vigilantes went to the outskirts of Matamoros to recover stolen property on behalf of Charles Stillman, a prominent merchant in Brownsville. These men murdered Juan Chapa Guerra, though Mexican officials concluded that another man, Juan Chapa García, was their intended target. The limits of seeking justice across the border were evident when Chapa Guerra’s survivors could not retain a Texan lawyer willing to press charges on their behalf in a U.S. Court.

The presence of a growing number of runaway slaves from Texas attracted bounty hunters and led to abductions. In 1851, Mier’s “political chief” condemned a group of Texan “pirates” who crossed the border to take an African American runaway, Melchor Valenzuela, away from his Mexican wife to return to slavery. In April of that year, the “military commander of Mier” blocked the arrival of a group of armed Americans, who responded with a hail of gunfire across the Rio Grande. The Mexican officer remonstrated with the commander at Ringgold Barracks near Rio Grande City, who “offered to perform the necessary protests” with his superiors. A far greater threat arrived later in 1851 when José María de Jesús Carvajal, a native of San Antonio who received an education in Kentucky and Virginia and became a Protestant along the way, launched a separatist uprising. Carvajal attracted support from John “Rip” Ford’s

company of Texas Rangers by pledging to return fugitive slaves from Mexican border towns. From Rio Grande City, Carvajal took Camargo and Mier in September of 1851, but failed in his drive to seize Matamoros despite a bloody siege. After more Mexican protests, U.S. marshals detained some of Carvajal's followers in Rio Grande City and Brownsville and sought their indictments, with little success from local grand juries.

In the spring of 1852, American papers printed alarming bulletins about a wave of abductions and killings near Mier in Starr County, Texas. These accounts centered on the murder of Robert Patton, a farmer who reportedly visited the border to purchase and drive livestock north to his home in Ellis County, Texas. According to the Brownsville *Rio Bravo*, "two Mexicans and a boy" were at "The Wells," a camp north of Rio Grande City, when the adults decided to assault Patton, who had "his brains beaten out by these fellows for the sake of his money and effects." The boy fled and informed a "party of citizens" who set out in pursuit. These vigilantes captured one of the two suspects. "After a regular trial" that took place immediately afterward, "the citizens of Rio Grande City—in the presence of the whole people—all concurring" hanged the man. Before his death, the condemned man reportedly made a confession that led a mob to cross the Rio Grande and abduct a man near Mier, before lynching him in Starr County. These vigilantes then went north to "The Wells" and "charged upon and killed six more of the villains, who had been in the habit of a long time of committing similar depredations in the vicinity." In addition to Patton's death, newspapers described the abduction and killing of Thomas Harris, the Pennsylvanian who lodged with John Vale in 1850. Coverage of the plunder of A. V. Edmondson's ranch "forty miles west of Brownsville" compounded descriptions of border outrages. This account concluded with a stark warning: "if things go on at this rate, not a Mexican, in a short time, will be suffered to live upon this side of the river."

William Carrigan and Clive Webb include this conflict in a comprehensive survey of the lynching in borderlands, and list all of the Mexican dead as "unknown." Mier's authorities identified Eusebio García, the husband of Ramona de la Peña, as one of the men abducted and killed in Starr County. His killing prompted Marcelo Hinojosa, Mier's mayor, to file a protest against his murder with Jesús de Cárdenas, the former president of the Republic of the Rio Grande who was the governor of Tamaulipas during a period of federalist authority across Mexico. Many of the victims lacked identification, such as the "skeletal remains found on the other side of the Rio Grande" buried at the Mier parish

on March 23, 1852. On May 16, 1852, Don Luciano García “brought a cadaver from the opposite bank of the Rio Grande” to the parish for a burial. However, the instability that prevailed across Mexico after the war thwarted efforts at diplomatic challenges and due process. At the time of these killings, Mexico’s president, Mariano Arista, a veteran of many campaigns on the Tamaulipas frontier, fought off a revolt by supporters of Santa Anna in 1852. By 1853, Santa Anna overthrew Arista, created a centralized dictatorship, and installed General Adrián Woll as a military governor in Tamaulipas. Santa Anna’s renewed centralism and the sale of the Gadsden Purchase galvanized Mexico’s liberals to launch the “Revolution of Ayutla” that exiled Santa Anna in 1855. President Ignacio Comonfort and Vice President Benito Juárez took power and led a wave of reforms that centered on secularization and limiting the power of the Catholic Church.

Through these changes in national regimes, Francisco Benavides, who took Father García’s position in 1853, continued to record losses of *mierenses*, at times far from home. In July of that year, Juan José Bazán was found dead of an “accidental gunshot” forty leagues, or about 168 kilometers, north of Mier. Closer to his home, on February 2, 1854, Pedro Luna died “of a gunshot across the river” and left María Lugarda a widow. Later in 1854, José Domingo Garza was “murdered by the Americans on the left bank [the U.S. side from a downstream perspective] near Mier.” Mier witnessed the close of one military theater in this tumultuous decade as Native American raiding came to an end. Campaigns with both Mexican and American forces took a toll on indigenous groups in the region. Thirty-year-old María Juana Ramirez was the last recorded death “at the hands of Indians” in Mier, on December 30, 1857.

However, Mier and the surrounding borderlands witnessed another decade of upheaval and bloodshed. In 1857 the War of the Reform broke out between liberals and conservatives. While Benito Juárez momentarily triumphed and won Mexico’s presidency in 1861, conservatives allied with Napoleon III of France, who installed Archduke Maximilian of Austria as Mexico’s emperor. In power, Maximilian promoted reforms that alienated his conservative supporters but did nothing to endear him to Mexican liberals. Juárez created a coalition of reformers and nationalist opponents of intervention and successfully appealed for U.S. aid. French troops reached Matamoros and fought several campaigns against supporters of the Mexican republic under President Benito Juárez (called *juaristas*) across the Mexican north, bringing another round of conflict to Mier. The U.S. Civil War, and rivalries between local leaders such as Juan Cortina,



an ally of the *juaristas* from Camargo, and Santos Benavides of Laredo, who sided with the French and Mexican conservatives as he led Confederate troops in south Texas, added more layers to the region's conflicts.

The final defeat of the conservatives in 1867 inaugurated the first period of stability in Mier for decades. The Mexican northeast witnessed the growth of railroads, a commercial agriculture boom, and rise of industry in Monterrey. After 1872, Mexico's growing dependence on foreign trade and investment and the authoritarian regime that emerged under Porfirio Díaz left no room for local strongmen such as Juan Cortina, the longtime nemesis of the Texas Rangers. Under U.S. pressure, Díaz forced Cortina into retirement in Mexico City. Likewise, the final defeat of Comanche forces in 1874 and concurrent campaigns against Apache bands ended Indian raiding in the wider region.

Ramona de la Peña lived to see the "triumph of liberalism" arrive in Mier. A powerful symbol of this new order was the construction of a Victorian clock tower alongside the old parish church building at Mier during the 1870s. The precise movements of a timepiece, not the tolling of church bells and daily cycle of prayers, marked time at the plaza. While Díaz downplayed the radical anticlerical measures of Juárez, the centrality of the parish church lessened with the emergence of a stronger state. When Ramona de la Peña died in 1880, civil authorities recorded her passing with bureaucratic precision: "In the City of Mier, the eighth day of May of 1880, at seven in the morning. The citizen Jesús Peña, single, 22 years of age, a merchant, native, and resident of this jurisdiction, reports; on the seventh day of this month at five in the afternoon, Ramona Peña de García, widow, deceased in this city of fever. She was buried in the common grave of the city mortuary at 74 years of age [sic]. David García and José María Peña, both adults, were present to confirm this death record." Peña had a "colonial" birth, but a decidedly modern death.

In the conclusion of his epic narrative of the warfare between Mexicans and indigenous nations that swept northern Mexico, Brian DeLay wrote, "by the 1880s, aging warriors told stories their children and grandchildren could hardly imagine...war stories, brought back from the deserts they made of a thousand Mexican homes." The age of large-scale Indian raids had long passed in the Mexican northeast by 1880. Nevertheless, Mier witnessed later periods of bloodshed and "deserts made of homes." The Mexican Revolution of the 1910s exposed the fragility of Porfirian "order and progress" and brought new bloodshed to the lower Rio Grande. And while Mexico returned to relative stability after 1920, many of the achievements of the "institutional revolution" largely bypassed the town.



By the close of the twentieth century, Mier remained at a population level similar to figures from a hundred years earlier and boasted of few economic assets beyond a rich history.

In 2001, the Secretariat of Tourism of Mexico (SECTUR) began the *Pueblo Mágico* or “Magic Town” initiative to highlight communities that “have always been in the collective imaginary of the nation” and represent “fresh and distinct alternatives for Mexican and foreign visitors.” SECTUR cited Mier’s importance in the struggles against “the expansion of Texas and the war with the United States during the nineteenth century” in the conferral of “Magic Town” status. Tragically, this recognition did not spare Mier from the violence that marked most of Mexico’s border cities by 2010. In November of that year, *La Jornada* newspaper reported that Mier became a *pueblo fantasma* (ghost town), a “place without police, the army, or a mayor; a place held hostage by organized crime.” Drug traffickers saw Mier as an ideal staging ground for illicit trade, and devastated the community with shootouts, a wave of abductions, and gruesome executions. By 2015, Mier counted 4,326 residents, a decline of nine percent from its 2010 figures. This violence led SECTUR to rescind the designation of Mier as a “Magic Town” to the dismay of residents who felt that the federal government failed to provide security and concurrently thwarted efforts to revive the community. SECTUR has since backed away from this withdrawal and again promotes Mier as a “Pueblo Mágico” for its historic sites, parish church and plaza, and role as a battleground with the “North Americans” in 1842. However, histories such as those of Ramona de la Peña and her family members and neighbors underscore how the “magic” qualities that SECTUR celebrates in Mier are inseparable from the traumas that mark its past. ❖

## NOTES

1. Archives of the Diocese of Matamoros (ADM), Mier Parish, “Defunciones,” April 23, 1852, r. 4, f. 102.

2. ADM, Mier Parish, “Bautismos,” April 26, 1839, August 16, 1840, September 8, 1845, October 29, 1846, February 21, 1849, March 28, 1851, r. 5. Their other children were José Sotelo de la Cruz, María Rosalía, José Salomé, and José Simón. Many parish clergy in Tamaulipas used the forenames José for males and María for females. I generally omit these names and refer to people by their second given name, which often was the more common name used to refer to persons, aside from instances where this creates an incomplete forename.

3. The parish buried Eusebio García with full fees (con un doble de apero), indicating a cost higher than the more modest charges (con apero or rotura menor). Such charges reflected the ability of a parishioner's family to pay and constituted acts of penance or charity on behalf of a deceased person. Paupers and unknown persons generally received free burials (de gracia).

4. Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 6.

5. This concept of “vernacular history making,” including sources such as gravesites and families’ shared memories of violence, comes from Mónica Muñoz Martínez, “Recuperating Histories of Violence in the Americas: Vernacular-History Making on the U.S.-Mexico Border,” *American Quarterly* 66, no. 3 (September 2014): 661.

6. ADM, Mier Parish, “Defunciones,” r. 3.

7. Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest 1580–1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), 140–141. The impact of Spanish-Mexican violence on indigenous groups is less clear, as priests rarely recorded unbaptized Indian dead. However, the number of indigenous criados (servants), often young children with unnamed “gentile” (non-Christian Indian) parents in the records, included five from 1767 to 1769, eight in the 1770s, and five from 1780 to 1782, with no further such baptisms through the remainder of the eighteenth century.

8. Jerry Thompson, *Sabers on the Rio Grande* (Laredo: Presidial Press, 1974), 34.

9. In 1776 the Spanish Empire created the Internal Provinces (Provincias Internas) of New Spain across what is now the Mexican states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo León, Coahuila, Chihuahua, Durango, Sinaloa, and Sonora, as well as present-day Texas and New Mexico.

10. Brian DeLay, *War of a Thousand Deserts: Indian Raids and the U.S.-Mexican War* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 16–17.

11. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” January 19, 1815, July 16, 1816, r. 3.

12. *Acta Constitutiva de la Federación Mexicana* (Mexico City: National Palace, 1824), 3, 13, 15.

13. Laura Shelton, in her study of Sonora during the early decades of independence, finds that the republican term *ciudadano* largely replaced *vecino* by the 1830s. In parish records in Mier, the two terms generally coexisted through the nineteenth century. Laura M. Shelton, *For Tranquility and Order: Family and Community on Mexico's Northern Frontier, 1800–1850* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2010), 151.

14. The padrones of Mier listed all households at regular intervals from 1767 to 1826. In general, these lists began at the central plaza de armas, with the leading families at the top. Ramona de la Peña's household was among the first twenty enumerated in the padrones, and generally had two or three household servants during the period. ADM, Mier Parish, “Padrones,” 1807–1826, r. 4.

15. Alicia Marion Dewey, *Pesos and Dollars: Entrepreneurs in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1880–1940* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2014), 24–27.
16. Comisión de Límites (Boundary Commission), *Diario de Viage de la Comisión de Límites* (Mexico City: Tipografía Navarro, 1850), 144.
17. DeLay, 52.
18. ADM, Mier Parish, “Bautismos,” November 17, 1832, August 20, 1824, r. 5; “Matrimonios,” January 11, 1839, r. 6.
19. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” 1810–1848, r. 3; 1848–1867, r. 4.
20. Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), 178–179.
21. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” February 15, 1838, June 15, 1838, r. 3.
22. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” July, August, 1838, r. 3.
23. Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800–1850* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 71, 74.
24. During the Spanish colonial period, the priest at Camargo supervised Mier’s church, and these ties remained close through the nineteenth century. Alejandro Prieto, *Historia, Geografía y Estadística del Estado de Tamaulipas* (Mexico City: Escarellillas, 1873), 185–186.
25. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” November 7, 8, 9, 11, 28 and December 4, 11, 14, 1839, r. 3.
26. *El Cosmopolita*, March 4, 1840.
27. *Ibid.*, March 14, 1840.
28. David M. Vigness, “Relations of the Republic of Texas and the Republic of the Rio Grande,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 57 (Jan. 1954), 312–313. Beatriz de la Garza, *From the Republic of the Rio Grande: A Personal History of the Place and the People* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2013), 11–12.
29. Reséndez, 147.
30. David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821–1846: The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 266.
31. Vigness, 318.
32. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” July 1, 1840, r. 3.
33. “Rafael de Lira to Canales,” Mier, October 12, 1840, in *Austin City Gazette*, cited in Joseph Milton Nance, *After San Jacinto: The Texas Mexican Frontier, 1836–1841* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 363.
34. “Soneto a Nuestra Señora de Santa Ana que Dedicar los Ciudadanos Lic. Antonio Canales, Nieves Vera, Jesús Treviño, y Presbitero Rafael Lira,” Ayuntamiento Honorable de Camargo, June 24–25, 1841, cited in Octavio Herrera Pérez, *El Norte de Tamaulipas y la Conformación de la Frontera México-Estados Unidos 1835–1855* (Cd. Victoria, El Colegio de Tamaulipas, 2014), 44.

35. Nance, 364–367. Octavio Herrera Pérez, *Breve Historia de Tamaulipas* (Mexico City: Colegio de México, 1999), 151–153.

36. Reséndez, 201–210.

37. “Samuel Houston to General Alexander Somervell,” Executive Department, City of Houston, March 22, 1842, Ameila W. Williams and Eugene C. Barker, in *The Writings of Sam Houston*, Vol. II (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1939), 530.

38. Herrera, *Breve Historia de Tamaulipas*, 137. Sam W. Haynes, *Soldiers of Misfortune: The Somervell and Mier Expeditions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990), 61, 67.

39. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” December 25, 1842, r. 3.

40. Haynes, 65.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Antonio María Guerra, *Mier en la Historia*, trans. José María Escobar and Edna Garza Brown (Edinburgh: New Santander Press, 1953, 1989), 46.

43. *El Siglo Diez y Nueve*, March 1, 1843.

44. Thomas Jefferson Green, *Journal of the Texian Expedition against Mier* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishing, 1845), 121. William P. Stapp, *The Prisoners of Perote* (Philadelphia: G. B. Zieber and Co., 1845), 41.

45. Green, 107–109, 293.

46. *Ibid.*, 293.

47. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” October 25, 29, 1844, r. 3.

48. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” February 1, 1844, r. 3.

49. J. Reese Fry, *A Life of General Zachary Taylor* (Philadelphia: Gregg, Elliot & Co., 1847), 179–180, 215. K. Jack Bauer, *Zachary Taylor: Soldier, Planter, and Statesman of the Old Southwest* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1985), 168–169.

50. DeLay, 264–265. José Angel Hernández, *Mexican American Colonization during the Nineteenth Century: A History of the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (New York and Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 90.

51. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” July 27, September 15, 1846, r. 3. Sabinitos Ranch was northwest of Roma in present-day Zapata County, Texas. U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, *Tactical Map, 1942* (<http://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/topo/texas/txu-pclmaps-topo-tx-zapata-1942.jpg>) (accessed June 11, 2018).

52. Frank S. Edwards, *A Campaign in New Mexico with Colonel Doniphan* (London: Hodson, 1848), 157–158.

53. Benjamin H. Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 12. N. A. Jennings in *Foreigners in Their Native Land: Historical Roots of Native Americans*, ed. David Weber (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 189–190.

54. Edwards, 109–110.
55. *Ibid.*, 111.
56. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” April 11, 1847, August 22, 1847, April 16, 1848, r. 3, October 12, 13, 1848, r. 4.
57. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” July 5, 1837, r. 3.
58. Stapp, 151.
59. This soldier was the namesake of Cameron County, Texas. Green, 285.
60. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” July 15, August 14, 1847, r. 3.
61. ADM, Mier Parish, “Matrimonios,” December 5, 1832, r. 6.; “Bautismos,” February 11, 1848, r. 5.
62. 1850 U.S. Census, Rio Grande Valley, Nicodemus Flores, Dwelling 1302, Family 1487.
63. Reséndez, 81, 136.
64. David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836–1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 24–48.
65. Mary Jo Galindo, “Con Un Pie en Cada Lado: Ethnicities and the Archaeology of Spanish Colonial Ranching Communities Along the Lower Río Grande Valley” (PhD dissertation, University of Texas, 2003), 99.
66. 1860 U.S. Census.
67. Hämäläinen, 149.
68. Most of Mier’s cholera deaths took place April 2–7, 1849. ADM, Mier Parish, “Burials,” r. 4.
69. John McKiernan-González, *Fevered Measures: Public Health and Race at the Texas-Mexico Border, 1848–1942* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 4.
70. *Memoria de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores* (Mexico City: National Palace Press, 1873), 86–87.
71. James David Nichols, *The Limits of Liberty: Mobility and the Making of the Eastern U.S.-Mexico Border* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2018), 156–157.
72. *Memoria de la Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores*, 87–89.
73. Jerry Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2007), 23.
74. Herrera, *El Norte de Tamaulipas*, 87. Joseph E. Chance, *José María de Jesús Carvajal: The Life and Times of a Mexican Revolutionary* (San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 2006), 131–133.
75. “Robert Patton,” Ellis County, Texas Probate Records, July 1852.
76. “Exciting News from Rio Grande City and Roma,” *New York Tribune*, May 11, 1852, and *New York Times*, May 13, 1852, cited in William Carrigan and Clive Webb, *Forgotten Dead: Mob Violence against Mexicans in the United States, 1848–1928* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 182.

77. New York Tribune, May 11, 1852.
78. Carrigan and Webb, 182.
79. “Jesús Cárdenas to the Mayor of Mier,” May 7, 1852, cited in Herrera, *El Norte de Tamaulipas*, 88.
80. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” March 23, May 16, 1852, r. 4.
81. Herrera, *Breve Historia de Tamaulipas*, 153–154.
82. *Ibid.* Daniel Arreola, *Tejano South Texas: A Mexican American Cultural Province* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), 111.
83. ADM, Mier Parish, Burials, 1853–1854, r. 4.; Marriages, December 2, 1837, r. 6.
84. Hämäläinen, 312–316.
85. ADM, Mier Parish, “Difuntos,” December 30, 1857, r. 3.
86. Guerra, 49.
87. Juan Mora Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848–1910* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 64–67.
88. Thompson, Cortina, 135–136, 236–237.
89. Lance R. Blyth, *Chiricahua and Janos: Communities of Violence in the Southwestern Borderlands, 1660–1880* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2012), 194.
90. Ayuntamiento Honorable de Mier, Entierros, “Ramona de la Peña,” May 8, 1880.
91. DeLay, 310.
92. Secretaría de Turismo, “Pueblos Mágicos” (<http://www.sectur.gob.mx/gobmx/pueblos-magicos/> January 3, 2014) (accessed June 11, 2018).
93. Secretaría de Turismo, “Mier, Tamaulipas” (<http://www.sectur.gob.mx/gobmx/pueblos-magicos/mier-tamaulipas/> April 28, 2014) (accessed June 11, 2018).
94. “Ciudad Mier, una Fantasma que Alguna Vez Fue ‘Pueblo Mágico,’ ” *Jornada*, November 19, 2010 (<http://www.jornada.unam.mx/2010/11/19/politica/002n1pol>) (accessed June 11, 2018).
95. At the time Mier became a “Magic Town” in 2010, Mier had 4,761 residents. Some representative populations of Mier during its first century are 274 in 1757, 973 in 1794, 2,228 in 1821, and 4,399 in 1837. Omar Valerio-Jiménez, *River of Hope: Forging Identity and Nation in the Rio Grande Borderlands* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2013), 65.
96. Francisco Soto, “Ciudad Mier, ¿pueblo mágico?” *Milenio*, March 1, 2014 ([http://www.milenio.com/firmas/francisco\\_soto/Ciudad-Mier-pueblo-magico\\_18\\_220357963.html](http://www.milenio.com/firmas/francisco_soto/Ciudad-Mier-pueblo-magico_18_220357963.html)) (accessed June 11, 2018).
97. Secretaría de Turismo, “Mier, Tamaulipas” (<http://www.sectur.gob.mx/gobmx/pueblos-magicos/mier-tamaulipas/> April 28, 2014) (accessed June 11, 2018).