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Mexican American Baptists' dependency on Anglo Baptist institutions in south Texas: A case study in Bee County

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MEXICAN AMERICAN BAPTISTS DEPENDENCY ON ANGLO BAPTIST INSTITUTIONS IN SOUTH TEXAS: A CASE STUDY IN BEE COUNTY

A Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

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In the early 1800s, Anglo-Americans entered the Southwest in great numbers, bringing religious institutions with them, Mexican American Baptist dependency on Anglo Baptist institutions occurred. Anglos in the Southwest brought in the doctrine of Manifest Destiny and strict racial codes. Mostly Southerners, they sought to submit so-called foreign cultured people, in this case Mexican Americans, to a predetermined role in the economic and sociopolitical life of the Southwest. Anglo Baptists were part of this culture and influenced by the practice of this ideology. Applying the theory of Dependency, this study will examine the manifestation of dependency and its legacy in Bee County, Texas, from 1821-1980.

The research is divided into the Introduction, four chapters, and a conclusion. The first two chapters present the history of Mexican Americans in Texas and Bee County. Chapters Three and Four discuss the history of Mexican American Baptists in the United States, Texas, and Bee County. The Conclusion presents results of the research and analysis of the theory.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

This thesis presents an overview of the early contact between two distinct religious and cultural groups and follows that relationship for a period of almost two centuries. In particular, it examines the beginnings and later development of the Mexican Baptist Church in South Texas, specifically in Bee County and surrounding areas. It focuses on events that led a number of Mexican and Mexican American Catholics in Texas to convert to the Baptist religion. The study explores how these new converts became a subordinate group within the larger Anglo-organized Baptist church. This subordination intensified after the war between the United States and Mexico in 1848. After the war, the new converts were confronted not only with a new religious doctrine, but also and more importantly, a new social order. Within this social order, Mexican Americans became subordinated to the newly established dominant power that exercised its control over areas of their public life. Thus the earlier Anglo settlers became the dominant group exercising their new power and authority over the economic, political, and religious life of the Mexican community.

Although this thesis focuses primarily on a historical perspective of the events surrounding the conversion and incorporation of Mexican converts to the larger Anglo controlled Baptist church, it also borrows from sociological theories on ethnic and race relations to explore early contacts between the two groups and later developments. The section that follows provides a brief synapse of the major theories that have helped to guide the analysis and that provide the theoretical underpinnings for the concepts that are used to label the different contact situations between the two groups throughout this time period.

In the United States the topic of race and ethnic relations has received considerable attention. Most notably, the social sciences, particularly sociology, have offered multiple theories attempting to explain racial and ethnic relationships involving adaptation, migration, exploitation, stratification, and conflict. Feagin and Feagin classify these theories as either "order theories" or "power conflict theories," depending on their principal concerns. They note:

> Order theories tend to accent patterns of inclusion, of the orderly integration and assimilation of particular racial and ethnic groups to a 'core culture' and society as in the third and fourth of the outcomes just described--power conflict theories give more attention to the first and fifth outcomes—to genocide and continuing hierarchy—and to the persisting inequality of the power and resource distribution associated with racial or ethnic subordination.[1]

Assimilation theories and other assimilation perspectives are examples of order theories while class-oriented neo-Marxist beliefs are models of "power-conflict" theories. Social order theories place their major focus on assimilation, which is the process of adaptation of migrating groups or persons to the cultural values of the "host people." Charles Hirschman explains that the primary emphasis on assimilation used by sociologists to define the racial and ethnic assimilation perspective is an example of order theories. The reason Hirschman gives for citing assimilation as the primary perspective is that other alternatives are less provable in comparison to Assimilation.[2]

The development of these theories may be traced to Robert F. Park, who proposed that migration from European countries to other areas represented a violent reorganization for societies around the world. These economic out-migrations led to a race relation cycle that resulted in stages of contacts, competition, and accommodation. The results are progressive and irreversible. The meeting of the host people and the

migrating group leads to economic competition. Accommodation occurs at a rapid pace, and the outcome is a forced adjustment to a new social position. In modern societies assimilation of racial and ethnic minorities is a long-term process, of cultured integration where migrating groups acquire the culture and social arrangements of the "host group." As the migrating groups integrates into the dominant culture, they bring with them their own culture and experiences. Thus the culture that emerges combines their experience with those of the "host people" to create a culture.[3] This point of view represents the "old" approach to ethnic relations, in which assimilation to the host society represented the ultimate stage of the process.

Since Park's early analysis other theorists have embraced Park's analysis of assimilation but have deviated from him in three important areas. Milton Gordon author of *Assimilation in American Life*, discusses three competing images of assimilation between racial and ethnic groups in America, commencing with first encounter. These images are the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and "Anglo-Conformity." Of the three, Gordon points out "Anglo-conformity" as the descriptive reality, which means that immigrant groups in the United States replace much of their own culture for that of the dominant pre-existing Anglo-Saxon "core culture" and society. The "Anglo-conformity" image of assimilation is the model that best illustrates the first encounters between Anglo newcomers and Mexicans in the early 1800s and the years that followed.[4] Gordon identifies the following seven dimensions of adaptation:

1. Cultural assimilation: change of cultural patterns to those of the core society
2. Structural assimilation: penetration of cliques and associations of the core society at the primary-group level
3. Martial assimilation: significant intermarriage
4. Identification assimilation: development of a sense of indignity linked to the core society

5. Attitude-recessional assimilation: absence of prejudice and stereotyping

6. Behavior-recessional assimilation: absence of intentional discrimination

7. Civic assimilation: absence value and power conflict.[5]

Feagin and Feagin suggest that Gordon's failure to include secondary structural assimilation is a major error in his theory. For these authors, historical evidence from the United States suggests that secondary groups do not automatically become part of the dominant group's friendship crowd. They write, "In addition, the dimension Gordon calls civic assimilation is confusing since he includes in it 'values', which are really part of cultural assimilation and 'power', which is a central aspect of structural assimilation at the secondary group-level."[6] Allen Williams and Suzanne Ortega, as well as I, disagree with Gordon's notion that cultural assimilation was the first type of assimilation to occur. Their findings suggest that Mexican Americans were less culturally but more structurally assimilated than blacks. The conclusion of Williams and Ortega's study was that assimilation differs significantly from one group to another and that Gordon's seven dimensions of adaptation can be reduced to three more useful categories: structural, cultural, and receptional assimilation.[7]

Among the numerous theories of ethnic and racial relations that have been formulated throughout the last fifty years, the group of theories classified by Feagin and Feagin as "power conflict theories" place a much greater emphasis on economic stratification and power issues than on assimilation theories. Defying the earlier assimilation paradigm based on social order, power conflict theories are based on theoretical assumptions that emphasize internal colonialism, power and resource inequalities, and class relations. This thesis borrows heavily from power conflict theories, especially the internal colonialism perspective, when presenting historical data relevant to the group interaction that developed between Mexican Baptists and Anglo Baptists in

South Texas. Evidence of the early assimilation position, internal colonialism, and dependency theory will be provided throughout the body of the thesis.

The main focus of "internal colonialism" according to Feagin and Feagin is placed on power and resource "inequalities." The theoretical structure for the development of internal colonialism stems from previous analyses of external colonialism, that is, the global dominance of certain capitalist nations, such as the United States, and a number of European nations over less developed areas of the non-western world. Examples of "external colonialism" are to be found in countries in which economies and politics are run by an outside colonial power. Numerous colonies under colonial power have become independent of their colonizers, but their economic endeavors continued to be directed by the capitalists and corporations of the colonial power, such as in the relationship between the United States and some Latin American countries.[8]

The result of a continuing dependency system is called "neo-colonialism" and is most prevalent in colonized countries where there are few white settlers. In these cases "external colonialism' becomes "internal colonialism." Such a structure occurs when white immigrant groups of a newly independent country, who have gained control from a home country, exploit non-European groups such as African slaves or Mexican farm workers. A prime example is the United States.[9] The origin of "internal colonialism" in the United States developed from classical European colonialism and imperialism and developed a life of its own. "Internal colonialism" in North America was in place before the American Revolution. Settlers in North American attempted to control and eliminate the native non-European people by uprooting them and forcing them to settle elsewhere. Native Americans became victims of these tactics and many were killed or driven off their land.[10]

As the United States developed, African slaves were imported as a source of cheap labor. Edna Bonacich, an "internal colonialism" theorist, argues that in U.S. society the (white) "majority-group" workers do not share the interests of the dominant political and economic class, the capitalists. Yet both the dominant employer class and the white part of the working class discriminate against the nonwhite part of the working class.[11] For example, in the South black laborers were used for agricultural work while in the southwestern United States cheap Mexican labor was used. By exploiting non-European people, white agricultural and industrial capitalists made large profits in the United States. The colonial and U.S governments are responsible for their strong support in justifying slavery in the sixteenth through the nineteenth centuries. It was the U.S. Government soldiers who subordinated the native Americans in the U.S. and later the Mexicans in the Southwest. Faegin and Faegin have noted,

> Most internal colonialism theorists are not concerned primarily with white immigrant groups, many of which entered the United States after non-European groups were subordinates; instead, they wish to analyze the establishment of racial stratification and the control process that maintain persisting white dominance and ideological racism.[12]

Other analysts of social and ethnic relations, influenced by Marxist research, emphasize class stratification. In the United States the political and economic systems support subordination of working non-whites and whites in the work place by the capitalist-dominant class. The capitalist class decides who and where to create jobs and is blamed for taking money and jobs from central cities to the suburbs and overseas. Barrera points out that race and ethnicity segment race and ethnicity.[13]

"Internal colonialism" theory studies the role of cultural stereotyping and ideology that particularly limit those who are racially ranked. This theory concludes that societies that experience "internal colonialism" are based on an ideology that implacably favors

the dehumanization of the colonized. Traditional assimilation theorists see stereotyping and prejudice as temporary but "internal colonization." They contend that colonialism serves as an excuse to exploit the subordinate groups for a long period of time and in some instances permanently.[14]

In recent years interest in historical sociology by sociologists such as Immanuel Wallerstein and others has increased substantially. Whereas most historians do not rely on theoretical implications for their historical research, sociologists such as Charles Tilly, Barrington Moore, Theda Skocpol, and Immanuel Wallerstein have taken historical material and used it to compare and construct a model that encompasses the major features of society. Among the numerous historical theorists, Immanuel Wallerstein's model stands out. He has labored jointly with a group of colleagues and made use of large amounts of historical sources to develop a model that includes the entire world as a unit of social transformation.[15] Wallerstein's finding serve as an explanatory model for this thesis.

Wallerstein places the blame on the worldwide system of capitalism and holds it responsibe for regulating certain societies to positions of "zero" productivity of development. The world as Wallerstein perceives it is divided into a network of areas consisting of core, periphery, semi-periphery, and external. The meaning of the word *world* as used by Wallerstein is used to define a world in itself made up of societies that are connected, yet remain autonomous to the outside world. These societies do not necessarily mean nations; instead, the analysis defines the interaction between "core areas" and "peripheral areas." To Wallerstein cyclical dynamics are as follows:

> Core societies have high skill, high wages economies of production; peripheral societies low skill, low wage economies. Prosperity in the core societies depends upon their ability to exploit the low-wage periphery, and

also upon the effective demand for the high-priced goods which their own labor force provides.[16]

There are numerous theories explaining racial and ethnic relations; however, most such theories can be classified as either "order" theories or "power-conflict theories. Within these two major theories there are a number of subcategory theories, including assimilation, internal and external colonialism, and neo-Marxist theories, among others. They serve as explanatory models for historical research. In the United States, "assimilation" is an example of order theories because it focuses on how a migrating group adapts to the ways and institutions of the established group. Gordon identifies seven dimensions of adaptation that occur as the result of assimilation. They are instrumental in determining outcomes resulting from the initial encounters between race and ethnic groups. "Internal colonialism" and "external colonialism" are two other explanatory theoretical perspectives that deal with racial and class stratification. Their central focus is on "power" and "resource" inequalities that are the result of racial and ethnic subordination and are useful in social history research. Countries whose economies and politics are run by an outside colonial power are examples of "external colonialism." Continued reliance on an "outside colonial power" by local colonies eventually leads to dependency, often called "neo-colonialism." Sociologists such as Immanuel Wallerstein have taken historical material and contructed an explanatory model that aids in comparing and evaluating historical findings. There are similarities in Wallerstein's explanatory model that are found in both "internal" and "external" colonialism. Wallerstein believes that individual societies are controlled by "capitalist world systems" and societies do not control their own fate. The "world" as perceived by Wallerstein is divided into networks between areas that he calls core, periphery, semi-periphery, and external areas. There are two world systems: one has a dominant state that pressures other states into contributing economically, while the second type is composed

of states that are bound together politically and economically. As in "internal" and "external" colonialism the dominant state exerts its power over the weaker states. To maintain themselves economically strong and highly skilled, "core states" depend on their ability to exploit the low-skilled and economically depressed societies. This dominance by "core states" eventually leads to dependency and results in power and resource inequality as it does in "internal" and "external" colonialism.

Introduction Notes

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[1] Joe R. Feagin and Clairece Boother Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations: Theoretical Perspectives in Race Relations*, 4th Edition (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1992), 41-42.

[2] Ibid., 41.

[3] Robert E. Park, *Race and Culture* (Glencoe, Ill: Free Press, 1950), 150.

[4] Milton M. Gordon, *Assimilation in American Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1964), 72-73.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Feagin and Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, 43.

[7] Allen Williams and Suzanne T. Ortega, "Dimensions of Assimilation," *Social Science Quarterly* 71 (1990), 697-709.

[8] Feagin and Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, 48.

[9] Ibid.

[10] Ibid., 49.

[11] Edna Bonacich, "Theoretical Perspectives in Race Relations," in *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, 4th ed., J. Feagin & C. Feagin, eds., 52-53.

[12] Feagin and Feagin, *Racial and Ethnic Relations*, 49.

[13] Ibid.

[14] Ibid., 50.

[15] Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Vicissitude of Twentieth-Century Sophistication World Systems," 288.

[16] Ibid., 290.

CHAPTER I

ORIGINS OF MEXICAN AMERICAN CONVERTS IN SOUTH TEXAS (1821 – 1900)

Background of the Study

Events leading to the conversion and dependency of Mexican American Baptists on Anglo Baptist institutions most likely originated with the first Mexican converts in early 1820, when they were still citizens of Mexico, and the Southwest still belonged to Mexico. The focus of this study is the exploration of the Mexican American Baptist relationship with Anglo Baptist Institutions from 1821 to 1980 in Texas, specifically in Bee County, Texas. In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain and *Nuevo Santander* (Texas) became a province of Mexico. Anglo Texans, or Texians, were already living in what later became Texas; however, a much larger migration of Anglo settlers into Texas occurred after the independence of Mexico from Spain.

From 1821 to 1836 some thirty thousand settlers under the leadership of Stephen F. Austin entered Texas. The majority of the new settlers were Protestants, in contrast to the Roman Catholicism of native Texans. Under the Mexican Constitution, Catholicism was the exclusive religion of Mexico, and practice of any other religion was legally forbidden. Disobedience of said law usually led to banishment or punishment. The large number of Protestant settlers in Texas were Anglo Baptists, with a mission to evangelize the "lost," including Mexicans living in Texas at this time. Evangelizing of Mexicans by Anglo-Baptist missionaries was difficult, since Mexicans did not speak English nor did

Anglo Baptists speak Spanish. Texas Mexicans (Tejanos) were also unfamiliar with Baptist theology. Nonetheless, a number of Mexicans embraced the Baptist faith. Since the majority came from Catholic backgrounds, they were unfamiliar with the new doctrine, making them dependent on English speaking preachers and missionaries for their religious training.

In early 1800, when Mexico was still under Spanish rule, United States citizens and foreigners started their migration into *Nuevo Santander*. Such countries as Britain, France, and the United States threatened Spanish sovereignty on the northern frontier. According to historians Julian Samora and Patricia Vandel Simon, the Anglo Americans migrated from Europe to America with the intent of buying property. The first Anglo settlers to the United States had left Britain primarily to escape British rule and taxation. In Europe only a few "poor" people owned property. As more Europeans immigrated to the United States, they no longer settled on the Atlantic seaboard, but migrated westward in search of a better life, bringing along with them their religious institutions.[1]

The first immigrants to enter Southwest Texas arrived with private armies to fight Indians and conduct filibustering expeditions. But their primary interest was to own property and stay in the immediate area. The Spanish colonial government welcomed the immigrants. Spain believed any settlement discouraged French and English intrusions and deterred Indian attacks. As the immigrant population increased and surpassed the local population, Spanish enthusiasm for the newcomers decreased, and concern grew that immigrants would take over. To limit further immigration, Spanish officials issued fewer and fewer land grants. However, Spanish attempts to curb United States immigration into Texas proved futile; outsiders continued to pour in to Texas. In 1820, Moses Austin, a Missourian, obtained a charter to settle three hundred families in *Nuevo Santander*. In 1821, Mexico won its independence from Spain and delayed grant approval of Austin's colony. Mexico chose instead to issue colonization grants only to

those who professed the Catholic faith and agreed to become Mexican citizens. Moses Austin died before he could fulfill the terms of the charter. In 1823, the Mexican government granted Stephen F. Austin, a Roman Catholic and son of recently deceased Moses Austin, approval to settle a colony. According to Rodolfo O. de la Garza, et al., the Mexican government's original intent was to bring into Texas Mexican loyalist frontiersmen who would help hold up its territory against Indians and United States outsiders. De la Garza writes, "Mexican officials hoped that naturalized American Mexicans would serve as a buffer between Mexico and the United States, thereby improving relations between the two countries and decreasing the possibility of a military invasion."[2] By the time Stephen F. Austin received approval to bring settlers to Texas, it was immaterial, for Austin, who did not wait for approval, had already taken settlers into Texas and founded the San Felipé de Austin community. Between 1820 and 1836, under the leadership of Stephen F. Austin, some thirty thousand Anglo American settlers entered Texas. In 1835, many of these same settlers led a revolt (Texas Revolution) against Mexico.

As they refused to abide by the requirements of Mexican citizenship, the influx of Anglo settlers created problems. Mexican Law included permission for settlers to settle in Texas if they become Mexican citizens, Roman Catholics, and abide by Mexico's emancipation of slavery. The stipulated requirements most often disregarded were those that dealt with becoming Roman Catholic and freeing of slaves. Settlers that emigrated from the Southern states often brought black slaves with them. This prompted the Mexican government to forbid further importation of slaves. Since they greatly outnumbered Mexicans, Anglo immigrants seldom abided by stipulations of Mexican citizenship requirements.

Problems especially arose in one area of religion. Writing in the 1920s, William Stuart Red, in *The Texas Colonist and Religion 1821-1836,* argues that the religious

problems that arose between Tejanos and Texas colonists were the result of a clash between two different religious beliefs:

> Both Protestantism and Roman Catholicism claim Divine Authority for the methods that they use in seeking to secure the temporal and eternal well being of their followers, but these views of civil and religious liberty clashed in Texas from 1821 to 1863.[3]

The Mexican Constitution of 1824 named the Roman Catholic Church the established Church of Mexico. In direct contrast, the majority of the Texas colonists were Protestants. Red claimed that the Mexican Declaration of Independence, as written, prompted Anglo Texans to proclaim the Mexican army and priesthood as "eternal enemies" of civil liberty.[4] Nevertheless, it made very little difference what the Texas colonists wanted, National and State Colonization laws, until 1834, were in accord with a Constitution that recognized the Catholic Church as the established Church of Mexico.

Anglo Americans believed that no one government or even the Pope had the right to deny citizenship to anyone because of religious beliefs. Many of the Texas settlers that migrated from Louisiana, where they had lived since the Spaniards were in power, had enjoyed religious tolerance. After the death of his father, Stephen Austin assumed his father's grant to settle three hundred families in Texas. When news spread to different parts of the United States regarding the settling of three hundred families in Texas, inquiries about the terms of settlement began to arrive at Austin's headquarters. The main concern of those inquiring was the status of religious freedom of worship in Texas. Although Protestant Churches and gatherings were not permitted in Texas during the early 1800s, they nevertheless took place.

In 1829, Thomas J. Pilgrim, a Baptist, settled in San Felipe. He had arrived from New York State to assist Austin as a translator. He took notice of the need for religious services and organized a Sunday school for local residents. When Mexican officials were

informed of his activities, they became very disturbed and prompted Austin to advise Pilgrim to discontinue the meetings. In another settlement south of San Felipe, the Reverend J. W. D. Creath opened a Sunday school at Matagorda and another at Old Caney under the direction of the Baptist Church. In 1830, Alexander Thompson held the first Methodist Sunday School meeting at the house of Mrs. Lucy Kerr, Union Hill, Washington County. Presbyterian missionaries Summer Bacon and Benjamin Chase arrived in Texas in 1833. They spent their time distributing Bibles, preaching and teaching in the Austin and Dewitt colonies.

Red argues that Protestants had preached the gospel even before Austin's Colony was founded:

> As early as 1816 William Stevenson commenced to preach in this settlement at the house of a Mr. Wright, and organized a Church in 1817. In 1818, a camp meeting was held. John Rabb says: "Father Stephenson (Henry Stephenson) had preached on the west side of the Red River as early as 1818, in the company with Rev. William Stevenson, who had charge of the Arkansas Million."[5]

Red mentions Joseph L. Bays as a member of thirty families that accompanied Moses from Missouri to Texas. While waiting at the border between Louisiana and Texas, Bay remembers several preachers taking turns preaching to the group of settlers waiting. Among the preachers were a Methodist, a Universalist, and a number of Baptist preachers.[6] A letter written by Austin to the Reverend William Stevenson outlines Austin's position on religious matters. Austin insisted that according to Mexican law, Catholicism was the exclusive religion of Mexico and any preacher, regardless of faith, who was a non-Catholic and chose to go through the country preaching a different doctrine could face imprisonment from the Mexican Government. Austin's desire was to

allow Protestants to preach, but keep in mind that he was obligated to enforce the Mexican Constitution forbidding religious propaganda other than the state religion.

In 1825, the United States initiated secret overtures for Texas to join the Union. Mexico soon learned of the overtures and became concerned of the danger ahead. The true intent of the United States became obvious when in 1827 the United States Secretary of State, Henry Clay, offered Mexico one million dollars if it would make the Río Grande the border between the two countries. The Mexican government viewed the offer as a threat and refused. Instead, in 1830, Mexico closed the frontier to Anglo-American migration, levied heavier taxes, and enforced stricter laws on Texas citizens. The same year, Commanding General Manuel de Mier y Terán, led elements of the Mexican Army into Texas. He had orders to rid Texas of Stephen F. Austin's colony. The efforts to expel Austin failed; however, Mier y Terán built some military posts in Texas and eventually led his men back across the Río Grande. Before leaving, he made a series of military recommendations.[7]

In 1830, the Mexican government took steps to force Anglo settlers to abide by the Mexican Constitution, but it was too late. The more numerous Anglo settlers ignored the warnings, and conflicts between the two groups grew. The Texans had distaste for the Mexican Constitution and its policy for self-government on the northern frontier. At first, both Texas Mexicans and Anglo Texans rebelled against the Mexican government, but the Texians, because of their sheer superiority in numbers and their refusal to follow Mexican law, came to control the rebellion. According to Professor David Montejano,

> [There are] ample historical documents that described the Anglo-Saxon spirit that fueled the struggle for Texas independence in 1835-36 and the war with Mexico a decade later. Texas independence and subsequent annexation of the northern Mexican territory were essentially the reflection of a 'manifest destiny'. The Anglo-Saxon nation was bound to

> glory; the inferior, decadent Indian race and half-breed Mexicans were to succumb before the inexorable march of the superior Anglo-Saxon people. In more defined terms, this destiny called for an expansion of the nation westward to the Pacific Ocean and southward to Isthmus of Panama; and called for the ports that would assure the nation's future as a mercantile empire.[3]

Matt and Rivera add that Texans reacted angrily to Mexican intrusion and leaders rebelled openly against centralism:

> On the entire periphery of Mexico—in Yucatán, Sonora, Nuevo México, California, and Texas—opposition to centralism led to military action as local leaders refused to accept control of Mexico City. Yucatán declared independence and submitted to central authority, only after a long struggle in 1843. In Texas, reaction to the government was more violent and more successful largely because of the overwhelming number of recent Anglo immigrants.[9]

Because of years of strained relationships with the Mexican government, Texans foresaw trouble ahead and stored large arsenals of weapons and ammunition. They were prepared to fight. In June of 1832, they attacked the Mexican fort on Galveston Bay and defeated the Mexicans stationed there. Anglo and Mexican Texans were not fighting for independence, but were seeking to become a state, with the same status as Coahuila, within the Federation of Mexican States. Secondly, they wanted Mexico to abolish laws prohibiting further American immigration. In September of 1832, a meeting was held among the Texans to discuss Texas' request for separate statehood. Among those present were Tejanos, Anglo Texians, Americans, and Europeans. In April of 1833 the first Texas statehood convention was held. Delegates wrote a petition appealing to Mexico for statehood, and they also framed a constitution. Stephen F. Austin traveled to Mexico

to appeal to the Mexican government for Texas statehood. Instead, he was jailed for eighteen months. When released, he returned to Texas and spoke in favor of independence.

In 1822, the Mexican government refused to grant separate statehood and closed new immigration into Texas. These are among the primary reasons cited for Texans' seeking independence from Mexico. On March 2, 1836, fifty-nine Texas delegates met at Washington-on-the-Brazos and declared independence from Mexico. David Burnett was elected as provincial president and Lorenzo de Zavala as vice-president. Sam Houston was reappointed as commander of the armed forces. Congruently, the same year General Martín Perfecto de Cós, Commanding General of the Eastern Interior Provinces was headquartered at the Alamo mission in San Antonio. After an unsuccessful military encounter with Texan rebels, and obtaining assurances that they would respect the Constitution of 1824, General Cós returned to Mexico.

Santa Anna was directed by the Mexican Congress to take troops into Texas and subdue the rebels. Texans confronted Santa Anna's troops in a battle at San Antonio. Upon learning that Santa Anna was preparing to invade Texas, the Texans reacted by going on the offense and made preparations to invade Mexico at Matamoros. Even though they had been forewarned that General Santa Anna was preparing to invade Texas, they withdrew all but a few soldiers from the Alamo. The withdrawal left the mission vulnerable to attack or siege.

On March 6, 1836, Mexican forces numbering between 2,500 and 5,000 attacked the 182 soldiers left to guard the Alamo. After a ten-day siege of the Alamo by Santa Anna and his troops, they attacked the 182 Anglo and Mexican Texans at the fortress. Within an hour, all the defenders of the Alamo were killed. Captain Juan Seguin, leader of the Tejano troops, escaped death. He had been sent to seek help.[10] Defeat of the Texans at the hands of Santa Anna planted the seed of hatred towards Mexico, including

many Texans of Mexican descent. Although Tejanos fought alongside the Anglo Texans for independence from Mexico, most were treated poorly after Texas won its independence.

After the victory, Santa Anna made a strategic mistake by advancing from San Antonio to San Jacinto where he and his troops stopped to rest. Texas troops returning from Matamoros learned of the Alamo defeat and followed Santa Anna and his troops, catching them by surprise and unprepared at San Jacinto. The battle that ensued was short lived, leaving six hundred of Santa Anna's men dead with only nine Texans killed. Santa Anna was taken prisoner, and for all practical purposes the war was over. The Texas victory cost Santa Anna his presidency; however, he later returned to office more powerful than ever. The victory earned the Texans the independence they sought, although Mexico refused to recognize Texas as a republic.[11]

Captain Juan Seguin, who had escaped the Alamo, led a group of Tejanos who were deciding forces in the defeat of Santa Anna's troops at San Jacinto. Taken prisoner but later released, Santa Anna agreed to sign the Treaty of Velasco, granting Texas its independence. The Mexican government did not sanction the treaty signed by Santa Anna and continued efforts to force Texans to resubmit to Mexican authority. By 1840, the United States, France, and Great Britain had recognized Texas as an independent Republic. The defeat at San Jacinto ended Mexico's presence in Texas. By winning its independence, Texas became a Republic instead of a separate state within the Mexican Federation of States.

After the revolution, Mexicans living in Texas were more than likely referred to as *Tejanos*. Mexicans and Anglo Texians, who fought alongside each other for independence, welcomed the separation from Coahuila. Tejanos were among fifty-five delegates who attended the first convention and drafted the first Constitution of Texas.

Erasmo Seguin, a staunch Anglo supporter, was among those bearing the Constitution to Mexico.

A number of Tejanos living in Bexar County during the war participated in battles in and around Bexar. Their participation is documented on land grants records. Sixty-seven men with Spanish surnames were rewarded with bounty and grants for their participation in the Siege of Bexar. One hundred and sixty Tejanos fought alongside the Anglo Texans in the siege and capture of Bexar. Other Tejanos fought at the battle of Cos and Goliad. Although there were many Texas Mexicans who fought on the side of Texas, the majority did not. According to Arnoldo De León, those who did not take part were looked upon by the Anglo community as apathetic, indifferent, and unconcerned: "The question of Tejano patriotism came up often. During the Texas revolution of 1836, Anglos suspected Mexicans of siding with Santa Anna, even as some rendered important service to the insurrectionary cause."[12] After independence, the Anglo Texans used the above indifferences as one of several excuses to discriminate against Tejanos.

There are several schools of thought as to why Texas broke away from Mexico. The editors of The Mexican Experience: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, disagree with some observers who felt that the Texas revolt was caused by the desire to be independent of Mexico. Rodolfo O. de la Garza, et al., believed the causes were the following:

> It was, rather, between those who favored strong central government and those who favored provincial autonomy. It was true that mainly Anglos opposed those favoring autonomy, but it was also true that a large proposition of the native Mexican opposed the central government.[13]

Anglo settlers viewed the Mexican government as lacking order and discipline. He states, "The newcomers saw the Tejanos as mongrels, uncivilized protestants and un-Christian, a slave of the wilderness that must be subdued."[14] Anglo settlers discriminated against the Mexicans because Anglos viewed them as descendents of Spaniards, Indians,

or Africans, and were hostile towards them. This hostility had originated during the sixteenth century when Henry VIII of England broke away from the Catholic Church. The English thought of the Catholics and Spaniards as an alliance made possible by the devil himself. The English also looked upon the Spaniards as cruel brutes. Clearly, the image that the English drew of the Spaniards came from the way they treated the Indians when they conquered Mexico and other Latin American countries.[15] Since Mexicans were descendents of Spaniards, Indians, and Africans, Anglo-American settlers assumed that Mexicans were the same as Spaniards and treated them accordingly.

Before independence from Mexico, Texans pressed the United States for annexation because they needed protection. After they won their independence, they decided they could make it on their own and decided on a wait-and-see attitude. At the time the United States was dealing with the issue of slavery. The free states and those wanting slavery were fairly equally divided; however, as time passed, it seemed that the pro-slave movement gathered support. Since Texas was a slave state and prospects for annexation to the United States were not favorable, Texans decided to seek economic and political stability through other methods. The opportunity to expand politically and economically presented itself in 1841 when they encouraged New Mexico to free itself from Mexico and join the Texas republic. Texas' intent in helping New Mexico become independent was really an effort to annex the New Mexico area for its valuable Santa Fé trade.[16]

During Texas' independent period (1836-1845), the relationship between the Tejanos and Anglos regressed. Even though ethnic distinction was present from the time Anglo Americans first encountered the natives, up to this time the distinction did not involve superior or inferior social status. The role of a subordinated ethnic minority had not yet been assigned to the smaller Tejano population.[17] During the period leading to the United States-Mexican War, Anglos in Texas and the United States neglected to

distinguish between Tejanos and Mexican nationals. Failure to distinguish between the two caused friction in the relationship between Texas Anglos and Tejanos. Mexico's continued efforts to re-conquer Texas kept the U.S., Texas, and Mexico in constant conflict. In addition, U.S. overtures to Texas to join the Union added fuel to the conflict.

In March of 1845, the U.S. Senate approved the annexation of Texas. Although it came as no surprise, the Mexican government viewed this as an act of war and initiated immediate preparations to defend the northern frontiers. In August of 1845, John Slidell was sent to Mexico by President Polk to purchase Alta California and New Mexico from Mexico, having been authorized to offer as much as $25 million for the purchase of the two provinces. While in Mexico, John Slidell had instructions to discuss the disputed Texas-Mexico boundary. But the Mexican government refused even to discuss the matter. The attempt to negotiate the sale of Texas and to purchase Alta California and New Mexico created an anti-American attitude in Mexico. When the attempt to acquire the territory failed, President Polk sent General Zachary Taylor to the vicinity of the Nueces River in Texas with the expectation of provoking a military confrontation. By his actions, President Polk fueled in the media the American conviction that God had manifested Americans to rule over all of North America. "The provocative move of President Polk brought the expected results—a clash between the American and Mexican troops."[18] The war was short and ended with an American victory. On August 24, 1847, an armistice was announced and on February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between the two countries.

From the date the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed on February 2, 1848, until ratified, both Mexican and U. S. statesmen deliberated over articles of the treaty. On the side of the United States, after long consultation and discussion with his cabinet, President James K. Polk pushed for ratification of the treaty by the Congress. Polk had the support of Congress for the war; however, he felt that support might not continue. If

support for the war were withdrawn, the U. S. would have to settle for a less favorable treaty. He recommended to Congress that the treaty be ratified without Article X, which dealt with land grants. After a heated debate between various factions, the U. S. Senate voted on March 10, 1848, to ratify the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Secretary of State James Buchanan wrote the Mexican Minister of Foreign Relations a letter explaining the modified treaty in hopes that the Mexicans would ratify the treaty. After much discussion and deliberation from the opposition, Mexico ratified the treaty on May 19, 1848.[19]

In the end, lands ceded to the U. S. as the result of the treaty were all of present-day Texas, California, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, and Nevada. Parts of Colorado and Wyoming were also involved. The Mexicans were to keep everything south of the Rio Grande."[20] According to historian Oscar J. Martínez, the following articles are especially significant:

> Article V, which defines the new border between the two nations; Articles VIII and IX, which detail the citizenship, property, and religious rights accorded the Mexicans who were incorporated into the United States, and Article XI, which obligates the United States to stop Indian incursions into Mexico.[21]

Under Article V, the Rio Grande River, beginning at the Gulf of Mexico, became the new boundary between the two countries. Under Articles VIII and IX, Mexicans living in territories that previously belonged to Mexico and was now U. S. territory could continue to live where they presently resided or return to Mexico and still retain ownership of the property. They also could sell their land and keep the proceeds without paying taxes or contributions on the sale. If they stayed in the U. S., they could retain their Mexican citizenship up to a year, at which time they had to decide either to return to Mexico or become U. S. citizens. If they decided to stay, they were accorded all the rights of U. S.

citizenship, such as the free enjoyment of their liberty and property. They could also practice their religion without restrictions. Under Article XI, any invasions into Mexican territory by aggressive Indian tribes to harm or hurt Mexican citizens would be dealt with harshly by the United States government. According to Samora and Simon, Tejanos retained their language and the government agreed to publish all government documents in both English and Spanish. Their right to retain their culture, such as family customs, was guaranteed by the U. S. government.[22]

In the immediate period following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, groups of Anglo Americans wanted to rid Texas and other Southwestern states of Mexicans because this country was for Americans. Abbé Emmuel Domenech, a minister practicing in Brownsville at that time (1849-1855), described the Anglo Americans living on the frontier lands of Texas as demeaning and of low moral character. They came to Texas after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo to take advantage of the Mexicans by stealing their property and whatever else they could.[23] Oscar J. Martínez agrees that discrimination was one of the major problems facing the Mexican Americans throughout the last part of the nineteenth century. He credits the large influx of Anglo American migrants that came from southern United States and settled in the Southwest after the treaty for creating tensions that resulted in violent encounters. Shortly after the treaty, Mexican Americans, who were in the minority, were forced to endure ethnic slurs, physical violence and multiple other abuses.[24] David Montejano acknowledges that the process of subjugation, dispossessions, and violence against Texas Mexicans began after Texas gained its independence from Mexico in 1836.[25] Mexicans living in San Antonio and other communities left or were driven out and fled to Mexico. Fraud and force were also major reasons for their leaving. Montejano contends that the wealth of Texas Mexicans was in land. During the Texas Revolution period (1837-1842), 356 Texas Mexicans sold 1,388,574 acres to thirteen of the most prominent American buyers. Some elite Mexican

land buyers who chose to remain in Texas purchased 278,769 acres from Mexican landowners who wanted to leave; however, it hardly compared with the land the Anglo buyers purchased. By the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848 Tejanos had been under Anglo dominance for over a decade.[26] Rodolfo O de la Garza writes,

> By 1846 the Tejanos had been placed in a subordinate position by the Anglos of Texas. One may argue, therefore, that when Texas was brought into the United States, thus transforming all Texans into United States citizens, the first segment of the Mexican American ethnic group was created [Creation Generation]. With the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, all of the remaining Mexican nationals in the conquered borderlands came under the political control of the United States and, consequently, were then subject to the laws and government of the United States. In a sense, this "transfer" of people completed the process that had been started in Texas. At this point, a new ethnic group existed within the vast expanse of the American Southwest. But the main elements of this newly formed group were still isolated from one another, and the processes leading to the actual dominance of the Anglos varied in the different territories.[27]

Violence directed against Tejanos during Texas' struggle for independence continued after the war. In 1850, Mexican Americans who aided slaves in escaping to Mexico were exiled. The same year, a war ensued between Tejano cart men and Anglo freighters who competed to take freight from settlers living in the interior of the state to gulf ports. Juan N. Cortinas, a Matamoros resident, rebelled against Anglo misuse of the justice system to steal property from Tejanos. Cortina lived on a small ranch near his mother's ranch (*Rancho del Carmen*) approximately nine miles upriver from Brownsville, Texas. Cortina had been a champion for Tejanos' rights for many years.

On July 13, 1859, Cortina was in Brownsville when he witnessed a Brownsville city Marshall mistreating a Tejano in the process of arresting him. The Tejano had at one time been employed by Cortina's mother. Cortina confronted the Marshall who insulted him. An argument erupted and Cortina shot the Marshall in the arm. Cortina fled to his mother's ranch, while rangers and federal troops were called in to help capture him. He eluded his captors and on September 28, 1859, Cortina, with seventy-five men, entered Brownsville and attempted to set up command at Fort Brown and raise the flag there. Some of his men stormed the Cameron jail, killed the jailer, and freed the prisoners. For two decades after the Marshall incident, Cortina continued to raise havoc around Brownsville and other border towns. Not only did he fight companies of Rangers sent from Austin, Texas, to capture him, but at one time even fought a company made up of twenty Americans and forty Tejanos.[28]

Throughout the late Nineteenth Century, Mexican Americans continued to struggle against injustices by the dominant Anglo Texans. Although there was enmity between the Mexican Americans and the Anglo Texians, a large number of Mexican Americans joined with the Confederate States against the Union. Meier and Rivera report that "a majority of the 3,000 Tejanos who fought in the Civil War fought for the South."[29]

Analysis

Mexican American Baptist dependency on Anglo Baptist institutions may well have originated in early 1800 when Anglo Saxon settlers first came to Texas as a part of Spain, then Mexico. Inspired by the Jeffersonian theory of "Manifest Destiny" that claimed the Anglo Saxon race as chosen by God to rule, Anglos came to conquer, civilize, and Americanize this part of the western continent. Indeed, "Americans" had developed a detailed set of beliefs about Mexicans before ever arriving in Texas. These

beliefs entailed converting the "supposedly inferior" Mexican Catholics to a "superior" Anglo Saxon type of religion. Anglo settlers demeaned and dismissed Mexican spiritualism, believing that Mexicans had no religion and were in need of religious support. In 1821, the largest influx of Anglo settlers entered Texas, accompanied by Protestant missionaries. Among the settlers were Baptist missionaries, who made every attempt to evangelize the Spanish-speaking population. Their belief in Manifest Destiny, derived from the belief in the superiority of U.S. institutions, was to transform the religious institutions of Texas.

During this period in Texas history, Texas was a province of Mexico. The intent of the Mexican government was to bring into Texas frontiersmen loyal to Mexico who would help defend its territory against Indians and groups from the United States. The Anglo settlers were welcomed as an answer to Mexican frontier problems. But the chauvinistic and material intent of Anglo settlers differed from that of the Mexicans. The hunger for land and self-rule on the part of the Anglos led them to agree to submit to the Mexican government's wishes while they waited for the opportunity to fulfill their dehumanizing ideology of "Manifest Destiny." Few seemed to realize that a process of dependency would result in armed conflict. With support from the United States, Texas declared its independence from Mexico on March 2, 1836, and the "invited guest" turned upon its host. After several hard-fought battles in which a large number of Texas Mexicans and Anglo Texians fought together, Texas gained its independence from Mexico. By 1840, the United States, France, and Great Britain recognized Texas as an independent Republic. Although there was a large number of Texas Mexicans who did not take part in the war, a large number did. Those who did not take part were looked upon unfavorably by the Anglo community. Refusal to take part in the war was further excuse to discriminate against Texas Mexicans, including those who fought in the war. During this period Tejanos were ostracized, robbed of their lands, and ridiculed,

particularly in the religion they practiced. The racism and prejudice harbored by Anglo Americans toward all "Mexicans" was instrumental in dispossessing large numbers of Mexican Americans from their lands and in nullifying guarantees of "all the rights of citizens." In regions like South Texas, they became a separate community of apartheid, a community with "separate but equal" Baptist Churches.

Chapter I: Endnotes

[1] Juilian Samora and Patricia Vandel Simon, *A History of the Mexican American People* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1977), 69.

[2] Rodolfo O. de la Garza, et al., eds., *The Mexican American Experience: An Interdisciplinary Anthology* (Austin: Austin University of Texas Press, 1885), 7.

[3] William Stuart Red, *The Texas Colonist and Religion, 1821-1836* (Austin: E. L. Shettles, 1924), 1, 92.

[4] Ibid., 92.

[5] Ibid., 70-74.

[6] Ibid., 74-76.

[7] Samora and Simon, *A History of the Mexican American People*, 84.

[8] David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans: In the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1994, 24.

[9] Matt S. Meier and Feliciano Rivera, *Mexican Americans/American Mexicans in Texas From Conquistadores to Chicanos* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1972), 54.

[10] Samora and Simon, A History of the Mexican American People, 84.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Arnoldo De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes Toward Mexicans in Texas, 1824-1900* (Austin: Austin University of Texas Press, 1983), 49.

[13] Rodolfo O. de la Garza et al., eds., The Mexican Experience: An Interdisciplinary Anthology (Texas University of Texas Press, 1987), 7.

[14] De León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 4.

[15] Ibid., 4-5.

[16] Meier and Rivera, Mexican Americans/American Mexicans, 59-62.

[17] de la Garza et al., eds., The Mexican Experience: An Interdisciplinary Anthology, 7.

[18] Meier and Rivera, Mexican Americans/American Mexicans, 61-62.

[19] Richard Griswold del Castillo, The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo: A Legacy of Conflict (Norman: University of New Mexico Press, 1988), p.

[20] Carlos Jiménez, The American Heritage: With Writing Exercises (TQ5 Publication, 1994).

[21] Oscar J. Martinez, U.S.-Mexico Borderlands: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives (Scholarly Resources, Inc., 1996), 20, 37.

[22] Samora and Simon, A History of the Mexican American People, 94.

[23] Montejano, Anglo and Mexicans, 31-32.

[24] Martinez, U.S.-Mexico Borderlands, 48.

[25] Montejano, *Anglo and Mexicans*, 26.

[26] Ibid., 28.

[27] Rodolfo O. de la Garza et al., eds., *The Mexican American Experience*, 9.

[28] Jerry Thompson, *A Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1977), 82, 87-88.

CHAPTER II

EVANGELIZATION OF TEXAS MEXICANS BY ANGLO BAPTISTS BEGINNING IN 1836

> Under the Mexican Constitution Roman Catholicism was the exclusive religion of the land. Heretics (i.e., Protestants) were subject to banishment and other punishments. . . . Hampered by these religious restrictions, Protestant ministers who entered Texas could not stay long or had to work secretly under the guise of some other occupation.[1]

Before 1800, Texas Mexicans were primarily Catholic, their priesthood coming from the immediate area. The Catholic Church served as an instrument of the Spanish government in the colonization of Texas. Catholic missionaries were instrumental in building several missions in Texas that legitimized the presence of the Spanish Crown in Texas. By 1800 the influence the Catholic Church had exerted in Texas began to decline. Most Anglo settlers that migrated into Texas in early 1800 were Protestants who did not have the same concept of the Catholic Church as the predominant Mexican population did. After The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo it was difficult for Mexican Americans to practice their Catholic faith. Some in the Anglo community ridiculed them for their method of worship, and in one case even ran the Catholic priest out of town,[2] reducing the number of Catholic churches. Religious scholars believe that early in the 1830s as the Catholic population in America increased greatly through immigration increasingly bitter

attacks were made against the Catholic Church. The attackers accused the Catholic Church of being "alien" and a potential threat to the sacred foundations of the American Constitution.[3] Not only did the Catholic Church come under attack during this period, but other denominations initiated efforts to attract Texas Mexicans to their faith. Among the different denominations were Texas Baptists, who responded to their Biblical challenge of making disciples of those whom they considered "unbelievers."

Before the independence of Texas from Mexico in 1836, all gatherings other than Catholic were unconstitutional and prohibited. After 1836, Baptist missionary work among Texas Mexicans was initiated locally by settlers. But it was the Northern Baptist Convention that first undertook the task of evangelizing Texas Mexicans in 1841. The new work was accompanied by multiple problems, such as providing Spanish-speaking ministers and laymen to minister to the Mexican population. Finding a suitable place of worship for new converts was difficult because it entailed hiring ministers and paying operating expenses. Instead an effort was made to integrate Mexican converts into Anglo congregations, but as Mexican converts grew within Anglo congregations, integration proceeded with difficulty.

Mexican American Baptists originated from two watershed events. The first group was comprised of those Mexicans living in Mexican territory before The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Although small in numbers,

> they never lost their Mexican identity and never were able to forget the sad reality that in a period of some fifty years, roughly from 1810-1853, the United States had acquired by means not always legal...more than half the territory of Mexico.[4]

The second more significant migration voluntarily migrated to Texas from Mexico before and after the revolution of 1910. They came in search of new economic opportunities of the capitalist industrial Southwest. The United States needed labor and they needed jobs.

During the revolution alone, one tenth of the population of Mexico came to the United States.

By the second and third generation these early Mexican immigrants were relegated to dual wage systems, barrio or colonial life, unsafe working conditions, poor health care, and little spiritual guidance in the mines, factories, and fields of the Southwest. But churches, especially Baptist churches, opened centers where Mexican immigrants could go to learn the English language and arts and crafts. Their purpose was to help them adjust to their socioeconomic environment and in the process win them to the Baptist faith.[5]

Evangelical Protestants had always been interested in spreading the gospel into Mexico and initiated missionary projects there long before they did in the United States. The beginning of Protestantism in Mexico can be traced to the evangelistic endeavors of Doctor Bingham, Secretary of the American Bible Society. In 1826, he visited Mexico and upon his return to the United States prepared the way to have several hundred Bibles shipped into Mexico City. Several years later (1833), the Bible was translated into Spanish. Opposition from the Catholic Church, plus rigid restrictions and high prices, soon defeated the sale and further printing of the new Bibles. According to religious scholars, U.S. Army chaplains during the War between the United States and Mexico in 1847 were the true origin of Protestant evangelical work in Mexico. Whenever the opportunity presented itself, U.S. chaplains would witness, teach, distribute Bibles, or do whatever necessary to spread the gospel to the Mexican population.[6]

The first time evangelicals were permitted to preach the gospel openly in Mexico was in 1861, when James Hickey, a Baptist minister, preached the first sermon in Northern Mexico. Most evangelical work done in Mexico prior to this date was to individuals or small groups, and usually in a covert manner. The following year, Thomas M. Westrup preached in Monterrey and Northern Mexico where he won several converts.

A few years later these converts became the founders of the first organized Mexican Baptist church in Mexico. Westrup became pastor of the newly organized Mexican Baptist church. In 1870, Westrup was appointed by the American Baptist Home Mission Society as missionary to Monterrey.

Evangelical work done in Mexico was invaluable in assisting the Anglo Baptists' evangelistic efforts among the Mexicans in Texas and elsewhere.[7] Regarding their emphasis on race relations,

> almost from the beginning of their organized existence in the late 1840s, Anglo Baptists in Texas have expressed an interest in the topic of race and a concern for members of racial and ethnic minorities. For more than a century, various spokesmen, Baptists and others in the state and in the nation have emphasized the importance of the subject of race in American life.[8]

In 1837, J. R. Jenkins, chairman of the Board of Foreign Missions Committee in the United States, made a plea to Baptist missionaries in Washington to answer the call to come to Texas and help spread the gospel among Texas Mexicans.[9] Other Protestant denominations in Texas, such as the Methodists and Presbyterians, who answered the call even before the Baptists, challenged the Baptist missionaries. Regardless of the denomination, most Protestants shared ideas and methods for evangelizing with one another. Most evangelicals shared the common practice of holding revival meetings and Bible studies. An evangelist named Summer Bacon led Presbyterians in Texas. In 1829, Bacon traveled from settlement to settlement throughout Texas and ministered to the newly arrived American colonists. He came into daily contact with Texas Mexicans and found that they had a great desire to hear the gospel and were especially eager to own Bibles. His greatest aspiration was to supply each Texas Mexican with a Bible, but that became impossible. His funds were limited and not all Presbyterians shared his concern

for distributing Bibles to Mexicans. After his death in 1844, no one within the Presbyterian denomination volunteered to carry on his work in Texas.[10]

Since before 1836, religious gatherings were prohibited. It was dangerous for missionaries to preach the gospel in Texas. After the independence of Texas, the danger to Baptists and other denominations for preaching the gospel diminished; however, the work still remained difficult because trained Baptist missionaries were few in number.[11] There was a great need for missionaries with experience and knowledge of the Spanish language, who could work among Mexican converts. Since the work among Texas Mexicans was in its early stages, the new converts were unable to contribute to the new missionary work. Whereas in Catholic churches the relationship between priest and members is paternal, it was not so in the new missions. Texas Mexican converts were encouraged and expected by Anglo missionaries to become active participants in the new missionary work. However, it was thought that they did not fully understand their responsibilities and what was expected of them. If a neophyte's failure to meet expectations was disappointing to him, it did not compare with the effort he needed to understand the new Protestant doctrine. Most of the new converts understood the basic doctrine of salvation as practiced by Baptist Protestants and were "exceedingly joyful." Because of their limited knowledge of the new doctrine, Mexican converts became totally dependent on Anglo missionaries for their religious training. It was believed that Texas Mexican converts needed to be indoctrinated and trained by Anglo missionaries to function in their new way of religious life.[12] Early relationship between Texas Mexican converts and Anglo missionaries was one of paternalism and forced silence. It was a student-teacher relationship where the Anglo missionary was the teacher and the new convert was the student and a silent partner.[13] This left the Christian training of Texas Mexicans converts entirely dependent on Anglo Baptist tutelage that further supports the dependency theory.

Historically Mexican Baptist churches came under the auspices of two main denominational Boards: the Southern Baptist Convention and the Northern Baptist Convention. There were other Baptists whose beliefs are similar but who choose to serve independent of any hierarchy and answer only to a local church body. Still other Baptist groups differed from all others in their method of worship.

In 1841, Northern Baptists started evangelizing Mexicans in Texas. Under the ministry of R. H. Talliaferro and directed by Anglo churches, the first Mexican American Baptist churches in Texas were organized in Austin, Bastrop, and Lockhart. The successful efforts of Northern Baptists in Texas soon spread to New Mexico, and a large Mexican American Baptist church was organized in Albuquerque. The Civil War soon brought a halt to the Baptist work. From 1868-1880 very little evangelization took place in Texas or elsewhere. A report concerning Mexican American missionary work in New Mexico after 1890 was both discouraging and encouraging. It was discouraging because some of the churches founded early were scattered, and other Mexican American Baptist congregations had absorbed many of the members. The Mexican American Missionary report was encouraging because although Mexican American Baptist work in New Mexico diminished, the work of missionary-minded American Baptists closely affiliated with the Northern Baptist churches did not. In New Mexico, Mexican Americans were encouraged to join the Anglo American Baptist churches, supposedly creating a race-friendly church. It was believed that integration sped up the assimilation of Mexican Americans and attracted Mexican American Catholics to the evangelical Gospel. It was believed by some that religious integration without discrimination would help Mexican American believers become adjusted to the new religious doctrine.[14]

According to Dr. Samuel Ortegón, San Antonio, Texas, is the city where the first Southern Baptist Mexican American Baptist congregation in Texas was established in 1888.[15] Another author of religion, Dr. Joshua Grijalva cites the First Mexican Baptist

Church of *Laredo* as the first Mexican American Baptist Congregation established in Texas in 1883.[16] In 1880, John O. Westrup became missionary of the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board. John and his brother had already served as pastors in Mexico. John started a work in Laredo but was unable to continue because he and a companion were murdered. The crime was never solved, "though some said they had died at the hands of Indians, it was thought that the heinous act was provoked by the Catholic Church. The murder of Protestants was never closely investigated in Mexico."[17] True, the Catholic Church did not overly welcome Protestants, but Thomas Westrup, John's brother, continued to work in Laredo, Texas, and baptized the first convert in 1881. A Mexican American Baptist church was not established in Laredo until1883.

In 1888, William D. Power, pastor in Saltillo, México, came to preach a revival in San Antonio where a number of Mexican Americans were present. Some of those present were converted to the Baptist faith. Since Power was pastor of the Mexican Baptist church in Saltillo, he encouraged his parishioners to receive the new group as members in their congregation. They agreed. On July 1 of the same year the new converts received permission from the mother church in Saltillo, México, to organize as a church. The newly formed Baptist church called Manual García Treviño, a former Methodist ordained deacon, as their first pastor. The church later became *Primera Iglesia Bautista* of San Antonio, Texas.[18]

Charles D. Daniel, who was born in Alabama but spent most of his early years as a missionary to Brazil, was appointed by the Southern Baptist Convention to initiate the Baptist work among Mexican Americans along the Río Grande border. While a missionary in Brazil, Daniel learned that his wife was ill and he was forced to return to Texas where he accepted the Mineola pastorate. In 1891, Daniel, at the urging of Dr. J. B. Cranfill, the Mission's secretary of the General Baptist Convention of Texas, accepted the job as the first superintendent of the Mexican American missionary field, under the

direction of the Texas Southern Baptist Missionary Board.[19] Among Daniel's accomplishments was support he gave the young Mexican American Baptist churches in organizing their own convention (*La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas*).

It was not until the turn of the century that Mexican Americans began to make a noticeable impact as pastors and missionaries. Anglo missionaries who had served as missionaries in Mexico were in great demand by the Southern Baptist Convention and the General Baptist Convention of Texas. But by the turn of the century Mexican Americans began to make a noticeable impact as missionaries. Manuel Treviño founded the San Angelo Mexican Baptist church in 1892. That same year the Laredo Mexican Baptist church was organized; however, its growth stagnated because of a lack of trained Mexican Americans to help with the missionary endeavor. In 1893, the First Mexican Baptist Church of El Paso was organized. Dr. Alexander Marchand, a former Roman Catholic, is credited with helping organize the first Mexican American Baptist Church in El Paso, Texas. Marchand's conversion to the Baptist faith was the result of a conversation he had with a Black Baptist minister, whose religious doctrine was similar to what he had been reading in the Bible. He became convinced of the validity of the Baptist doctrine and converted. After his conversion Marchand, who spoke Spanish, started preaching to Mexican immigrants in El Paso. He was ordained as a Baptist minister, and his intense evangelical zeal won him many converts among the local Mexican American citizens and Mexican immigrants. The new converts eventually organized into what became the *Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana de El Paso*.[20] Other Mexican American churches were soon organized before 1900.

At the turn of the century Anglo Baptist institutions were faced with evangelizing a different type of individual from that of the late 1800s. When Texas won its independence from Mexico in 1836, Mexicans were already living in what became Texas. With the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo at Tepeyac between Mexico and

the United States, the Mexicans became U.S. citizens. As new citizens they found themselves "strangers in their own land" and with a different culture and language surrounding them. Dr. Joshua Grijalva believes that a vast majority of Mexican Americans living in Texas during this period were Catholics and had been taught by the Catholic Church that God intended for them to be poor and obedient. As a result of historical misunderstanding, Anglos viewed the Mexicans with suspicion, mistrust, and racial hate. A few other "so-called citizens" looked upon them with curiosity and sympathy. Still, Mexican Americans were treated as second-class citizens by the Anglo American population. A large number of Mexican Americans were recent immigrants, understood little English, and were relegated to low-skilled and low-paid labor. Under a new capitalistic environment, Mexican Americans became a dispossessed working class community.[21]

After the Mexican Revolution of 1910, thousands of Mexican immigrants were pulled northward to work the new Southwest industries. As a result of the World War I, the United States became chief supplier to the Allies, and the demand for industrial as well as agricultural workers soared .... To supply the thousands of new workers needed additional Mexicans were recruited. These Mexican laborers worked not only in California's diversified agriculture, in Colorado beet fields, in Texas cotton fields, and in the copper mines of Arizona and New Mexico, but also in northeastern iron foundries and Appalachian coal mines.[22]

A large number of Mexican immigrants who migrated to Texas during the revolution were not only peasants but political refugees, middle class Mexicans, and professionals.[23] Cecilio Arrastia adds that it has been estimated by historians and sociologists that during the revolutionary period almost one tenth of the entire population of Mexico crossed the U.S. Mexican border into the United States and Texas.[24] It was this "collective" experience as dispossessed labor from their historical lands that made

them open to religious doctrines. Douglas R. Brackenridge and Francisco O. García declared that fewer than 2,500 Mexicans entered the United States from 1900 to 1914, but by the 1920s, 500,000 migrant workers had come from Mexico. Subjected to all forms of discrimination and treated as second class citizens, they now lived in a dual but unequal society. A synod of Texas report in 1908 claimed that four thousand Mexican American Protestants were living in Texas, but that number is dramatically wrong. Thousands of Mexicans were pulled to Texas. Missionary activity before 1900 consisted mostly of preaching, but by 1910, the tremendous influx of immigrants changed the missionary thrust from just preaching to include social, medical, Americanization programs, and eventually a place of worship separate from Anglo parishioners.[25] Thus deprived of their land, exploited for their labor, and segregated into a community of apartheid, Mexican Americans would now have "separate" Baptist churches.

The expense of financing the entire Mexican evangelistic efforts was a small price to pay to keep the new Mexican converts from integrating into the Anglo Baptist churches where supposedly the "white chosen race" of parishioners worshipped. Evangelization of Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans by Anglo Baptists not only fulfilled the Anglo Baptist Biblical mandate to make believers of the "lost" but also determined where the new converts worshipped, which was with their "own kind." The policy of subsidizing the entire Mexican evangelical efforts eventually led to dependency of Mexican and Mexican American converts on a "core" group of Anglo Baptists. From 1920-1947, only twelve Mexican American churches in Texas became self-supporting.[26]

Prosperity enjoyed by the United States in early 1900 came to a sudden stop with the Stock Market crash of 1929. Historically, the Stock Market crash is the beginning of the Great Depression. Attempts to curb Mexican immigration into the United States prior to the Depression had begun several years before. The Depression served as an added inducement to repatriate Mexican immigrants and some Mexican Americans into Mexico.

Mexican immigrants were affected immediately by the Great Depression. They were the first to be dismissed from their jobs and the first to be repatriated. There were three ways by which Mexican and Mexican Americans were repatriated to Mexico: first, a large number of immigrants left voluntarily; second, they were asked to leave; and third, they were forced to leave. During this same period in history, immigration of Mexicans into the United States was severely restricted.[27]

Approximately 500,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans returned to Mexico from 1929 to 1939, and over half were from Texas. As economic conditions worsened immediately following the Depression, job discrimination of Mexicans and Mexican Americans increased. Mexicans living in urban areas were required to show citizenship papers to retain their jobs. County, state, and municipal governments passed measures prohibiting employment of Mexicans. Mexican Americans and Mexicans left jobless resorted to relief organizations for help in prompting Anglo Americans to suggest that relief should be reserved for Anglo Americans only. Because of repatriation, large numbers of Mexican American citizens and Mexican immigrants lost jobs and personal belongings. In some cases, they even left their U.S. born children with relatives and returned to Mexico.[28]

The Great Depression and repatriation were devastating to the Mexican American church congregations. Like other institutions, churches suffered economically during the Depression, and early on chose to impose reductions in missionary budgets for Mexican American evangelical work. For example, the Presbyterian Mexican American work was affected by the Depression and most likely affected Baptist work as well. A 30% budget reduction was imposed on all Mexican American Presbyterian missionary programs:

> [The depression] played havoc on the already precarious way of life of Mexican American laborers in the United States. Brought into the country during and after Worlds War I to meet pressing labor needs,

> they quickly bore the brunt of unjust racial discrimination and prejudice when change in economic conditions came. Their service was forgotten in the demand that "white men should be given their jobs."[29]

The loss of jobs plunged the Mexican American community into deep poverty and added to the depressed woes of the states and nation. Protestant churches, already depleted of funds because of the Depression, were not able to meet the expenses that missionary work entailed and were forced to limit missionary work in Texas. In some cases they abandoned the work completely. A large number of the Mexican converts returned to Mexico or were victims of the U.S. Government repatriation (deportation) program that returned Mexicans who did not have proof of citizenship to Mexico.

The Blanco Baptist Association of Bee County has been affiliated with evangelizing Mexican Americans since late 1800. At one time they were members of the San Antonio Baptist Association. In 1873, nine churches withdrew from the San Antonio Association and became independent, forming an association of their own west of the San Antonio River. The names of these nine churches with their towns and counties were Beeville, Bee County; Blanco, Goliad County; Escondido, Karnes County; Meansville, Nueces County; Refugio, Refugio County; Aransas, Aransas County; St. Mary's, Nueces County; and Santo Domingo, Bee County. Later, other churches petitioned for permission to enter the Blanco Baptist Association and were accepted. At the turn of the twentieth century some of these same churches left and formed their own associations, which were smaller and more effective.[30]

Since its early history, the Blanco Baptist Association has shown an interest in "evangelizing" the Mexican American population in Bee and surrounding counties. Since the turn of the century they have played a major role in supporting Mexican American churches and missions financially; however, in the last two decades Mexican American Congregations have been encouraged to become self-supporting. Shortly after

the Blanco Baptist Association was formed, Mexican American work was placed under the auspices of the Blanco Baptist Association and local Anglo churches.

Prior to 1960, Mexican American members of the Blanco Baptist Association were few in number. However, after 1960 membership has increased dramatically. This change can be credited to the "civil rights movement" that focused on integration in Bee County from late 1950 to early 1970 and not so much from spiritual endeavors of the Anglo Baptist community. The "civil rights movement" was responsible for better jobs and integration of schools, resulting in better education for Mexican Americans in Bee and surrounding counties. Better jobs and education have narrowed the social, educational, and economic gaps between the Anglos and Mexican Americans in Bee County and elsewhere. Even though Mexican American Baptists have made considerable monetary and educational advances, they still rely on local and state Baptist institutions for many of their endeavors, such as loans for construction, Christian education loans, initiation of new missionary works, Christian literature, pastors' insurance, and other needs. Anglo Baptist churches are more self-reliant than Mexican American churches because they have larger churches, larger congregations, and more money. For example, the Anglo Baptist church of Beeville, Texas, has a membership of 650 or more, while the Mexican American Baptist Church has a membership of 100 or fewer.[31]

The Blanco Baptist Association has met every year since its origin in 1873, and its recorded yearly meetings yield valuable information of the relationships that have existed between Anglo and Mexican American Baptists in Bee and surrounding counties. At the first annual meeting of the Blanco Baptist Association on August 21, 1874, L. D. Young presented a Missionary Committee report in which he described the spiritual condition of Mexicans in the area and what was being done to evangelize them. He commented that there was a great need for more missionaries, and that the laborers in the fields who were evangelizing were few and so was their financial support. He continued to report that

little had been accomplished within the bounds of the Blanco Baptist Association because of "unspecified Mexican troubles" in the area. He believed that God would send the necessary missionaries to help evangelize the Mexican population.[32]

In 1879, the moderator of the Blanco Baptist Association annual meeting appointed a committee of three Christian brothers to search for and employ a Mexican American missionary to preach to the Mexican population within the boundaries of the Blanco Baptist Association.[33] J. W. Dunn, a member of the "Colored and Mexican Populations Committee," reported to the Association that he had been among the Mexican population in Bee and surrounding counties. His encounter with Mexican Americans living in Bee County was a learning experience for Mr. Dunn. He had talked with them and felt very much at ease talking to those that understood English. He handed them Bibles and tracts to read. When he spoke to them about Jesus, he found them to be very receptive and teachable, and their questions seemed to be very sincere. He concluded that all that was needed to win the majority of Mexicans living among the Anglo community to Christ and free them from the "supposed yoke" of superstition was to preach the gospel to them in their own language. In his opinion, Dunn believed that some of the Mexicans in the Blanco Baptist Association were Baptist in principle and would unite with local churches if they were invited. If not, they needed a missionary at the earliest day possible.[34]

The members of the "Missions Committee on Mexican and the Black populations in the Blanco Baptist Association," reported that the Black population within the bounds of the Association was advancing at a rapid pace both in religion and education. However, what they reported about the Mexican population was not encouraging. These men apparently knew less of the Mexican population than they did of Blacks. The Missions Committee commented that the Mexican population seemed to be regressing instead of progressing. According to Mission Committee members, the Mexican

population had been influenced by other, less spiritual religions. The committee pointed out to the Blanco Baptist Association that it was the duty of the Association as pillars of the faith to help the Mexicans whenever the opportunity presented itself.[35] In August of 1882 in a report on the Mexican population, S. B. Kimball commented that it was difficult to report on the spiritual conditions of the Mexicans living within the bounds of the Blanco Baptist Association because the Anglos had little contact with the Mexicans, who spoke a different language than did Anglos. However, Mr. Kimball emphasized that Christianity was fast taking hold of the Mexican mind, and missionaries working in the field were reaping converts. He continued to appeal for everyone's help in converting Mexicans to the Baptist way of worshipping. He felt a Mexican mission was of utmost importance, and one in Corpus Christi would be ideal.[36]

In 1885 and 1886, because the missionary reports on the Mexican and the Black populations were similar in content, they were included in the research as one report. According to the area missionary, the Mexican and Black population that lived in the midst of the Blanco Baptist Association boundaries had been greatly neglected and had grown very little in religious knowledge. Black churches within the bounds of the Association were in need of consecrated men who were "Biblically knowledgeable." According to this missionary, the Blacks' method of worshipping God was so foreign to that of the Anglos' that at times it seemed ridiculous to him. It would have been easier to integrate Mexican Americans and Blacks into Anglo Baptist congregation, but segregation of Blacks and Mexican Americans was prevalent during this period in history, and not all Anglo Baptists welcomed them into their congregations. The Missionary Committee and the Blanco Baptist Association were aware of the conditions of the Mexican Americans who lived within the bounds of the Association and the ones who lived along the borders between Mexico and Texas. According to the report, the Mexican Americans were not responsive to spiritual training because their lives were

filled with superstition. Evangelical work done among local Mexican Americans and those from Mexico was so encouraging that it was suggested that the Blanco Baptist Association continue supporting the work since missionaries had gained valuable experience working among Mexican Americans. To support missionary work among Mexican Americans did not mean to integrate them into the Anglo Baptist churches, but to support them economically.

The missionary report concluded that a vast majority of the Mexican American population lived on farms or ranches, and the most practical way to reach them for Christ was through personal contact. The work needed a person who could speak the Spanish language fluently and would go from house to house preaching and distributing religious literature that would be simple to read. An excellent example would be to go where the majority of Mexican Americans live and do missionary work there. Corpus Christi and San Diego, Texas, were suggested as good places to start since these two cities were in the center of the Mexican American population. Kimball, a member of the missionary committee, argued that the Black population enjoyed better religious privileges than Mexican Americans did because they were on a higher spiritual ground than were the Mexican Americans. The explanation given in the report as to why the Blacks were spiritually higher than the Mexican Americans was that Blacks had been reared among Anglos and were exposed to the Baptist faith earlier. The report described the difference between Mexican Americans and Black Baptist converts as being one where Black converts knew their place and were still willing to be taught by Anglos, and in fact, more intelligent Blacks looked for the opportunity to be taught by Anglos.[37]

According to Carol R. Jones, in 1886 J. F. Kimball gave the following report to the Blanco Baptist Association concerning Mexican missions within the Association's boundaries. He declared that he was saddened at the poor physical condition of the Mexican Americans who traveled the Texas plains. The cold nights on the plains were

especially hard on them because so far as Kimball knew, most of them had no more than one blanket to keep warm. Because of the Mexican Americans' past history of aggression toward Anglo citizens in Texas, no one seemed to care to give them any charity. According to Kimball, of the thousands of Mexican Americans who lived within the bounds of the Blanco Baptist Association, only a few had converted to the Protestant faith and those who did converted to the Methodist religion.[38]

In 1887, at the fourteenth annual meeting of the Blanco Baptist Association held in Goliad, J. B. Kimball was appointed to give the report for the Committee on the Mexican American population. During this period in the history, Mexican American Baptist churches were under the auspices of the Anglo Baptist institutions and did not have their own missionaries. Kimball reported that the committee regretted that very little work had been done by the Baptists among the Mexicans who lived within the bounds of the Association. The report confirmed that there really wasn't any evangelizing done among the Mexicans except with Mexicans living in "Old Mexico." Kimball continued his report by explaining to those people present that W. M. Flournoy, appointed by the State Baptist Convention and in conjunction with the Association, had been preaching part time among the Mexican Americans west of the Nueces River. He cited excerpts from a private letter written by Flournoy to W. S. Howard. In this letter Flournoy said that he tried to continue his work in Laredo among the Mexican Americans, but the lack of support made the work very difficult for one person to do by himself. He had been praying for God to send someone to work among the Mexican Americans in western Texas. He reminded the Association that two years prior to 1887 he had been appointed to preach among the Mexican Americans within the bounds of the Blanco Baptist Association. Because of ill health and an epidemic of small pox among the Mexican Americans, Flournoy said his work lasted only four months and the opportunity to come back to work there again had not presented itself. He also believed

that in the near future the Baptists of Texas would be responsible for bringing the gospel to the Mexican Americans of Texas. In the same report, A. J. Holt said that he had reported to the General Baptist Convention of Texas that there were approximately 100,000 Mexican Americans in Texas that the Baptist churches had been trying to evangelize without success. Holt suggested that Anglo Baptists should forgive them for the mistakes they made in siding with Mexico in the war with the United States and the gospel should be preached to them.[39]

In 1895, toward the close of the 19th century, a report prepared by W. S. Howard and J. K. Kimball was presented at the annual meeting of the Blanco Baptist Association. The question of what to do with the Mexican American population in the midst of the Blanco Baptist Association continued. Although Mexican Americans were at the doorsteps of the Blanco Baptist Association, "they were entrenched in ignorance and superstition." They were considered ignorant of God's plan of salvation, and no one among the Anglo churches had devised a method to teach them the Christian way of life. The committee reporting on the Mexican Americans in the area believed that if they were to be won to Christ, it must be done by a joint effort of all Anglo churches in the area. The committee report suggested that each church in the Blanco Baptist Association raise money to buy religious material written in Spanish that could be handed out to Mexican Americans. W. C. Luther promised that for every dollar of literature ordered by any pastor from the Blanco Baptist Association he would give two dollars of his own money.[40]

According to the minutes of the 23rd Annual Session of the Blanco Baptist Association, the Mexican American population continued to be of major concern to the Association. Members suggested that a special effort be made to evangelize the Mexicans since they had made their homes among the members of the Blanco Baptist Association. It was also noted that Methodists, who preach a gospel that differs from that

preached by the Baptists, were beginning to make converts among the Mexican American population in Bee and surrounding counties.[41]

As of 1896, there were approximately 300 Mexican American Baptist converts in the Association. Since there were no Mexican American members in the Blanco Baptist Association at this time, annual reports on Mexican American work were given by Anglo Baptist leaders. R. B. Thames, chairman of the committee on Mexican population, added that the new converts were anxious to hear more about the gospel. One of the most important things that the Mexican converts needed was a place of their own in which to worship. He suggested that the Blanco Baptist Association take into consideration constructing churches for Mexicans to worship. He declared that from his previous missionary experiences, congregations didn't seem to grow without a church building. Thames believed that a building seemed to have some kind of unifying power. If the Blanco Baptist Association members were concerned about converts, they should be equally concerned in building a place for the new Mexican converts to worship, even if it meant sacrificing.[42]

For the first time a Mexican American was allowed to join the "core group" of the "Anglo Baptist establishment" in Bee county. In 1898 Missionary Manuel Guitiérrez not only became the first Mexican American member in the Blanco Baptist Association, but he depended on the Anglo Baptist Association for his "entire" salary. In his report to the annual meeting of the Blanco Baptist Association he commented that he had been on the job ten months, had traveled 228 miles, preached 30 sermons, baptized 30 persons, and made 400 visits. His monthly salary was $125.65.[43]

By the turn of the century, the Blanco Baptist Association fellowship of churches were at the threshold of the goal they had so long pursued, that of seeing positive results for their evangelistic endeavors within the Mexican American community. Rev. Manuel Guitiérrez had helped organize three church groups that later became churches in Bee and

surrounding counties. Small groups of believers were organized in each of the following cities: Beeville, Aransas, and San Diego.[44] Various Baptist groups and denominations had expressed interest and concern for members of racial and ethic minorities since their organized existence in 1840. They had been successful in various parts of the United States and Texas; however, up to late 1800, very little evangelizing had taken place in Bee and surrounding counties. All that changed when the Baptist Blanco Association was founded in 1873. Although it was an Anglo Baptist Association, its members had a deep concern for the evangelization of Mexican Americans as this research has shown. However, their early zeal was somewhat diminished by the fact that Baptists lacked expertise in working with Mexican Americans. With the help of Mexican American pastors and missionaries, the Blanco Baptist Association of Baptist churches entered the new century ill prepared for the Mexican American missionary work.

During most of the 1800s Anglo Baptists in Bee and surrounding counties had engaged in a concerted effort to evangelize Mexican Americans, but the results were somewhat discouraging. Still, the foundations laid during the 1800s were not in vain, especially with the founding of La Primera Iglesia Bautista Mexicana of Beeville, Texas. Although there were several Mexican American churches founded before 1940, the majority were founded after 1940. Anglo Baptist churches sponsored the majority of early Mexican American Baptist missions and churches; however, they did not always include Mexican American church history with their own. A history of the First Baptist Church in Beeville, Texas, What God Hath Wrought, is highly regarded by Anglo Baptist congregations; it does not include the history of Primera Iglesia Bautista of Beeville, even though the Mexican church was once a mission of the Anglo Baptist Church.

The largest number of Mexican American Baptist churches located in Bee and surrounding counties were missionary efforts of local Anglo Baptist congregations. Local Anglo Baptist churches financed missionary efforts with help from the Baptist General

Convention of Texas and Blanca Baptist Association. After initial efforts to integrate Mexican American Baptist converts into Anglo Baptist congregations failed, there is little indication in the records that the effort continued. Instead, both Mexican American and Anglo Baptists joined forces in evangelizing and building churches for the new Mexican American converts, but in most cases Anglo Baptists financed the entire projects.

Several of the early Mexican American Baptist churches have since ceased to exist, while new ones have been founded. Mexican American churches in Bee and surrounding counties could well be divided into two periods: churches established before 1950 and those established after 1950. Soldiers coming home from World War II could be credited indirectly with the growth of Mexican American Baptist churches in Bee and surrounding counties after 1950. The soldiers were eager to build homes with money they had saved from their military service. They injected money into the local economy, especially on the west side where most of them lived.

Soldiers returning home from war challenged discrimination against minorities in Bee and surrounding counties. They no longer were satisfied with segregated schools and eating places, low wages and other inequalities. They felt they had fought and died equally with their Anglo counterparts and now expected to be dealt with fairly. Organizations such as the American GI Forum founded by Dr. Héctor García and LULAC fought for the rights of the returning GIs. The Mexican American servicemen returning from war invested their money locally, and before long the pride of ownership extended to the local churches, including the Mexican American Baptist churches. Local Mexican American Baptist congregations, energized by the demand for equality and pride of ownership, and with the help of the local Anglo Baptist Churches and the Baptist General Convention of Texas began to build and beautify their own sanctuaries in Bee and surrounding counties.

From 1900 to 1980, fifteen new Mexican American Baptist churches were

founded. Also, a number of others were established, but for various reasons closed. As the Mexican American Baptist population increased in Bee and surrounding counties, "cultural and structural assimilation" as defined by theorist Milton Gordon began to take place. Gordon's theoretical perspective on "race and ethnic relations" declares that an initial encounter between "race and ethnic groups" takes place, resulting in a "multiple assimilation outcome." He identifies three possible models of assimilation: the melting pot, cultural pluralism, and Anglo-conformity. Of the three competing images of assimilation, Anglo-conformity is the instrument that best describes the pattern that emerges in the relationship between Mexican American Baptist converts and the Anglo Baptist "core group." [45]

As Mexican-American Baptist congregations grew in numbers in Bee and surrounding counties, they changed their own cultural patterns and adopted those of the Anglo Baptist "core culture." By adopting the "dominant cultural pattern" of the primary group they initiated the process of "assimilation" into the Anglo Baptist community while maintaining their own separate churches. However, since they were economically dependent on the Anglo Baptist "core group," for their church growth, the Baptist "core group" determined at what rate "assimilation" took place. The origin of the following churches illustrates how Mexican American Baptists, because of limited resources and education, were mostly "silent partners" in the initial thrust to evangelize Mexican Americans in Bee and surrounding counties. Each new missionary work begun followed several theoretical stages before and "assimilation" occurred. Robert E. Parks, a major sociological theorist, affirms that secondary groups go through four stages or "race relation cycle." The four stages are contacts, competition, accommodation, and eventual assimilation. In each of the following Mexican American Baptist churches several stages of "race relation cycle" as argued by Parks are identifiable.[46]

La Primera Iglesia Bautista of Beeville, Texas, was organized on February 8,

1900. Missionary Gutiérrez and the Blanco Baptist Association were very supportive of the new work; in fact, Rev. Gutiérrez resigned as missionary and became the church's first pastor. He pastored the Mexican American Baptist church for the next two years before accepting another pastorate.

Rev. Julian J. Jiménez accepted the vacated position of pastor. Unfortunately, during his pastorate floodwater destroyed both the church building and the pastor's house. With the aid of First Baptist Church of Beeville and Blanco Baptist Association, a new building was constructed on Ireland Street. Not only did the Anglo Baptist church help with the construction of the building, but they also helped the Mexican American Baptist congregation during this difficult period.[47]

It was not until1943 that Rev. Sóstenez Martínez became the new pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista. He and Rev. A. A. Sanders, pastor of First Baptist Church, worked well together. When Rev. Martínez shared with Sanders the need for a new church building, Rev. Sanders agreed and a building campaign was launched. The congregation of First Baptist Church, encouraged by Rev. Sanders, donated $7,000.00 for the construction of the new building and Primera Iglesia Bautista pledged to raise $1,500.00. The area missionary for Blanco Baptist Association, Milton S. Leach, sought help from the Home Mission Board of Texas for assistance in the new construction and was given $5,000.00. It was not long before *Primera Iglesia Bautista* raised the $1,500.00 and purchased the property to build the new sanctuary. Construction for the new structure started in 1945, and by 1946, the new sanctuary was dedicated. The following year a parsonage was constructed next to the new church for the pastor.[48]

Primera Iglesia Bautista continued to grow. In 1956, a lot was purchased for $500.00 and the pastoral house was moved to the new location. The following year, a new educational building was constructed at a value of $1,400.00. By 1957, the Sunday school membership had grown to 200, and the church was considered one of the largest

Mexican American churches in the Blanco Baptist Association. Lupe Pérez, a deacon at *Primera Iglesia Bautista*, contends that by the mid-1950's, the church no longer depended on other institutions for its financial welfare; instead, all expenditures were paid for by *Primera Iglesia Bautista*. From 1960 to 1980 the church's primary focus was on growth and meeting the spiritual needs of the local congregation. During this period there were a number of new pastors, and the church experienced problems and divisions. However, because it was victorious in conflict, today the church continuous to supply the spiritual needs of a large portion of the Mexican American community in Beeville, Texas.[49]

In January of 1942, Primera Iglesia Bautista of Mathis was organized as a mission, with Víctor Orta as its first pastor. Two years later a building was bought by the mission and placed on the property of Luciano Cano, a church member. The following year Mrs. J. E. Crane purchased and donated two lots to the mission. The building on the Cano property was then moved to the two new lots. The Mexican American missionary work was enhanced with the assistance of Milton Leach, the area missionary at that time. In 1951, the first permanent church building was constructed with help from the Anglo Baptist church of Mathis and their pastor, Don Anderson. In 1958, a building fund was started to add additional buildings to the church property. In 1962, as the building funds increased, a building committee was formed. Wiley Huntsinger, a member of the First Baptist Church of Mathis, chaired it. Five acres were purchased in 1966 for construction of a new church building. On June 12, 1966, the new place of worship was completed and a dedication service was held. Alfonso Flores, pastor of Primera Iglesia Bautista of Corpus Christi, preached the dedication sermon. In 1980 the church became self-supporting, and the name was changed from Mision Bautista to Primera Iglesia Bautista of Mathis.[50]

Marie Kendell, member of First Baptist Church, wrote the Mexican American Baptist church history as she best remembered it and submitted it to the Blanco Baptist

Association. On April 15, 1947, Rev. C. F. Griffin was called to pastor the First Baptist Church of George West. In his capacity as pastor, Rev. Griffin became concerned for the Mexican American children he met at the Menchaca subdivision. The subdivision had a small building that was used as a community center and a park where the children gathered to play ball and games. He told the children Bible stories and sang with those who listened. Mrs. Giffith, the pastor's wife, encouraged the ladies from the Missionary Society to take refreshments and help them start a Sunday school there. Members of the First Baptist Church gave their approval by supplying volunteers to help sponsor missionary work there. Marie Griffin was among those who volunteered to help with the new work.

The First Baptist Mission's Committee recommended that the church purchase a piano for the community building to use when singing with the Mexican American children. The piano was purchased and moved to the new location. As a result of the Mission Committee's initiative, a small mission was founded. The Mexican American mission members applied to the Baptist General Convention of Texas for financial assistance and aid was approved. With this money, mission members were able to call a part-time pastor. The mission's first pastor, Andrew Huron, helped the mission with preaching and Sunday school. The small Mexican American congregation met in the same building until 1963. When an Anglo Baptist congregation disbanded in the community of Clog near George West, they offered the building to the Mexican American Baptist congregation. The Mission members accepted the offer. In 1960, they purchased four lots from Buck West, the nephew of George West, the founder of George West, Texas. They had the building moved to the new location, where it is presently located. Rev. W. R. Underfeed, former pastor of First Baptist Church and also an excellent carpenter, indirectly contributed to the needs of the Mexican American Baptist Mission. While pastor at First Baptist Church of George West, he and a close friend,

Walter F. Lam, built the pews, a pulpit, and a communion table for the Lord's Supper. The First Baptist Church donated these items to the Mexican American mission.

In 1966, several members decided to launch a campaign to raise money to brick veneer the mission. Ann Regan, a member of First Baptist Church, had a brother James Storm, who agreed to match dollar for dollar any money raised. The mission and the First Baptist Church joined forces in a money-raising campaign and raised $3,300.00, which was matched by Storm. A local contractor was hired and the work of bricking the mission began. Mrs. Kendell believed that it would be hard to find a more dedicated group of men than those at First Baptist Church in George West. From the time that the land was purchased and a building was moved to the property, First Baptist Church members helped the Mexican American Baptist mission. They not only helped with their talents but also financially. This group of dedicated men did much of the remodeling, including painting, plumbing, carpentry, and even adding bathrooms.[51]

In 1947, Mrs. H. C. Cook, a member of First Baptist Church in Mineral, noticed that there was a large group of Mexican American children attending public school. She obtained permission from the school teachers to invite the children to attend Sunday school at the Anglo Baptist Church in Mineral. Many children responded to the invitation. To accommodate the group of Mexican American children, a Spanish-speaking department was set up at the First Baptist Church.[52] Mrs. Cook did not end her mission by bringing the children to church; she also taught Sunday School at the church. She taught the "plan of salvation and stewardship and gave the children pennies and nickels to help support missionary work in Mineral, Texas." The children, under Mrs. Cook's direction, would present plays that their parents would attend. This is how four Mineral families began attending services at the First Baptist Church in Mineral. They promised to support the children by attending church services.

The Anglo Baptist church invited Rev. M. S. Leach, the area missionary, assisted by

Rev. Sostenes Martínez from Beeville, Texas, to preach a revival to the Mexican Americans attending the Anglo Baptist Church in Mineral. Twenty-seven people made professions of faith during the revival. Among those making decisions were the following families: Romero, Villarreal, and Ramírez. They also were the first Mexican American Baptist families in Mineral and the first to be baptized at a local watering tank. In April of 1949, Primera Iglesia Bautista of Mineral was organized. The church continued to meet at First Baptist Church and called Rev. Sóstenes Martínez as their first pastor. Martínez's salary was paid equally by the new Mexican American Baptist Congregation and the local Anglo Baptist church; each paid the pastor five dollars a month. With help from the Baptist State Board, First Baptist Church of Mineral, and First Baptist Church of Pawnee, the Mexican American congregation purchased what had previously been a grocery store in Mineral. They converted the building into a church, and on October 25,1953, the Mexican American congregation held their church dedication. Rev. H. E. Gary, President of Valley Baptist Academy, preached the dedication sermon. The church was later moved to a new location on property lent to the Mexican American congregation by the Methodist Church of Pettus, Texas, where it is now located.[53]

Juan Sálazar, a deacon and presently a member at Primera Iglesia Bautista of Goliad, gave the following account as he remembered it. In 1940, Antonio Rojas, a Baptist Mexican American convert, was living on a ranch called *El Rancho la Gloria* near Goliad, Texas. He was dedicated to the Baptist faith and started to minister at the ranch and to the farmhands living on the ranch. He lived in a two-story house and used part of the building as a meeting place for those who wanted to attend the Bible studies. Rojas, with help from First Baptist Church, bought a building in Goliad, Texas, from the local Anglo Baptist congregation and organized the group into a mission. It was not long after becoming a mission that they started regular church services on Sundays.

Church pastors most instrumental in the organization of this work were Dan Guitiérrez, Brother Griffith, and Jones Gonzáles. There were others who contributed to the success of the church, but the three mentioned were those who contributed sacrificially to its initial growth. In 1980, the Mexican American Baptist mission was organized into a church and was no longer under the auspices of the First Baptist Church of Goliad.[54]

In October of 1979, Santos Martínez was called to pastor Primera Iglesia Bautista of Beeville, Texas. In August of 1980, he resigned as pastor. Disagreement about church priorities between two church groups at La Primera Iglesia Bautista caused the church to divide.[55] Approximately fifty percent of the congregation left Primera Iglesia Bautista and started their own church at the home of one of the group members. With the exception of two leaders, the total leadership left Primera Iglesia Bautista. The members who left the church were financially better off than those left behind, and their goal was to build a bilingual Baptist church that would cater to mostly upper middleclass Mexican Americans. According to Rev. Martínez, the origin of the new church was a dream come true for him and others who left Primera Iglesia Bautista. The first meeting of the new church was held at 708 N. Adams Street on Sunday, August 17, 1980. The new congregation, called Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida, soon outgrew the temporary meeting place and were forced to find a larger place of worship.

construction.[57] Construction of the new church building was completed and dedicated on Thanksgiving Day of 1981. Between 1980 and 1985, two events occurred that Rev. Martínez named as part of the transitional period of the church. First, the church name was changed from Iglesia Bautista Nueva Vida to New Life Baptist Church, and second, the use of English became exclusive during church services.[58] Presently, an Anglo pastor, Rev. Jesse Berthold, is the church pastor and most of the founders no longer worship at New Life Baptist Church.

In 1958, after sharing Christ in the community of Pawnee, the family of Alfred and Nieves Duenes gathered all their prospects and held worship services in a small frame house in Pawnee, Texas. The same year the small group of believers called Rev. Elías Torrez of Beeville, Texas, to help pastor the small congregation. In 1960, with the assistance of Rev. Blas Garza, and the support of mission members, the local Anglo Baptist Church, and the Blanco Baptist Association, the small group of believers organized into a mission. That same year, the group received a section of land donated by Charles Edwards for building a structure to serve as a place for the mission members to worship. The members applied for help from the Cooperative Program, a statewide Baptist program that helps small Mexican American Baptist missions and churches. The Anglo Baptist church of Pawnee came to their aid by organizing the construction of the church building.

After the construction was completed, Mrs. Doyle Hair of First Baptist Church volunteered to help with the mission's young girls. She helped organize the Girl's Auxiliary, a program that helped to educate girls in Christian living. She remained as leader of the young girls for a period of fifteen years. In 1981, the Mexican American mission became a self-supporting church.[59]

Dr. Joshua Grijalva claims that in 1911 the Mexican American Church of Skidmore, Texas, had 60 members and had asked to be accepted into La Convención

Bautista Mexicana de Tejas[60]; however, the church disbanded and was resurrected again in 1978 by a different group. Josie Gonzales, church historian, gave the following account of the history of Iglesia Bautista La Hermosa:

> Candido Gonzáles and his wife Josie Gonzáles founded this church. After moving to Skidmore, Texas, they started attending the Anglo Baptist church in Skidmore, where Reverend B. C. Brown was pastor. Rev. Brown and the Gonzáles shared the need for a Sunday school class in Spanish. They started a class that became so successful that they asked the Anglo Baptist church for a Mexican American Department where they could not only hold Sunday School classes but also preaching services. The Anglo church gave the couple permission and made Candido Gonzáles a deacon and the director of the department. Noé Ortíz, Blanco Baptist Association missionary, helped teach the adults. The small group of Mexican American believers grew in the Anglo Baptist church and in April 1985, the congregation moved to a small building of their own and became a mission.[61]

Analysis

When Anglo American settlers arrived in Texas after 1821, they brought with them a religion much different from that of the native Tejanos. Early Anglos believed that Catholic believers were pagans and were in "dire" need of salvation. Among large numbers of different Protestant groups that accompanied the settlers were Anglo Baptists. The premise for their faith was based on the Biblical teaching that all so-called "Christian believers" are obligated to go out and win "lost souls" for God's Kingdom. During the Texas frontier period extending from 1821-1836 Anglo Protestant groups were prohibited from practicing any other religion except the Catholic faith, the official religion of Mexico. After the independence of Texas from Mexico in 1836 and the official

annexation of Texas into the United States in 1848, Protestants were free to practice their faith in Texas without fear of reprisals.

After 1848, Texas became part of the United States and almost overnight Tejanos became U.S. citizens. The once proud native Mexicans became "suspicious foreigners" in their own land. They were hated, mistrusted, deprived of their religion, and dispossessed of their own land. Within three decades a large number of the new Mexican American citizens were relegated to "peón" status doing manual labor for Anglo bosses, or "patrones." Religious groups such as Anglo Baptists were among a number of religious "core groups" who were instrumental in providing jobs for Mexican American Baptist converts. In the initial evangelization of Mexican Americans, they were integrated into the local Anglo Baptist churches or other protestant churches; however, as they grew in numbers, they threatened the status quo and were shunned by certain members. This growing antagonism toward the newcomers led Anglo Baptist leaders to provide the new converts a place of their own to worship. Before 1900, missionary work among Mexican immigrants and Mexican Americans in Bee County was done by Anglo Baptist institutions. The Anglo Baptist churches provided the place of worship, upkeep, and the pastor's salary.

As the Mexican American Baptist population grew, the impoverished Mexican Baptist community was forced to depend on the wealthier Anglo Baptist Institution "core groups" for their economic, social, and spiritual welfare. In most South Texas communities such as those in Bee County, Anglo Americans were the new land and business owners, while the Mexican Americans became the laborers. Anglo Baptists who were part of the Anglo establishment hired Mexican American Baptist converts as laborers in their fields or as janitors in their places of business. Females, moreover, were hired in their homes to do domestic work. Local Anglo Baptist churches or the Baptist General Convention of Texas usually financed the Mexican American missionary work.

The long-continued subsidies in support of Mexican American work resulted in dependency. Consequently, instead of striving for independence, Mexican American Baptists found it easier to depend on Anglo Baptist bosses for their jobs and on Anglo Baptist institutions for assistance. This "paternal relationship" between Anglo and Mexican American Baptists differed little from the "patrón-peón" system practiced by corporate bosses for over a century.

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CHAPTER III

THE ORIGEN AND DEMISE OF LA CONVENCIÓN BAUTISTA MEXICANA DE TEJAS (1910-1964)

> *La CBMT fué organizada en 1910, por los pastores mexicanos de tejas, aquellos valientes precursores de la Obra Bautista en este estado. Nuestros hermanos de Raza sufrían muchos despresiose injusticias por la terrible descriminación racial de esa época y aún algunos pastores con sus familias fueron victimas del odio racial que existía.*[1]

By early 1900, the growth of Mexican American Baptists in Texas had increased considerably. According to Fred Montero, a retired pastor, missionary, historian, and pioneer of Mexican American Baptist work in Texas, Mexican American pastors and missionaries suffered greatly as victims of discrimination and racism. Montero contends that early Mexican American pastors' salaries were so minimal in comparison to Anglo Baptist pastors they had to pastor two and three churches plus do missionary work in order to survive. During this period in the life of Mexican American church history, they suffered considerable discrimination from Anglo Baptists. The practice of racism prevented Anglo Baptists from accepting Mexican Americans on equal terms. A supposed poverty, lack of education, and unfamiliarity with church politics kept Mexican American Baptists from serving on policy-making boards or influencing the development of Mexican American churches. Pastors, who worked several churches, and who did not have transportation, walked long distances on Sundays to provide worship services.

Evangelists also traveled on foot or horseback from city to city preaching revivals. Rev. Montero started his early ministry in the Belton and Dallas, Texas, areas. He remembers how he and his wife Berta worked incessantly to help build a place of worship at 2700 Fairmount Street in Dallas, Texas. As a result, he was hospitalized for exhaustion. While he was pastor in Belton, Texas, during the depression, Montero was paid $10.00 monthly. When Montero lived in Dallas, he preached in back yards, homes, missions, and a number of other locations in the Dallas area.[2]

In 1910, Charles D. Daniel, an Anglo missionary who was interested in evangelizing Mexican Americans, met with seven pioneer Mexican American Baptist pastors from throughout the state of Texas. They discussed what could be done to help Mexican American Baptist churches throughout the state of Texas in their efforts to evangelize Mexican Americans in the state. Travel during this period was either on horseback or on foot, making it very difficult for churches to have communication with one another. Daniel and the group of pastors envisioned an organization to which Mexican American Baptist pastors and church members could go for spiritual help and church guidance. The organization envisioned would meet yearly in different cities with representatives from various churches throughout Texas attending. The gathering would serve to discuss the various problems facing the different churches within the state, and it would also serve as a time of fellowship and revival for those attending.

The group concluded that a convention where churches could meet once a year would be a step toward a closer relationship among Mexican American Baptist churches in Texas. The idea for a Mexican American convention was discussed, and the idea for La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas was the result of the group's hard work. Organized in 1910, first officers included Charles D. Daniel, Chairman, Daniel S. Barocio, Vice-President, Gil Villarreal, Second Vice-president, and Benito C. Pérez, Statistical Secretary.[3]

As a result of the leadership of Charles D. Daniel in helping organize *La* Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas (CBMT), he was elected as its first president.[4] The Mexican American Convention was patterned after the Anglo General Baptist Convention of Texas. The newly formed Mexican American Baptist Convention was instrumental in assisting the Mexican American population, pastors, and missionaries with their spiritual, financial, and educational needs. The CBMT unified Mexican American churches in the state of Texas and their leaders with the same purpose as that of evangelizing Mexican Americans in Texas. The term *Convención*, as used to identify the Mexican Convention, indicated much more than just a Convention. Pastors, church leaders, and members from all over the state of Texas met every year at a designated city to elect new officers, have fellowship, and deal with the business of member churches. The normal duration of the annual meeting was three days. In addition, the CBMT had a headquarters that remained opened year round and supported the Mexican American Baptist churches with training pastors and missionaries, so they would be more effective in preaching the gospel among the Mexican Americans in Texas. The CBMT kept in touch with the Mexican American pastors, missionaries, and Mexican American Baptist leaders of Texas through newsletters, statewide revivals, and monthly periodicals. *El Bautista Mexicano* and *La Voz Bautista* were the most popular Mexican American Baptist publications in Texas.

Fred Montero claims that although the CBMT started with limited funds and inexperienced leadership, by 1960 the Mexican American organization had become a strong and viable missionary entity for Mexican American Baptists of Texas. Each year new officials were elected, and not only was the Convention well organized but also had a sizable amount of money in its treasury. The majority of the Mexican American churches throughout the state of Texas contributed towards the expenses of the CBMT. The following are some of the programs supported and sponsored by the CBMT:

(a) domestic, state, and foreign missions, (b) a statewide week of prayer for Mexican American missions, (c) evangelization programs, (d) educational courses for pastors, missionaries, and church members, (e) financial support for missionaries in Mexico, and (f) scholarships for students to attend Lacy Christian school in Mexico. Scholarships were awarded through *La Unión Femenil*, a Mexican American women's organization, under one of the programs of *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas*.[5]

Church scholar, Dr. Joshua Grijalva, confirms some of the accomplishments of the CBMT. He attests to the fact that the Mexican Baptist Convention helped to establish communication between the different Baptist Conventions, such as the Mexican Baptist Convention of Mexico, and the Anglo General Baptist Convention of Texas. On July 20, 1917, at the annual Mexican Baptist Convention, the Auxiliary of Mexican Baptist Women attending the Convention met and organized into a statewide organization the *Associación Bautista de Señoras, Auxiliar* to the Convention. The Mexican work in Texas, which had been under the dual management of Mexicans and Anglo Baptists, was ceded over to the Anglo Home Mission Board of Texas in 1919. Charles D. Daniel, ex-president of the Mexican Baptist Convention, became the new superintendent of the Mexican American work in Texas. Although there were Mexican American Baptists who may have done the job equally well, there was no opposition to his appointment from the Mexican American community.

The financial crash of 1929 did not initially impair the growth of the Mexican American churches; however, that changed rapidly. Carey McWilliams declares that by 1930 the myth that Mexican field labor was easier to handle was no longer true. Many of the Mexican field laborers, unsatisfied with their pay, organized into labor unions and went on strikes. During the Depression a large number of Mexican immigrants went on government relief, which angered Anglo American citizens. They believed that the best way to prevent Mexican immigrants from receiving government relief subsidies and settle

strikes was to repatriate them to Mexico. Truckloads of Mexican American women and children were repatriated to Mexico. In some cases even Mexican American citizens who were unable to prove citizenship were deported.[6] Grijalva argues that from 1931 to 1940 Mexican American Baptist work in Texas stagnated. It was also a very difficult period for undocumented Mexicans living and working in Texas. From 1931 to 1934, approximately half a million Mexicans, some of whom were U. S. citizens, were rounded up and sent back to Mexico to help alleviate the job shortage in Texas. Their departure created jobs for the local citizens. The migration into Texas also declined drastically during this same period. Many of the undocumented were Mexican Baptist converts who supported Baptist missions in Texas monetarily and with their membership. In some cases, as in the Rio Grande Valley, entire Baptist congregations with their pastor went north in search of work. The economic condition of Texas was so desperate that urban unemployed Anglo laborers sought farm work that previously had been done by undocumented Mexicans and Mexican American citizens.[7] Migration north depleted Mexican American membership in the local Mexican American Baptist churches and dealt a devastating blow to the evangelization of Mexicans by Anglo Baptist Institutions. One of the areas most affected was the Rio Grande Valley of Texas.[8]

In 1939, a committee was selected by the CBMT to initiate its own Spanish newspaper. The committee founded *El Bautista Mexicano*. Previously the Convention had to rely on others to print its paper; however, since its origin *El Bautista Mexicano* did its own publishing. In its first publication the newspaper printed articles praising the CBMT and its dedicated leadership for the contributions they had made in working together with Anglo Baptists in evangelizing Mexican Americans in Texas.[9] Joshua Grijalva commented that the Anglo Baptist churches had associations of churches from several counties and encouraged Mexican American Baptist churches to join the Anglo associations. Some of the Anglo associations welcomed the Mexican American Baptist

churches with open arms, while others received them as members but were not overly enthusiastic about having them in their midst. According to Grijalva, it was perhaps the different language and culture. Still other Baptist associations saw Mexican Americans as foreigners and treated them accordingly. In 1916 a certain association voted to help foreigners such as Chinese and Mexicans. The different cultural and language barriers, economic differences, and racism, which were "rampant" towards Mexican Americans during this period, could well have been a major cause for their differences. Where discord existed, neither the Anglos nor the Mexican Americans made an effort to resolve their differences.[10]

Anglo associations helped with salaries, church building, and education for the Mexican American Association members. The Valley Baptist Academy located in the Lower Río Grande Valley, was founded by the Río Grande Baptist Association, and was the result of both Anglo and Mexican American Baptists working together towards a common goal. The Academy was a Christian school established to give young people at the high school level a Christian education. Although the majority of the students enrolled at the Academy were Mexican Americans, the Academy did not discriminate against race or color. The first two presidents elected were Anglo Baptists. Thomas B. Hart was the Academy's first president, and the first trustees were E. G. Gregory, Ignacio E. Gonzáles, Eulogio L. Garza, F. L. Flynn, Loyd Corder, Harry Thompson, Francisco Morales, A. C. Miller, Charles D. Dawson, and Carlos Hernández Ríos. Over the years the school has had a large enrollment of Mexican students. The Academy was moved to several locations before finding a permanent location in 1967. The new location consists of a ninety-acre tract of land located at 3700 East Houston Street in Harlingen, Texas. Today the property is worth over two million dollars and hundreds of students have graduated from the Baptist Academy since it was founded in 1946.[11]

Through years of hard evangelistic endeavors, Mexican Baptist leaders have concluded that Mexican American Baptist pastors, leaders, and lay persons served best when they were educated; however, the Mexican American Baptist leadership did not always think this way. In early 1900, the belief was first, a person who had a conversion experience and wanted to preach, need not go to school to be ordained. Second, any person with a good testimony and speaking ability, who had a desire to preach, should be allowed to preach regardless of education. Many of the early Mexican American Baptist ministers depended on conferences and courses sponsored by Baptist Associations or Conventions for their ministerial education.[12]

In 1960, after fifty years of existence, CBMT entered a three-year study to determine the possibility of merging with the General Baptist Convention of Texas. When the Mexican American Baptist Convention met in San Antonio in 1960, the churches voted to enter into a program of unification with the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Although the vote was 70 in favor and 17 against, the opposition fought long and hard to keep the merger from happening. Rev. Fred Montero believed that

> a good historian is true to truth and facts, be they good or bad otherwise, his writing would be legends or stories but not history. Writing have appeared in our periodical, *El Bautista Mexicano*; in pamphlets and booklets by would be "historians" on the subject of Unification---that is, the act by which the Baptist General Convention of Texas took control of our Mexican Baptist General Convention reducing its status to that of department---praising this and that individual for their participation in bringing about Unification. But they failed to mention true heroes and even victims of the tactics employed in such a movement. Some of these writers "neither saw nor heard" since they did not belong to the Convention at the time.[13]

The unification that occurred between the two conventions was not adequately explained since not all Mexican American Baptist members understood the true ramifications of the merger. Rev. Montero wrote a series of articles and letters to Mexican American Baptist leaders and to the CBMT from 1960 - 1972 against unification. The idea of unification did not come from the Mexican American leaders; instead, two representatives of the Home Mission Board and BGCT, Lloyd Corder and L. D. Wood, initiated it. According to Montero, the motives of Anglo Baptists were to gain control of the Mexican American Convention using whatever means possible to get the Mexican Convention leaders and members to vote for unification. The true motive for unification may never be known, but the success of the Mexican American Convention threatened the control that the "core Anglo Baptist group" had over Mexican Baptists. During the probationary period before the actual vote for unification was taken, Mexican American church pastors were threatened by letters and even terminated for being against unification. Many of those who voted for unification regretted having done so when they found out they had lost their autonomy, sovereignty, the treasury, and self-control. The CBMT became a department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas.[14]

Seven Mexican Americans were named to a committee to represent the CBMT at a meeting with an Anglo delegation from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and reconsider unification and report back to the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Montero claims that the president of the Mexican American committee, Carlos Paredes was bilingual and the only member of the committee who acted and spoke for the group. The other six were not given an opportunity to ask questions or give their opinions. Rev. Silva Linares was a member of

the unification committee and confirmed Montero's assertion. Even though unification did occur, it was not accepted by all of the Mexican American Baptist community.[15]

Grijalva points out that there were three periods involving the unification between the two conventions: the Pre-Unification Period, 1958-1963; the *Convención*-BGCT Unification of 1964, and the Post-Unification Analysis of 1978. After a three-year period of study, the CBMT and the Baptist General Convention of Texas merged, but not without opposition. Ricardo B. Álvarez wrote in a section of *El Bautista Mexicano* that a group, mostly from San Antonio, presented a "Manifesto." The group of seven persons named themselves "The Board of Vigilance of the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas." The written manifesto against unification was sent to the leaders of CBMT. It was presented at the Convention that was meeting in Harlingen, Texas, in 1963, stating their opposition. The letter to the leadership of the Convention did not arrive in time. A motion was made at the Convention to discuss the manifesto at the next annual Mexican American Convention, which would be held in Lubbock, Texas. When the CBMT met in Lubbock, a motion was made to review the concerns of the "Board of Vigilance." The motion was voted down and CBMT proceeded to vote for unification.[16]

Prior to the Harlingen 1963 meeting there had been voices of opposition. In 1960 when the CBMT met in San Antonio, Pascual Hurtiz presented a message at the CBMT and urged the Convention members to consider the following three concerns:

1. Would the two Conventions be able to work together to the satisfaction of both?
2. What guarantee did *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas* have that the Baptist General Convention of Texas would honor the unification proposals?
3. Pascual Hurtiz claimed he had been informed that some pastors and churches had been threatened with withdrawal of pastoral aid if they voted against unification.

When votes were cast, the three concerns did not seem to matter. The vote for unification by those present and eligible to vote was 70 for and 17 against. In the fall of 1961, during

the pre-unification period, Ignacio E. Gonzáles, President of CBMT, a member in favor of unification and the Mexican American Exploratory Committee, was awarded an honorary doctorate degree by the University of Corpus Christi. Gonzáles' support of unification was crucial, and the honorary doctoral degree could have been viewed by some as a reward by the "Anglo Baptist Core group" for his support. Members of the Mexican American Baptist community were elated since few Mexican Americans shared this honor. The honorary doctorate degree bestowed on Gonzáles came at a time when Mexican Americans were marching and striking for equality.[17]

There is little evidence that love and understanding, as preached by Gonzales and others, accelerated the pace of integration and equality for Mexican Americans in south Texas during the 1960s. A large number of the Mexican Americans who were members of the Mexican American Baptist Unification Committee (*Comité de Entendimiento*) were later employed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas in various capacities. Dr. Grijalva served as president of *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas* the first year following the merger. A few years later he became president of *El Teologico Bautista Mexicano de San Antonio, Tejas,* or Mexican Baptist Bible Institute, supported by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. Although the Mexican American Convention merged with the Anglo Convention, the Mexican American Convention continued to exist. The CBMT has yearly meetings; it is a department of the Baptist Convention of Texas and dependent on the Anglo Baptist Convention for its existence. The power it once exerted over the Mexican American Baptist community has greatly diminished. The yearly meeting is an event where pastors, delegates, and church members gather to share Christian experiences, get away from their churches, and meet new friends. The CBMT still has its officers, but the money that once flowed into its treasury now finds its way to the Baptist General Convention of Texas coffers.

Grijalva acknowledges that according to the agreement between the two Conventions, CBMT became a department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The Mexican American Baptist Convention changed from an organization supported by Mexican American Baptist churches to a department of the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The Mexican American Baptist Convention's main purpose after the merger was to stimulate the various Mexican American Baptist churches in promoting growth through evangelism, support missionary work and Christian education, and work towards promoting harmony among Mexican American Baptist churches of Texas. All money and gifts sent to the Convención now go directly to the BGCT treasury.[18]

In 1975, the completion of the Constitution that would govern the Convention was presented at the annual meeting of CBMT, which met in Corpus Christi, Texas. A similar group that had opposed the merger in 1964 voiced opposition to the Constitution. This group of anti-unificationists had appeared yearly at the Mexican American Baptist Convention and passed out pamphlets and voiced their opposition against unification. In 1977, because of the opposition from the anti-unificationists, a committee of ten was elected to study the pros and cons of unification since their merger in 1964. The ten committee members consisted of five from CBMT and five from the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The findings were reported to CBMT at the annual meeting in McAllen, Texas, in 1978. The report by the ten members was presented and approved by the messengers to the Convention with some minor changes.[19] The approval of the report laid to rest any future dissension by the anti-unificationists.

In 1978, Daniel Aleman reported to CBMT that Mexican American Baptist congregations gave $297,464 in 1978 to the cooperative program administered by the Baptist General Convention of Texas. The annual budget report of the Cooperative Program presented by Aleman is an example of how Mexican American Baptist contributions had increased substantially by 1978. It also supported the belief that

Mexican American Baptists were at the threshold of contributing substantially to their self-support. Robert García, head of the Church Extension Committee, reported that 172 pastors had received pastoral assistance from the BGCT. During the same period loans to Mexican American Baptist congregations totaled $71,000. Elfin K. Howell met with the Mexican Baptist leadership in Mexico to discuss the future missionary work along the Río Grande, while James M. Dunn, head of the Christian Life Commission, gave a study detailing the needs and concerns of Mexican Americans and Mexicans living in the Río Grande Valley. Dunn reported to the Christian Life Commission that the salaries they earned was seldom enough, and families suffered more illnesses and deaths than the national average.[20]

Before the merger *La Convención Bautista de Tejas* was deeply concerned with the spiritual and financial needs of Mexican American Baptist churches in Texas and assisted with their needs as much as possible. They also supported Mexican American Baptist churches in Bee and surrounding counties. Delegates selected by the local Baptist churches represented the church at the Mexican American Baptist Convention when it met yearly. Before the merger of the two Conventions, Mexican American churches supported CBMT with their offerings and donations.

The *Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas* had existed for fifty years before the merger with the Anglo Baptist Convention, and most Mexican Americans developed close ties with CBMT. The CBMT had been the strong arm of the Mexican American churches during the Depression and both World Wars. To the Mexican American Baptist community, CBMT was a yearly event where the church pastor, members, delegates, and leaders met with fellow brethren from all over the state of Texas. They took care of the business of the Convention, shared Christ, and had fellowship. To most members, *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas* was the pride of the Mexican American Baptist

community. Even now the merger of the two Conventions continues to confuse older members who remembered CBMT before the merger.

Analysis

At the turn of the century Mexican American Baptist church members became subject to the discrimination that was rampant during this period in South Texas and elsewhere. According to a number of Mexican American pastors such as Rev. Fred Montero, discrimination of Mexican Americans was as prevalent inside the Baptist churches as it was outside. Assumed poverty, lack of education, unfamiliarity with church politics, and their "Mexican origin" kept most Mexican American Baptists from "culturally assimilating" into the core Anglo Baptist community. Mexican American Baptist congregations had not alternative but to seek social support within their own church family, further alienating them from Anglo Baptist congregations. Mexican American Baptist pastors who most often depended on Anglo Baptist institutions for their salaries were paid considerably less than Anglo pastors, and they were kept off policy-making boards. Anglo Baptist members who were financially better off controlled the coffers, the pulpit, and in isolated cases even the pulpit content.

As a result of the civil rights movement, discrimination has considerably diminished in Anglo Baptist institutions and some "cultural assimilation" has taken place between the two Baptist groups. However, Mexican Americans who assimilate into Anglo Baptist congregations and culture do not automatically enter the "clique group." The demise of *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas* occurred at a period in Baptist history when cultural assimilation was in effect. The "Anglo-Saxon Protestant mentality" felt threatened by what they viewed as a "secondary cultural group" — in this case the Mexican American Baptists who had gained considerable independence by establishing their own convention. Under the guise of forming a stronger Baptist Convention for all the Baptist community, a few Anglo Baptist leaders convinced a group of Mexican

American Baptist leaders to merge and become a department within the much larger Anglo Baptist Convention.

Chapter III Endnotes

[1]Rev. Fred Montero, *Es Tiempo de Enderezar Las Veredas* (Letter handed out to members attending *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas*), 1.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Rev. Benjamin Diáz, *Los Bautistas Mexicanos en Tejas a Través de 50 Años 1910 - 1960* (privately published, n.d.)

[4]Joshua Grijalva, D.A. Min., D.D., A History of Mexican Baptists in Texas 1881 - 1981 (Dallas: Office of Language Missions, Baptist General Convention of Texas in cooperation with the Mexican Baptist Convention of Texas, Baptist Building, 1982), 32.

[5]Montero, *Es Tiempo de Enderezar las Veredas*, 1.

[6]Carey McWilliams, North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States (New York: NY: Praeger Publishers, 1990), 176-177.

[7] Grijalva, A History of Hispanics in Texas, 47-48.

[8] Ibid., 49-50.

[9] Ibid., 53-55.

[10] Ibid., 56-57.

[11] Ibid., 73.

[12] Samuel Maldonado Ortegón, "Religious Thought and Practice among Mexican Baptists of the United States, 1900 - 1947" (Ph.D. diss., University of Southern California, 1910), 114-121.

[13] Rev. Fred Montero, "The Historical Origin of Unification." Letter distributed to members and Mexican American leaders of *La Convención Bautista Mexicana de Tejas*, 1972, 1.

[14] Ibid.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Grivalva, A History of Mexican Baptists in Texas, 120-121.

[17] Ibid., 120.

[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid., 158-166.

[20] Ibid., 166-167.

CHAPTER IV

THE HISTORY OF MEXICAN AMERICANS IN BEE COUNTY

Introduction

> If this little book, dealing with the early history of Bee and adjoining counties, is enjoyed by the pioneer men and women and their descendants as they read its pages, I shall be happy, indeed.
>
> Love and respect prompted me to collect these facts to be preserved for future generations, and I trust each one who reads them will have a deeper feeling of gratitude for the brave men and women who, among savage beasts and still more savage men (Indians and Mexicans), laid the foundation for our present civilization.[1]

Numerous historical books have been written about the early history of Bee County and Beeville, Texas, the county seat. Although Mexican Americans have lived and contributed to this local history, they are seldom mentioned in or entirely omitted from local history. However, there is a vast source of oral Mexican American history that has not been recorded. Mexican Americans and their ancestors lived in Bee County long before the County was founded. At a certain period in history the southwestern part of the United States once belonged to Spain and later to Mexico, but with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the area was ceded to the United States. As it worked

out, Mexican Americans ended up as laborers helping farmers clear land for farming and working as *vaqueros* (ranch hands) on local ranches.

As Bee County developed under capitalism, Mexican Americans became the targets of discrimination in the work place, political setting, and educational system. But after World War II, the docile demeanor of the Mexican American community in Bee County began to change. Mexican American citizens had fought and died in two foreign wars and now sought equality in schools, local politics, and the work place. By late 1960 and early 1970, Mexican American leaders and registered voters challenged the status quo of Bee County. Because of civil rights activism throughout the county, it became impossible to deny the Mexican American population equality. Thus an integrated community began to emerge.

Today Mexican Americans occupy some of the most important positions within Bee County. The first Mexican American judge, Santiago (Jimmy) Martínez, in Bee County history was elected in the last general election of 1996, while schools enjoy the leadership of many well-qualified Mexican Americans as teachers, principals, and coaches. The impact that Mexican Americans have made in the development of Bee County can not be overlooked.

The first settlers to Bee County can be traced as far back as 1685 when Spanish explorers came and settled on the Blanco and Papalote area. Phillip, the King of Spain, gave Carlos Martínez, one of his warriors, a Spanish land grant that extended into northern Bee County. Martínez and his entire family were killed by Mexican soldiers when Mexico revolted against Spain. In 1805, another Spaniard, Don Martín de León settled on a large ranch between the Aransas and Neueces Rivers. When Mexico gained its independence from Spain in 1821, the Mexican government took away all Spanish land grants from Spanish settlers, including Don Martín de León's land grant. In 1824, Texas and Coahuila were joined together, forming the provisional states of Texas and

Coahuila. The two provinces passed a colonization law in 1825 that gave land agents large grants of land to settle. The colonization law was designed to attract settlers into the Texas area that had fertile soil that settlers could use for farming and raising livestock. Under the original colonization laws passed by the Mexican government settlers had to be natives of Ireland and other Roman Catholic countries. According to reports from New York and other eastern states where Irish immigrants had settled, the Irish were hard workers, and honest and law-abiding citizens. The Mexican government concluded that the Irish would make good Mexican citizens, and a special effort was made to bring them to Texas.[2]

Don Martín de León, earlier dispossessed of the Spanish land grant, was later granted permission by the Mexican government to settle a colony in what is present-day Victoria County, a community approximately sixty miles northeast of Bee County. Since the original colonization stipulated settlers must be natives of Ireland, Don Martín de León sought and was granted special permission to settle here. Permission granted to Don Martín de León was also extended to other settlers who were not Irish and who wanted to settle in Bee County.[3] In 1834, several Irish families settled on present-day Poesta Creek area (Bee County). To the north of these Irish settlers several Mexican families had settled. They were Rosalia Peña, Julian Zavala, and four Molina families.[4]

Both Spanish and Mexicans settled in Goliad (*la Bahía*), which included part of Bee County and presently Goliad County. Large tracts of land in Goliad County were allocated for mission support; however, land not allocated to missions was ranched by soldiers who were stationed in Goliad or had retired there. Private citizens and soldiers could also rent mission land by giving a tenth of their profits to help maintain the missions in the Goliad area. The renters were called *diesmeros*. In 1808, the Refugio mission (part of Bee County during this period) owned 5,000 head of livestock of all kinds. They also rented large parcels of land to *diesmeros*. As the Protestant population

increased, the Catholic population declined and missions were abandoned. These abandoned missions released their public lands and were immediately taken over by ranchers.[5]

In 1820, Captain Aldrete was Commandante of La Bahía mission and father of José Miguel Aldrete, who was Don Martín de León's son-in-law. When Don Martín de León abandoned the land located at *El Alamo* on the north bank of the Aransas. Aldretes and Rafael Machota took possession of the land and later received title to the land. A vast majority of the Spanish and Mexican families that settled in the area of Bee, Goliad Refugio and Victoria counties were *Tamaulipecanos* or were affiliated with the old *Nuevo Santander* ancestry. Between 1836 and 1870, a large number of these families returned to *Tamaulipas*.[6] Historian Hobart Huson claims:

> Other early Spaniard and Mexican families who had taken ranches in our section, most of whom were in possession prior to Irish colony, were those of Auda, Bacera, Barrera, Blanco Buentello, Carabajal, Castillo, Castro, Cabarrubias, Delgado, Falcón, Flores, Galán, Gallardo, Galvan, García, Garza, de la Garza, Gonzáles, Goseacochea, Hernández, de León, Manchola, Huizar, Moya, Musquiz, Navarro, Nura, Nunez, de la Peña, Pérez, del Prado, Ramón, Reojas, Reyna (Reñe), Ríos, Rodríguez, Sarbriego de Los Santos, Serna, Suarto, Torres, Valdez, Villa, Villareal, de la Viña, and Ybarbo.[7]

Some of these families were closely related to those from Bexar (San Antonio) and came from *Tamaulipas, Coahuila,* and other northern Mexican states and had close family ties with each other. According to the state abstracts of Bee County, the following Mexican American families owned large tracts of land to Bee County:

Date	Name	Acreage
03-17-1834	José María Uranga	48712.40 acres
12-20-1834	Manuel de Los Santos	4828.40 acres
12-25-1834	Luciano Recindos	4428.40 acres
08-03-1835	Carmen Molina	1746.13 acres
08-03-1835	Juan de Diós Molina	4605.50 acres
08-03-1835	Theodóro Molina	4605.50 acres
08-03-1835	Julian Zavalla	4605.50 acres
02-23-1841	Cayetano Rivas	4605 acres
01-07-1847	Marcelo Alcorta	4605 acres
12-14-1857	Carlos Sandoval	320 acres
01-22-1857	Nepomuceno Recéndez	2302.77 acres[8]

Mexican families that settled in Texas before independence from Mexico were citizens of Mexico and referred to as Mexicans. When Texas won independence from Mexico, Mexican living in Texas became Texas Mexicans or Tejanos. After Texas was annexed to the United States, they became Mexican American citizens. In early 1800, several Mexican families settled in the Papalote area, a small community in Bee County.[9] The Mexican settlers were Charlie Cantú, Narciso Cantú, and Santiago Garza. Joseph Gus Roundtree, owner of the Roundtree ranch located in Bee County and author of a book on Bee County history, acknowledges that several Mexican American families worked on his ranch and now live on the Roundtree land. In 1908, Sivero Valdez, his wife, and two children came to live and work on the ranch. Roundtree commented that Valdez had several descendants living in Beeville. Another man, Alejandro Treviño, and his family have lived on the ranch for twenty-five years. In 1924, the Felipe Treviño family moved to the ranch as tenants. They were such good tenants that Roundtree

turned the whole ranch over to them. Others who lived on the ranch prior to Treviño included the following families: Antonio Olivárez, Margarito Vasques, Alejandro García, Mayin Saucedo, Vidal Silvas, José Leal, José Nave, Rita Nave, Francísco Garza, Mateo López, Refeno Sauceda, Louis Salinas, Antonio Blanco, Louis Adémes, Sóstenes Garza, Leonardo Garza, Mauricio Gueterra, Tanilo López, Genaro Gonzáles, and Felípe Ramírez.[10]

The following are events passed on to the present Mexican American generation by ancestors who were eyewitnesses to events of early days in Bee County and Beeville, Texas. Catarino Romero, who presently lives in Mineral, a small community northwest of Beeville, recalls coming to Robstown, Texas, in 1914 with his parents. They lived in Monterrey, Mexico, and were contracted to pick cotton in Texas. After traveling back and forth continually between Texas and Mexico, they decided it was best to settle in Texas. They moved to Aqua Dulce, a small community approximately ten miles south of Robstown, Texas. Romero had two major experiences that impacted his life: the death of his mother in 1919 and a huge storm that devastated the area. A cure for her mother's illness had not yet been discovered; thus his mother's death was somewhat premature. Because of limited technology to track storms or warn those in its path, the storm killed many people or caused them to lose all their possessions. The area residents were devastated by the storm, and it forced Romero and his family to seek work elsewhere. They relocated to a ranch owned by T.W. Willy in Candlish, a community ten miles north of Beeville, but still in Bee County. Romero married during the Depression and moved to Normana, where he resided for a short period until he moved to Mineral, Texas, where he has resided ever since.

Romero recalls that almost everything they ate was grown, raised on the farm, or hunted. Almost all families that worked on farms were given a small plot of land by the farm owner to grow vegetables for home consumption. They were also given a hog or

steer for their meat consumption. These gestures were normally made during the Christmas season or at the end of the year. From the meat they made such things as bacon, jerky (dried meat), sausage, lard, and crackling. Several times a year Mexican American families traveled eighty miles, all of them to San Antonio, Texas, a large city north of Bee County, where they bought large quantities of flour, sugar, and coffee. They often bought supplies to last for several months because seasonal work kept them busy year round. The supplies were purchased at a large grocery store called Centeno's, owned by a well known San Antonio Tejano family. Romero and other Mexican Americans in Bee County recall the store as the pride of the Tejanos in Texas because few Mexican Americans owned businesses, let alone one as large as Centano's.[11]

Enrique Flores, a retired Mexican American ranch hand, reported experiences similar to Romero's. Although he worked as a ranch laborer, the work was just as hard as farming. Daily activities on the ranch generally began at approximately 4:00 a.m. when the ranch hands were awakened. After washing up, they ate a hearty breakfast consisting of bacon, eggs, potatoes, refried beans, homemade *tortillas*, and plenty of coffee. After breakfast, they saddled their horses and rode the ranch with other ranch hands. Work on the ranch consisted of not only working with cattle but also building fences and cow pens, clearing land, and doing many other chores. Ranch hands seldom arrived home before dusk. From 1950 onward, work on the farms and ranches changed because of improved technology. Tractors and trucks replaced teams of horses used to plow and pull wagons, thus reducing the workload of the ranch hands. Wages before 1900 were from fifty to seventy five cents a day, but by the mid-1900s wages for a full day's work had increased to ten dollars and more a day.[12]

Since Mr. Romero's work was seasonal, after the crops were harvested he and his family went up north, as did other families, and worked harvesting fruits and vegetables. Ranch hands such as Flores seldom left the ranches where they were employed. Women

living on ranches and farms worked almost as hard as the men, getting up earlier than the men to cook breakfast and prepare *lonche* for the ranch or field hands. In addition, they worked as field laborers with the rest of the family.[13]

In interviews with Romero and Flores, they both recalled the Depression years. They remembered that those years were difficult, not only for the working families but also for the ranchers and farmers in Bee County. In many instances during the Depression years, families worked for nothing except food and a roof over their heads. Items such as sugar, coffee, tires, and shoes were difficult to purchase and most families just did without. During this period families supplemented their diet with rabbits, wild pigs, deer, fish, and other wild game. They both agreed that they seldom went hungry because their basic food was grown or hunted. A commonality among most Mexican Americans in Bee County during the Depression years was that they were all poor and needed one another's help to survive.

Dionicio Silva, a small business owner in Beeville, shared his experiences of what life was like living in Bee County during the county's early years. Dionicio was born in 1904 and although advanced in years his recollection of life in Bee County was admirable and very informative. Since this interview he was tragically killed in an automobile accident. In 1921, his family moved to Clareville, a small settlement approximately ten miles southwest of Beeville in Bee County. As was common among newcomers to the county, they came as farm laborers to work on surrounding farms. His farm experiences are few because Silva moved to Beeville with his family at an early age, where he resided until his death two years ago.[14]

From 1900 - 1950 schools in Bee County were segregated, although there were some exceptions whereby selected minority students attended white schools. In Beeville, the elementary schools and the local Allen Carter Jones (A. C. Jones) High School were segregated. According to Dionicio Silva, Mexican Americans attended the Jackson

School, known throughout the community as the "Meskin" School. Blacks also had their own school named Canada Lott. Most of the faculty members and teachers employed at Jackson School were Anglos. Mexican American teachers were hired to teach there, but they were few in number. Several Mexican Americans who were well off economically and catered to the Anglo establishment attended A. C. Jones High School, but this was the exception and not the rule. Jackson School had only eleven grades at the time. Upon completion of the eleventh grade the student was considered a graduate and family members celebrated the achievement as if they had completed high school.[15]

Mrs. Vicenta Vega, another long time resident of Beeville, made the following comments in reference to Mexican American education in Bee County. Born in 1909 in Beeville, Mrs. Vega agreed that Mexican American youth did not receive an education equal to that of Anglo students; however; she added that segregation was not the only reason. According to Mrs. Vega, economics and control were also factors. Anglos did not want Mexican Americans to get an education because they did not want to have their labor force depleted. Furthermore, education made Mexican Americans "sassy" and "hard to handle." Vega confided that she started working cleaning houses for Anglo ladies at the age of eleven and continued well into her adult life. She had very little schooling, but believed that parents at that time were not concerned with female family members receiving a formal education.[16]

Dionicio Silva agreed with Vega's conclusion as to why Mexican Americans did not pursue education; however; he added other reasons not mentioned by Vega. Educated Mexicans created problems for those "good Mexicans" who were content with the way things were. Moreover, the *patrón* provided for the essentials workers needed and most Anglo bosses felt that the workers should be satisfied with such arrangements. Thus education was not important. He further added that Mexican Americans were also

at fault because they wanted their children to start working as young as possible in order to contribute to the family income. After the local crops were harvested, many families migrated north to work in the fruit and vegetable fields. Owners wanted their crops harvested as quickly as possible and preferred larger families because harvesting could be done more expediently. Although segregation was a contributing factor for Mexican Americans not receiving adequate education, it was not the only reason. Many of the Anglo bosses encouraged the Mexican American parents to keep the children out of school during planting and harvest season.[17]

There were various social activities that were enjoyed by the Mexican American community, but none were more popular than dances and weddings. They were especially popular because they were social events enjoyed by the whole community. Families would take turns hosting the events, which normally took place on Saturday or Sunday evenings and lasted well into the night. Most often local musicians who provided the music were family members or friends who lived in the community. People came to the events from surrounding farms and ranches, and some would to travel long distances to get there. Enrique Flores commented that during the early 1900s few Mexican Americans owned automobiles in Bee County, but that changed after World War II. Folks who traveled long distances to attend social events traveled on horseback or wagons, or walked.[18] Weddings have always been an occasion for big celebrations for most Mexican American families. In early colonial Texas and to the present time, marriages involving siblings is looked upon as one of the most memorable events with Mexican American families. Parents encouraged siblings to seek someone with similar cultural backgrounds for a mate, "*uno de los tuyos*," or "one of us." In these close-knit Mexican American families, siblings who married their own kind strengthened family ties. Families pooled their economic and labor resources, resulting in less burdensome lives for the newlyweds and their children. Mexican American families in Bee County

were no different from Mexican American families in other parts of the United States during the early and mid-1900s. Moore and Pachon make the following observation:

> From the existing ethnographic studies it appears that the family is the most important facet of life for Mexican Americans in south Texas as well as in other traditionalistic poverty enclaves. This is not only the immediate family of husband, wife, and children, but the extended family of relatives on both sides. It is the main focus of obligations and also a source of emotional and economic support as well as recognition for accomplishment.[19]

As a result of the close family relationship, Mexican American families were better prepared to endure hardship than were other families who did not enjoy such close relationships.

It is from close knit friends that the best man and bridesmaid (*padrinos*) are chosen as witnesses at weddings. Godparents (*compadres*) differ from *padrinos* in that they are witnesses to the baptism of a child instead of a wedding. *Compadres* served and continue to serve as vital instruments in the support of the extended family. The *padrinos* pledge support to the newlyweds with advice, monetary and spiritual assistance, and just friendship. The mother and the godmother of the child become *comadres*. Moore and Pachon declare that "a man and the godfather of his child become *compadres* (the *compadre* relation may also be a way of honoring a person superior in status: for example, a boss or patron)."[20] The *compadres* pledge they will help instruct the children in good moral values. Also, if there is the loss of one or both parents, they will help rear the children. *Compadrazco* is a Catholic practice; however, it is not unusual for Protestants to acknowledge having *compadres*, a religious practice some protestants practiced prior to their conversions.

Among other social and recreational activities was baseball. Today, baseball fields are built with bleachers, lights, and grass, while during the early and mid 1900s, baseball was played in open fields prepared for play the same day of the event. The games were mostly a family pastime; however, there were male-only teams that engaged in competition with surrounding communities. Few events attracted a larger crowd than Sunday afternoon baseball games. Jesse De Ruess, a retiree and long time resident of Bee County, recalls that although ball games were very competitive they were also very entertaining and family oriented. Each team represented a certain aspect of the Mexican American community, which could be religious, social, business, or some worthwhile cause. De Ruess remembers that one of the most entertaining softball teams was called *los gordos y los flacos* (the fat and the skinny ones).[21]

Horseback riding and hunting were also recreational events but enjoyed mostly by young males. De Ruess commented that youngsters from all parts of the community engaged in horse racing, and the rodeo. During early 1900 several racetracks were built in Bee County and were sites of horseracing on Sunday afternoons. He also noted that segregation was seldom practiced at these events. It included the participation of all the community regardless of nationality or ethnic background. At the turn of the century movies were relatively new to Bee County, but by the1920s Spanish movies were shown at a local Beeville theater called *El Treatro Maga*. After World War II movies became a favorite pastime for moviegoers, and movie theaters attracted larger crowds than previously, especially Mexican American families. Besides *El Treatro Maga*, there were two other theaters in Beeville, the *Realto* and *El Rio*, owned and operated by an Anglo family. Most of the movies shown at these two theaters were in English; however, Sunday nights were usually reserved for Spanish movies. These two theaters had a segregated seating arrangement. The upstairs was divided into two sections, one for

blacks and the other for Mexican Americans. The bottom floor was reserved for whites only.[22]

In 1878 the first railroad was built in Bee County and by 1920 it divided the town. Mexican Americans and blacks resided on the west side of the tracks and Anglos on the east side of town. Mexican Americans seldom ventured east of the tracks after dark, and it was common knowledge that they were not welcome. Those Mexican Americans found on the eastside after dark were escorted back to the west side or threatened. During 1940, Nago Alaniz, a young Mexican American lawyer, bought a house on the east side of town. Shortly after the purchase, the house was bombed and the culprit was never found. Mr. Alaniz never rebuilt the house. Instead, he left town and moved to San Diego, where he became one of the most prominent lawyers in the area.[23]

Before 1900, the most notable Mexican American businesses in Bee County were periodicals, including *El Grito Del Pueblo*, established in 1888 by P. & P. Gonzales, and *El Amigo de los Hombres*, established by Ignacio R. Rodriquez in 1890.[24] After 1900, other small Mexican American businesses were established, but none were as successful as businesses that opened after World War II. Mexican Americans who served in World War II became exposed to different cultures, ideas, and experiences that gave them more freedom to explore economic opportunities upon returning home. With help from the G.I. Bill, Mexican American veterans returning from war invested in homes, education, and businesses. The American G.I. Forum, under the direction of Dr. Héctor P. García, helped educate the returning Mexican American soldiers about the benefits available for them through the G.I. Bill. Mike Muñoz, city inspector and long time resident of Bee County and Beeville, believed that the increase in new homes and businesses on the west side of Beeville did not occur until after World War II. He affirmed that the G I Bill was instrumental in providing loans to help Mexican Americans with buying homes, starting businesses, and getting education. Returning soldiers had previously sent money home

while stationed overseas and in the States. Their money was saved for them by their families, and on their return home they invested in small shops that catered to the local *barrio* population.[25] Some business owners were more successful than others, such as the Alaniz family, which included two brothers, Luz and Simplicio Alaniz, and their two sons, Cruz and Crecencio. In the early 1920's, the two brothers, Luz and Simplicio, opened separate grocery stores on the west side. Luz was the owner of the larger store. According to his nephew Ray Alaniz, the stores were extremely successful since they sold not only groceries but also farm and ranching supplies. Besides the Mexican American customers, Anglos also patronized the business in large numbers. The Alaniz brothers gave credit to farmers and ranchers with guarantees of payment pending the sale of their cattle or crops. They not only owned the grocery store but also large segments of prime real estate, where the Alaniz apartments presently stand. Their sons Cruz and Crecencio Alaniz opened and operated a service station and garage during the mid-1920s. The two sons lived and worked on a ranch near Beeville, but came to town to work part time for two years as mechanic apprentices. They were employed at Young's Garage and worked for free to learn the trade. Presently, members of the Alaniz family still own the garage business. It has since relocated to the east side of Beeville.[26] The business has grown considerably and is looked upon as one of the most successful businesses in Bee County. Another small Mexican American business that opened during the same period was Silva's Grocery Store. It was a small family business that remained opened until Dionicio Silva's death two years ago. His store was unique in that he sold not only groceries but also herbs (*yerbas*). *Yerbas* are herbs used mostly by Hispanics for medicinal use. In 1930, Daniel Rojas opened a barbershop and Augustín Mesa opened a wood shop. By the mid 1900s, businesses on the west side included a bakery, tortilla factory, broom factory, meat market, barbershops, several restaurants, and as many small grocery stores.[27]

Among the most successful and largest Mexican American Businesses in Bee County was the Joe Ramírez Chevrolet Company established in Beeville, Texas, in March of 1924. In 1925, Ramírez built a new building for his dealership. By 1934 he had both the Oldsmobile and the General Motors dealerships. Eventually he had dealerships in Three Rivers, Sinton, Refugio, Woodsboro, Uvalde, and Brownwood, Texas. In 1970, Ramírez sold his dealerships and moved to Oklahoma.[28]

Alta Silva, who presently resides on the west side where she has lived most of her life, commented that streets on the West Side were covered with *caliche* and during windy weather the *caliche* dust would enter her house and covered the furniture and appliances with dust. During rainy weather it was impossible to travel or even walk on the streets without getting stuck in the mud. There was limited street lighting on the west side and families would do their shopping early to avoid being on the street after dark. Silva noted that streets on the east side differed from those on the west side. Those on the east side were covered with gravel instead of *caliche*, and were constantly maintained. There was a large creek located on the west side that did not have a bridge over it. Crossing the creek in the rainy season was almost impossible. People working on the east side had to walk long distances to get to the other side. It was not until the sixties that a concrete bridge was finally built. The bridge made it easier to travel from one side of town to the other, especially during bad weather.[29] Commissioner Toby Ortíz, a lifelong resident of Bee County, shared with the author what West Side Beeville was like when he was growing up. He remembers that before 1950 most restrooms (outhouses) were built outside. Mexican Americans referred to them as *escusados*. They were not only unsanitary but also very inconvenient in bad weather and at night. In the darkness of night they became dangerous to reach, especially for the elderly and children. The drinking water always tasted bad; however, citizens were assured that chlorine had killed all the germs. Very little sewage or drainage was available on the west side, and

homeowners had to haul their garbage to the County dump yard. Ortíz concluded that modern-day conveniences did not come to the west side until after 1960, and then at a very slow pace, if at all.[30]

A recent controversy concerning a cemetery in Tynan, Texas, a small town in Bee County, best describes how segregation existed even in death: "Anglo-only cemeteries were common in the early 1900s, with separate cemeteries established for blacks and Mexican Americans."[31] Over the years Mexican Americans were buried in one cemetery, while Anglos were buried in the other. That tradition has continued through today, but not out of discrimination according to Murff (cemetery official), who was quoted by editor Dan Parker in an article he wrote in the Corpus Christi Caller Newspaper. He stated, "That fence is not separating the cemeteries. There's always been a property line since they were set up in 1912."[32] Even when fences were not constructed, segregation still existed. David Montejano comments that "in the farm areas of South and West Texas, the Caucasian schools were nearly always divided into 'Anglo schools' and 'Mexican American schools', the towns into 'white towns' and 'little Mexicos,' and even the churches and cemeteries followed this seemingly natural division of people."[33]

Mexican American residents agree that segregated cemeteries have always been the common practice in most cemeteries located in Bee County. Except for private cemeteries, land for cemeteries has generally been a donation by Anglo property owners and kept private and segregated. Grave markers are evidence of such practices. Cemeteries are sectioned into two areas, one for Mexican Americans and the other for Anglos. Evidence that segregation is still prevalent is clearly demonstrated by grave markers bearing the names and dates of recent burials, with Anglos in one section and Mexican Americans in the other. The explanation given by some Anglos for such practices is that since the inception of cemeteries in Bee County, Mexican Americans have not sought burial on Anglo sections because they wanted burial next to their kin.

Not only have cemeteries been segregated but also funeral homes. A complete dismantling of segregated funeral homes in Bee County did not occur until the late fifties and early sixties. Even today, the Mexican American community does not patronize funeral homes noted for discrimination. During World War II, Félix Longoria, a resident of Three Rivers, was drafted into the army and while on voluntary patrol was killed. His dedication in defense of his country was typical of Mexican Americans in the military service. Love of family, home, and country overcame his dislike of discrimination at home (Three Rivers) and did not deter him from performing heroically in the service of his country. Up until World War II most Mexican Americans thought of themselves as Mexicans. With World War II, this perception changed dramatically. Mexican Americans who went to war were treated as equals. They ate, slept, and died alongside Anglo Americans. When Longoria's remains were finally returned to his hometown in 1949, family members asked to use the local funeral home facilities for memorial services and for the body to lie in state. The funeral director refused, explaining that the Anglo community in Three Rivers would not like it. Three Rivers is not located in Bee County, but in Live Oak; however, its boundary borders Bee County. The discriminatory act was brought to the attention of Dr. Héctor García, president and founder of the G.I. Forum. The G.I. Forum is an organization founded in 1948 by Dr. Héctor P. García, a Corpus Christi physician, who was concerned with the discriminatory practices directed at Mexican American soldiers returning home from World War II.[34] Mexican American veterans returning home from war were frequently denied Veterans Benefits. As a result, Dr. García founded the G.I. Forum to fight against G.I. injustices and made a personal request to the funeral director to allow Félix's family to use the chapel for funeral services and make arrangement for burial. The funeral director denied his request and told Dr. García that there had never been a Mexican American funeral service held at the chapel.

Carlos Sánchez, a Washington Post reporter, declared that Dr. García reported his conversation to an Anglo newspaper in Corpus Christi. A reporter called the funeral director in Three Rivers and confirmed the story. After speaking to the Corpus Christi newspaper reporter, Dr. García sent seventeen telegrams to congressmen, senators, one governor and a number of journalists. He also wrote to Congressman Lyndon B. Johnson of Texas and told him of the funeral home incident. Dr. García added that Funeral Director Tom Kennedy's action was in direct contradiction of the principles that Private Félix Longoria had died for. Twenty-four hours after sending Congressman Johnson the letter, Dr. García received a telegram from the Congressman expressing his regret that such an incident of prejudice had occurred towards the deceased, Private Longoria, and his family. He also told the Doctor that neither he nor the Federal government had authority over civilian funeral homes; however, he had made arrangements to have Pvt. Félix Longoria buried in Arlington National Cemetery with full military honors. The Congressman added that Pvt. Félix Longoria would be buried "where the honored dead of the nation's war rest."[35] On February 16, 1949, Pvt. Félix Longoria was buried at Arlington National Cemetery. Present at the funeral services were U. S. Congressman Lyndon Johnson, his wife Lady Bird, and one of President Truman's aides, Major General Harry Vaughn.[36]

Washington reporter Carlos Sánchez also commented on the effects that this national recognition of a Mexican American's military service had on the nation:

> It was the day, some historians believe, that Mexicans in this country became Mexican Americans. Longoria's odyssey was a focus of national attention 40 years ago but the nation's attention, and its conscience too, was soon captured by indignities and inequalities involving others. It has fallen to the Mexican Americans of the war generation to teach Longoria's story to succeeding generations; too often it has fallen to chance.[37]

The Texas Legislature investigated the embarrassing incident and concluded that no act of discrimination was committed. Dr. García commented that almost no one agreed with the committee's conclusion and that the incident had changed the way the nation looked at Mexican Americans. But the incident attracted national attention was the catalyst for the growth and emergence of the civil rights movement by Mexican Americans everywhere.[38] Although changes regarding segregation of cemeteries in Bee and surrounding counties have occurred since 1950, much work is still needed to completely desegregate cemeteries in South Texas and elsewhere.

From 1900 to 1950, with the exception of a handful of persons, few Mexican Americans are mentioned among the leadership of Bee County. However, after 1950, several Mexican American names appeared on the school board and city council rolls. Fred Garza and Fred Moreno were elected to the school board, and Armando Cortez and Ray Moreno to the Beeville City Council. Dr. García's fight for the rights of World War II veterans inspired Mexican American Beevillians to fight for their rights. By late1960 and early 1970 Mexican Americans had made a firm commitment to fight for equality in city and county politics.[39]

Mike Muñoz commented that no single event exacerbated the fight for equality for Mexican Americans in Bee County more than the farm workers' march from Starr County through Bee County into Austin, Texas, in 1968. They were protesting the minimum wage law in Texas and seeking public awareness to their cause by appealing to all Mexican Americans for support. Their goal was to meet with the governor and appeal for his help in seeking an increase in the minimum wage to benefit hourly-wage employees. As their march progressed through south Texas towns and cities, locals joined them by marching with them part of the way or committing themselves to marching the entire distance to Austin. A large group of Mexican American leaders and citizens from Beeville, Texas, sympathetic to the farmers' cause, met the marchers at the

city limits and marched with them through town much to the disdain of some citizens of the Anglo community. Some Anglo employers who were vehemently against the march through Beeville even threatened their Mexican American employees with dismissal from work if they took part in the march. Other Anglos who patronized Mexican American businesses threatened to boycott those businesses that participated in the march through town.[40]

Bernie Sandoval, a local restaurant owner decided to take part in the march. But he never realized how bad it really was until he lost the Anglo trade at his place of business. Not only did he lose his Anglo trade but also the ability to borrow money. He eventually sold the business and got a job working with Service Employment Redevelopment (SER), a government program in Corpus Christi, Texas, and moved from Beeville to be near his job. Other participants in the march suffered similar experiences, but for them the march in 1966 served as the impetus that united their efforts in fighting discrimination in Beeville and surrounding cities. Most of the in-roads to equality in the city of Beeville occurred from 1970 onward when the first majority City Council was elected.[41]

In 1970, the first Mexican American City Council was elected in Beeville, Texas. The four Mexican Americans who made up the City Council were Mike Muñoz, Santiago "Jimmy" Martínez, Humberto Saenz, and Bernardo Sandoval. Each Mexican American elected official had a special reason to become involved in politics. All four councilmen shared similar concerns such as the following: (a) the need to fight against discrimination in the workplace, (b) all the Councilmen had participated in the farm workers' march to Austin, Texas, to fight for better wages, and each one wanted better wages for workers in Bee County, and (c) two Councilmen were members of the American G.I. Forum and had been greatly influenced by Dr. Héctor P. García's ideals for equality. Their first City Council meeting was extremely tense because they had received several death threats

prior to the City Council meeting. The threats came from ex-sheriff Vail Ennis, who was known throughout the Mexican American community as "*el Canoso*" (gray-haired one). It is said that while Sheriff he killed several Mexican American men and beat women, children and the elderly among the Mexican American community. Although none of the threats were carried out, the first City Council meeting proved that the resolve of the Mexican Americans for equality was real. Even with threats of death the first Mexican American City Council meeting had the biggest crowd ever for a meeting such as the Beeville City Council.[42]

On December 10, 1969, Mike Muñoz, chairman of the American G.I. Forum in Beeville, Texas, sent a letter to Dr. Héctor P. García to help investigate allegations of possible segregation in the Thomas Jefferson Jr. High School in Beeville, Texas. Dr. García responded by sending the complaint to the HEW Office of Civil Rights. On July 15, 1970, he received a response from James C. McClure, from the Dallas Education Branch. They promised Dr. García that the office of HEW would investigate the complaint to determine if Beeville ISD was in compliance with Title VI, Civil Rights Act of 1964. Copies of the article were published in Beeville Bee-Picayune, the local newspaper. The newspaper heading stated that the G.I. Forum Counsel was threatening to sue the local school system. Other complaints against Independent School Districts Mathis, Bishop, Odem, and Corpus Christi in the area were filed during this period and can be found in documents included in the García Collection housed at Texas A & M – Corpus Christi University Campus in Corpus Christi, Texas, in the Mary and Jeff Bell Library. In each case Dr. Héctor P. García and the G.I. Forum were at the forefront of the complaints.[43]

Conclusion

Early Bee County "Anglo history" would lead one to conclude that it was the brave Irish settlers who fought against Indians, Mexicans, and wild beasts that settled Bee

and surrounding counties. However, Spaniards and Mexicans were settled here long before the first Anglo Saxon settler arrived in Texas in 1821. The history of Refugio County, which included part of Bee County, identifies a large number of Mexican families who were already living in Goliad, Refugio, and Victoria Counties. Most of the families were related to other families who settled in San Antonio, Texas, during this same period. The largest number of Mexican settlers in the area came from Tamaulipas, Coahuila, and other northern Mexican states. According to early Refugio history between 1836 - 1870, the majority of these settlers returned to Tamaulipas and other northern states. Most likely these families were victims of the bitter "aftermath" of the Texas Revolution when the brunt of the retaliation against Mexicans took place. "Vengeance-minded" Anglo Americans subjugated entire Mexican communities such as Refugio, La Bahía (Goliad), San Patricio, and Victoria. They stole their land and livestock, and even ran them out of town. Atrocities against Texas Mexicans and later Mexican Americans continued decades after the signing of The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848. The presence of Spaniards, Mexicans, and Mexican Americans in Bee and surrounding areas can be found in almost all aspects of life in the area. Spanish names of rivers, lakes, streams, towns, streets, foods, and farming and ranching apparatus are just some of many indications of the extensive presence of the Mexican American culture. Even *Medio* Creek near where Bee County Seat was first founded had a Spanish name. If Spanish names are not enough to "legitimize" the presence of early Mexican Americans in Bee and surrounding counties, there is a wealth of oral history that has been handed down from generation to generation that tells the story. Older Mexican American citizens recall incidents of discrimination and segregation of local schools and public places. They also remember Mexican American heroes who died in several U. S. wars to defend their country. Among them is Pvt. Felix Longoria, who died in battle but was refused burial services at an Anglo funeral home. Champions of civil rights such as

Doctor Hector P. García fought against discrimination in local schools and workplaces in Bee County. Had it not been for Mexican American leaders such as Doctor García, and organizations such as LULAC and American G.I. Forum, Mexican Americans' "civil rights" may never have been achieved.

Bee County, the area of this research, is located approximately one hundred and seventy miles north of the lower Rio Grande Valley and was among the territories ceded to the United States by the Treaty of Gaudalupe Hidalgo. Bee County was founded on January 25,1858, on one of several sites chosen before the county seat, named Beeville, was permanently located at its present site in the Poesta Creek area. From the beginning, Mexican Americans contributed to the development of Bee County. The first settlers were Mexicans who lived here before Texas was part of the United States. During the Mexican revolution of 1910, Mexicans fled their war torn country and settled in South Texas, including Bee and surrounding counties. By the turn of the century, other Mexican citizens left their motherland and came to work in the U. S., a joint work project of Mexico and the U.S. Mexican Americans who were already living in Bee County were hired to clear land, harvest crops, or work on ranches. Most were poor and life for them was hard, working as farm and ranch hands. A day's work was from sun up to sun down six or seven days a week. Before 1900, labor wages were from 75 cents to one dollar a day. After 1900 the pay scale increased; however, it was never enough to justify the hard work required of those who labored in the fields and ranches. According to Bee County history, Mexican Americans fought and died in all U.S. major wars. As county citizens they suffered discrimination at places of employment, public places, and local schools. In the late 1960s - 1970s, Mexican Americans united to win several city elections in Beeville, a fact that has made a significant impact against inequality of Mexican Americans in Bee and surrounding counties. This improvement has been a determining factor in the growth and improved conditions of residents in Bee County.

Mexican American Baptist dependency on Anglo Baptist institutions did not occur spontaneously; instead, dependency evolved over a long period of time. As Mexican Americans became dependent on Anglo social and economic institutions, they simultaneously became dependent on religious institutions. Part of this dependency was brought about by the Anglo-Saxon belief in Manifest Destiny, in which God chose the Anglo race to conquer, civilize, and Americanize the continent. Baptist beliefs, which are Holy Scripture based, were greatly influenced by this theory since the belief in Manifest Destiny was practiced in the culture in which they lived. Sociologically, Manifest Destiny influenced the way Anglo Baptists dealt with Mexican and Mexican American Baptist converts. Because of perceived social and economic conditions, Anglo Baptists controlled the new converts and determined how assimilation would occur, if at all. Missionaries' endeavors among Mexicans and Mexican Americans are equated with the socio-political definition of the Manifest Destiny Doctrine: to submit foreign cultured people to a predetermined role in economic and socio-political life of American culture.

In 1835, encouraged by the United States, Texas fought for independence from Mexico, gaining it in 1836. Texas temporarily became a free country before it was annexed to the United States in 1845. On February 2, 1848, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed between Mexico and the United States that ended the war between the two countries. By the terms of the treaty, the United States gained over half of Mexico's southwestern territory and a large number of its citizens. The treaty guaranteed that Mexican citizens who opted to stay in the United States would be treated as U.S. citizens. However, the terms were not honored; instead, Mexican Americans became the subject of abuse and degradation by the Anglo community.

With each conflict, Mexican Americans suffered emotionally and economically. Unable to speak English or afford legal counsel, they were defrauded of their homes and land grants. Because of their Catholic religion, they were shunned and ridiculed. Within

a very short period they were reduced to second-class citizens doing menial jobs to survive. Some of them found temporary refuge in the Anglo Baptist congregations and other Protestant groups that provided many of the menial jobs they needed to subsist. At first, an effort was made to integrate the new converts into the Anglo Baptist congregations, but as numbers grew in these congregations they were subjected to discrimination and segregation within the churches. Discriminating against Mexican American church members was a carryover from the attitude of superiority Anglos had towards Mexicans long before they became U. S. citizens. It was difficult for Anglo church members to treat Mexican Americans equally since a large number of them were employed by Anglo Baptist church members who practiced discrimination at the work place. Discrimination suffered by Mexican Americans at the hands of Anglo citizens perpetuated economic and dependency at work and eventually carried over to places of worship.

In spite of over a century of discrimination, segregation, and other injustices, Mexican Americans have emerged as a people determined to fight against those same injustices that continue to plague our society today.

Chapter IV: Endnotes

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VITA

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