

2005

Vidas Ilustres (English)

Clemente Rendón de la Garza

University of Texas at Brownsville

Texas Southmost College

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Recommended Citation

Rendón de la Garza, Clemente; University of Texas at Brownsville; and Texas Southmost College, "Vidas Ilustres (English)" (2005). *History Faculty Publications and Presentations*. 76.
https://scholarworks.utrgv.edu/hist_fac/76

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VIDAS ILUSTRES

By: Clemente Rendón de la Garza

(English Version)

General Alonso de Leon “El Mozo”

Don Jose de Escandon y de la Helguera

Fray Manuel Julio de Silva

Bachiller Mariano Antonio Matamoros Gurudi

General Alonso de Leon “El Mozo”

General Manuel de Mier y Teran Teruel

General Juan Jose de la Garza Galvan

Father Jose Nicolas Balli Hinojosa

General Lauro Villar Ochoa

Maria Lorenza Hinojosa Garcia

Jose Maria Barrientos Garza

Dr Manuel Feliciano Rodriguez Brayda

Ingeniero Eduardo Chavez Ramirez

Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano

General Alonso de Leon “El Mozo”

He was born in Villa de Cadereyta, Nuevo Leon in 1639. He was the son of Alonso de Leon y Josefa Gonzalez. His occupation was agriculture and livestock. He married Agustina Cantu and they had seven children, Alonso, Juan, Santiago, Ines, Mateo, Juana and Andres. In 1667 he was named Mayor of Cadereyta, position that he served for eight years. After that position Alonso was named “Encomendadero”, in which he help in the transformation of Indians to the catholic religion. During the period of 1668-82 he was known for the pacification of indians. In 1682 Alonso was named Sargento Mayor and by the end of that year governor of Nuevo Leon, position that he served until 1684. “El Mozo” wrote the book “Derrotero Diario y Demarcacion del Viaje”, in which he described the trip to the Bahia del Espiritu Santo looking for French settlers. In 1687 the Viceroy named Alonso governor of the Coahuila Republic

with the mission to start new towns and once again help in the indian pacification. “El Mozo” headed other expeditions looking for French settlements and during those trips he named Rio Nueces, Rio Hondo, Rio del Leon, Rio Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe and Rio San Marcos. General Alonso de Leon died on March 21, 1691. The first exploration of “El Mozo” was the south of the Rio Grande. He was one of the first explorers in San Juan de los Esteros Hermosos (Matamoros) and the one that brought Fray Diego de Orozco who made possible the first mass in Matamoros.

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Don Jose de Escandon y de la Helguera

Don Jose de Escandon y de la Helguera was born in Soto de la Marina, Santander in March 19, 1700, being the son of don Jose de Escandon Rumoroso y de doña Francisca de la Helguera. At the age of 15, he migrated to New Spain and enrolled with the army (Caballeros Montados de Merida). In 1721 he moved to Queretaro as Teniente de Infanteria y Caballeria. Don Jose married doña Maria Antonia Ocio y Ocampo in 1724 and they had two children, Jose and Ana Maria. Doña Maria died in 1736 and in 1737 he remarried doña Maria Josefa Juana de Llera y Bayas. They had seven children, Manuel, Ignacio, Vicente, Mariano, Francisco, Josefa Maria and Maria Josefa.

During the period of 1727 through 1734 he served in the indian pacification. In 1736 he started his pacification work in the Sierra Gorda region. With his work in Sierra Gorda he gained the title of Teniente de Capitan General de la Sierra Gorda.

On September 3, 1746 Viceroy Juan Francisco de Guemes y Horcasitas, Conde de Revillagigedo gave don Jose the rights to colonize Nuevo Santander. After some planning, in January 7, 1747 don Jose started his project. He left Queretaro with Fray Jose Velasco, Fray Lorenzo de Medina Captain Maldonado, two sergeants, 10 soldiers and some servants. Along the trip some other people joined him from San Luis, Nuevo Reino de Leon and Coahuila. Don Jose arrived to the Rio Grande on February 24, 1747 and established a camp named Real del Rio del Norte, currently known as El Soliseño. This camp served as based for Escandon’s inspection of the area. After three months, the expedition ended and by October 1747 he wrote a report about the expedition and future plans for settlement. On May 31, 1748 Conde Revillagigedo authorized Escandon to start his settlement plans. Don Jose de Escandon founded 22 towns in 3 periods:

First Period 1748-49		
Original Name	Actual Name	Date
Santa Maria de la Llera	Llera	December 25, 1748
San Francisco de Guemes	Guemes	January 1, 1749
Padilla	Viejo Padilla	January 6, 1749
Santander de los Cinco Señores	Santander Jimenez	February 17, 1749
Burgos	Burgos	February 20, 1749
Santa Ana de Camargo	Camargo	March 5, 1749
Reynosa	Reynosa	March 14, 1749
San Fernando de Presas	San Fernando	March 19, 1749
Altamira	Altamira	May 2, 1749
Horcasitas	Magiscatzin	May 11, 1749
Santa Barbara	Ocampo	May 19, 1749
Real de los Infantes	Bustamante	May 26, 1749

Second Period 1750 - 51

Original Name	Actual Name	Date
Santa Maria de los Dolores	Rancho Dolores, Texas	August 22, 1750
Soto la Marina 1750	Soto la Marina	September 3,
Santa Maria de Aguayo	Cd. Victoria	October 6, 1750
Revilla	Guerrero Viejo	October 10, 1750
Escandon	Xicotencatl	March 15, 1751

Third Period 1752 - 57

Original Name	Actual Name	Date
Santo Domingo de Hoyos	Hidalgo	May 19, 1752
Santillana 1752	Abasolo	December 26,
Mier	Cd. Mier	March 5, 1753
Laredo	Laredo, Texas	May 15, 1755
Real de Borbon	Villagran	May 8, 1757

By the end of 1749, Escandon was called back to Queretaro to help again in the indian pacification in Sierra Gorda. Discontent from Nuevo Santander settlers turn into removal of settlement rights. He died in Mexico City on September 10, 1770.

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Fray Manuel Julio de Silva

Fray Manuel Julio de Silva was born in Zacatecas in 1736, he was the son of don Joaquin de Silva and doña Ana Maria Caballero. He received the Franciscan votes on May 2, 1754. In 1790 Fray de Silva was designated to be commissioner of the Texas Missions. He travel to San Antonio with father Francisco Mariano Garza and they visited

Mission San Antonio Valero and Espiritu Santo. Fray de Silva was called to go back to Mexico and there he proposed to the Viceroy the founding of missions along the cost to control Karankawas and Comanche indians.

Father de Silva organized two groups, the first one headed by him and Fray Francisco Puelles to work in Texas and the second one, headed by his brother Father Joaquin Maria de Silva to work on the Pacific Coast. Fray de Silva got founding from Spain to start the Nuestra Señora del Refugio mission at north of Rio San Antonio. On his way back to San

Antonio, Fray de Silva and his followers passed through the congregation San Juan de los Esteros. As they found out that San Juan did not had religious services, they stayed there some days. The residents from San Juan decided to change the name of the congregation to Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros.

Fray de Silva and Fray Puelles continued their trip to San Antonio. When they learned about missing or lost funds, Fray de Silva returned to Mexico. During this time, Karankawa indians destroyed Refugio Mission. Fray Puelles had to relocate the mission and when Fray de Silva returned they relocated the mission one more time to Rancho Santa Gertrudis. After two years of hard work, Fray de Silva went back to Zacatecas due to poor health. He died on December 3, 1798 in Zacatecas.

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Bachelor Mariano Matamoros Guridi

Mariano Antonio Matamoros Guridi was born on August 14, 1770 in Mexico City, he was the son of don Manuel Matamoros Salazar and doña Mariana Guridi. Mariano got a Bachelors of Arts Degree in 1786 and a degree in theology in 1789. He got license to say mass in some churches. He had a son, Apolonio, before he became a priest and he raise him as his adoptive son and a daughter with her cousin Catalina Salazar.

Mariano believed in the Mexican revolutionary movement and although he didn't participated actively, his beliefs got him in trouble. Once Matamoros beliefs were public, he joined father Jose Maria Morelos. He was named "Coronel" and after proving his ability in some battles, Morelos made his "Mariscal" being second in command. He was sent to jail and had a trial, and on February 3, 1814 was killed. Several cities had been named after Don Mariano Matamoros and one of them is Matamoros, Tamaulipas.

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Father Jose Nicolas Balli Hinojosa

Father Balli was born on 1768 in Reynosa, Tamaulipas, he was the son of don Jose Maria Balli Fuera and doña Rosa Maria Hinojosa Benavides. Father Balli became priest in 1796. After serving in a chapel in Reynosa, he became the priest at Nuestra Señora del Refugio de los Esteros in Matamoros in 1800. The original site of the church was about 200 meter from the actual one (5th and Matamoros), but after a Rio Grande flood, Father Balli relocated it to the present site. He received a lot of land on both sides of the river and money as inheritance, and part of that inheritance he used to build the church in 1820. Isla de Santiago was also part of his inheritance, which is known as Isla del Padre. Father Balli died August 16, 1829 in Matamoros, four years before the completion of his project, the church of Nuestra Señora del Refugio.

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General Manuel de Mier y Teran Teruel

General Mier y Teran was born in Mexico City on February 18, 1789, he was the son of Manuel de Mier y Teran and Maria Ignacia de Teruel y Llanos. He joined in 1811 the revolutionary revolt with general Rayon. Later Mier y Teran joined his childhood friend in the battle, Mariano Matamoros. His main role during the was the construction of arms. Once Morelos died, Mier y Teran took control of the independence revolt. Several defeats plus the need of food and arms made him to back out of the battlefield and began a more pacific life. Iturbide was the next independence leader and once the proclamation of independence was a done deal, Mier y Teran return to the politics taking an active role in congress.

Mier y Teran started a school to teach how to make arms and prepare the army. His poor relations with president Guadalupe Victoria, made him accept Victoria's proposition to go to the border and try to set the border limits between Mexico and the United States. The border commission travel all the way to the Rio Rojo, and analyzed

the boundaries. By march 1829, Mier y Teran was order to come back and stay in Matamoros. During his time in Matamoros, Mier y Teran had the opportunity to study the Rio Grande all the way to Camargo. He knew that Texas was in problems and that the Mexican government needed to do something about it if they didn't want to lose it. When Mier y Teran saw that nothing could be done to retain Texas and that the Mexican government kept fighting between itself, he committed suicide in San Antonio de Padilla. Since December 5, 1972 his body lays down in Matamoros.

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General Juan Jose de la Garza Galvan

Juan Jose de la Garza was born in Villa de Cruillas, Tamaulipas on May 6, 1826, he was the son of Juan B de la Garza y Maria Eusebia Galvan. He became governor of Tamaulipas for the first time in 1852. De la Garza supported the "Plan de Ayutla" against Santa Ana dictatorship. After some battles and the fall of Santa Ana government, Juan Jose de la Garza became governor again and moved the state government from Matamoros to Tampico. He served eight times as governor of Tamaulipas. De la Garza founded the Instituto Cientifico y Literario San Juan in Matamoros. The school closed for a period during the Mexican revolution, but was later reopen as a middle school and currently as a high school with the name of his founder.

After the decline in popularity on his eighth period as governor, De La Garza moved to Mexico City. There he became minister of the supreme court and law teacher. Juan Jose de la Garza returned to Tamaulipas after 20 years where he died on October 16, 1893.

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General Manuel Gonzalez Flores

Manuel Gonzalez Flores was born in Matamoros on June 17, 1832, being the son of Fernando Gonzalez y Eusebia Flores. He joined the armed forces in Matamoros in 1853. He participated in the Puebla Battle of 1862. Benito Juarez, as Mexican president, named Gonzalez governor of the national palace. Manuel Gonzalez was a supporter of Porfirio Diaz and those beliefs made him resign from Juarez government to help Diaz and his Plan de la Noria and Plan de Tuxtepec. He also supported Diaz in his attack to Brownsville and Matamoros against president Lerdo de Tejada. Once Diaz became president, he named Manuel Gonzalez chief commander and governor of Michoacan. Gonzalez hold several positions in the army during Diaz presidential period. At the end of Diaz term, he helped Manuel Gonzalez to become the next Mexican president (December 1, 1880 – November 30, 1884). During Gonzalez time in office, he extended the railroad from 1073 km to 5731 km, increased the telegraph to 30,000 km, reformed the postal service and ended the problem on the border of Guatemala and Chiapas. Also, he implemented the decimal system, organized the army college, reestablished relations with England, changed the silver coins to nickel, and founded the Mexican National Bank (BANAMEX). On the other hand, the economy was having a recession and the debt with England increased. At the end of his days in office, Gonzalez was not real popular. Diaz became president again and Gonzalez was named governor of Guanajuato. He remained as governor with great popularity until his death. General Manuel Gonzalez died in Mexico City on March 8, 1893.

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General Lauro Villar Ochoa

Lauro Villar was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas on August 6, 1849 being the son of don Francisco Villar a doña Ursula Ochoa. Lauro Villar started his military career with Juan Cortina during the civil war in Matamoros. He fought against Diaz with the president Lerdo de Tejada. Lauro Villar ascended in the army and became chief of the army in Matamoros. During the Mexican revolution, Lauro Villar was serving in Mexico City and once Madero became president, Villar was named General. He fought against general Ruiz and general Reyes to defend president Madero. In 1914, due to health reasons, Villar resigned to the army after 49 years of service. He died in Veracruz on June 1923

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General Lucio Blanco Fuentes

Lucio Blanco was born in Nadadores, Coahuila on July 29, 1879, he was the son of don Bernardo Blanco and doña Maria Fuentes. He met Madero and supported his revolutionary movement. He fought against Diaz until he resigned as president. He helped Madero throughout his presidential period and after he was assassinated, he joined Carranza. He fought against Huerta in Matamoros, and took over the city. This was the first important battle won by the constitutionalists. From Matamoros, he organized the ceremony to give agriculture land property titles to people from Nuevo Leon and Tamaulipas. At the end of Carranza period in office, Blanco had to leave to Laredo, Texas due to his decline in popularity. Although Carranza did not support Obregon, he became the next president. Blanco returned to Mexico, but once again had to leave due to rumors about him being against Obregon. Lucio Blanco was found dead at the Rio Grande on July 7, 1922.

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Maria Lorenza Hinojosa Garcia

Maria Lorenza Hinojosa was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas on August 10, 1864, being the daughter of Don Victor Hinojosa Longoria and Maria Rosa Garcia de la Garza. She developed an inclination towards the music. Maria Lorenza composed her first song at the age of eight. She graduated for the “Conservatorio Nacional de Musica de la Ciudad de Mexico” and after that, she gave concerts in Mexico and the US. Maria Lorenza returned to Matamoros in 1904 where she composed many songs like the one for Lauro Villar. Her eyes saw the entrance of Lucio Blanco to Matamoros during the Mexican revolution and that event made her compose songs to generals and revolutionary events. Also, she composed a hymn to celebrate the first hundred years of the independence. Maria Lorenza Hinojosa died in Matamoros on January 19, 1936.

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Jose Maria Barrientos Garza

Jose Maria Barrientos was born Cadereyta Jimenez, Nuevo Leon on November 19, 1891, being the son don Francisco Barrientos Gonzalez and doña Trinidad Garza Zambrano. He joined a school band where he learned to play the cornet. During the first century celebration of independence, he started a band to participate in the festivities. Jose Maria Barrientos composed several songs during revolutionary period. He was taken by Carranza's supporters to a military base to play. Later, he joined the revolution in Matamoros with General Lucio Blanco. He retired from the army in 1915 and went to New Mexico where he joined a band. By 1916 he returned to Matamoros

and founded the Municipal band. In 1925, Barrientos also founded the Brownsville band. He formed part of the Matamoros first century festivities (1926) and his main contribution was to give the music to the words of the Matamoros hymn. Governor Portes Gil was really pleased with the hymn that ask Barrientos to transform it into the Tamaulipas Hymn, only three words were changed. During the foundation of first secondary school of Matamoros, Barrientos was part of the founding teachers. The work with the students was far beyond his duties, Barrientos was always willing to help in the creation of new bands. After a life full of great compositions, Barrientos died on August 3, 1965.

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Dr Manuel Feliciano Rodriguez Brayda

Manuel Feliciano Rodriguez was born in Matamoros, Tamaulipas on February 15, 1897, he was the son of Manuel Rodriguez Uresti and Adelaida Brayda Treviño. Dr Manuel married Raquel Herminia Longoria Guerra and they had three children, Raquel Herminia, Adela Aurora and Manuel Feliciano. He became a doctor in Mexico City during the period of the revolution of Agua Prieta. He returned to Matamoros to work as a doctor and also made his certificate valid in Texas. Besides his work as a doctor, he became a teacher and made possible the reopening of the Instituto Cientifico Juan Jose de la Garza as a middle school and later as a high school. His contribution to the Matamoros society included the foundation of the Rotary Club, and his great literary work. Dr Manuel Feliciano Rodriguez died on September 6, 1976.

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Engineer Eduardo Chavez Ramirez

Eduardo Chavez was born in Mexico City on May 6, 1898, being the son of Engineer Agustin Chavez Pedroza and Juvencia Ramirez de Chavez. As a high school student he joined the armed forces with Carranza during the Mexican revolution. He joined the National Irrigation Commission and work on the irrigation systems and in the rectification of the Rio Grande. Chavez was sent to Matamoros by president Cardenas with the mission to build a levee to prevent flooding problems. Once he finished the levee project, Chavez discovered the possibility of an irrigation system by gravity. Although the poor support of Cadenas advisors, Chavez got the authorization to start his irrigation project, El Retamal. That project gave the possibility to increase the agriculture production and in order to do it, he brought people from Nuevo Leon. The new residents founded several towns near Matamoros. Irrigation District 25 brought prosperity to the region. Chavez knowledge about the region and water treaty between Mexico and the US, gave him the opportunity to create important water dams (Presa Falcon and La Amistad). During the period of president Ruiz Cortines, Chavez as a cabinet member, headed important projects on the Gulf of Mexico, Rio Yaqui, creation of Mozucari water dam and irrigation district to name a few. Eduardo Chavez died in Mexico City on May 28, 1982 and his body was buried in Valle Hermoso, Tamaulipas. One of his projects, “Del Panuco al Bravo”, could and still can be the solution to the present irrigation problems of Matamoros and neighbor regions, but even know, the project do not have the necessary support.

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Don Eliseo Paredes Manzano

Eliseo Paredes was born in “Rancho La Esperanza” (Matamoros, Tamaulipas) on December 8,1899, he was the son of don Justo Paredes Cisneros and doña Clotilde Manzano Vidal. He was a businessman and historian. During the 20’s, he established a business in the Juarez Market. He married Maria Guadalupe Rangel and they had

seven children, Sergio, Eliseo, Josefina, Graciela Irma, Isaura, Maria Guadalupe, and Sara Alicia. Eliseo Paredes actively participated in different civic and cultural associations in Matamoros. He founded a historic society in Matamoros, formed and organized the Museo Casamata and became the first historian of Matamoros. Eliseo Paredes died in Matamoros on July 11, 1988.

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