HIJOS DE LA GRAN GUERRA:

THE CREATION OF THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY IN TEXAS, 1836-1929

A Dissertation

by

RALPH EDWARD MORALES III

Submitted to the Office of Graduate and Professional Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Chair of Committee,	Carlos Blanton
Committee Members,	Joseph Dawson
	R. J. Q. Adams
	Charles Brooks
	R. Bruce Dickson
Head of Department,	David Vaught

May 2015

Major Subject: History

ABSTRACT

Following the Texas Revolution, the Tejano community made a conscious decision to begin the long process towards accommodation within the American system. This included political alliances between the Tejano landholding elite and major Anglo Texan political figures, such as Sam Houston and John "Rip" Ford. During this era, the Tejano community made alliances of convenience with Anglo Texan politicians in support of the Southern Confederacy during the American Civil War. This alliance is best explained by parallels drawn by Tejano politicians between the ideals of Mexican Federalism and the local rule promised by the Southern Confederacy.

By the turn of the twentieth century, Anglo-Tejano relations had resumed their antebellum status quo of racial violence and societal marginalization had returned. It is during the early twentieth century that the Tejano community made the decision to embrace a Mexican American Identity that emphasized political participation and loyalty to the United States. The Mexican American identity in the Tejano community was galvanized during these years by the upheaval caused by the Mexican Revolution, the Plan of San Diego and the First World War. The Mexican Revolution and the Plan of San Diego made many Tejanos reject their earlier Mexicanist identity. The United States military, the Spanish language print media and the Catholic Church played important roles in fascilitating the shift of Tejanos towards a Mexican American Identity.

This dissertation concludes that the Tejano community embraced a Mexican American identity earlier that the prevailing scholarship believes. This is due in large

part to the Tejano military participation in the First World War, the efforts of pro-American Spanish language newspapers and the Catholic Church.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother and father, Modesta and Rosendo Morales and to the memory of my grandparents, Efrain and Amelia Sosa and Manuel and Anastacia Morales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This dissertation would not have been possible without the guidance of Dr. Carlos Blanton. Under his direction, this dissertation grew in ways I did not think possible. I would Also like to thank the other members of my committee, Dr. Joseph Dawson, Dr. Charles Brooks, Dr. R. J. Q. Adams and Dr. R. Bruce Dickson. Their advice and encouragement allowed me to complete this dissertation and to make it something of which I can truly be proud.

Likewise, this dissertation could not have been completed without the help of the collective archivists and staff members at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin, as well as archivists at the Texas State Archives, the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin and the Catholic Archives at San Antonio. Their collective assistance in helping me research this project was invaluable.

A great deal of thanks are due to my friends and colleagues both at Texas A&M University and Prairie View A&M University for their assistance and support. Without the particular aid of Tara Gaines, Victoria Eastes, Chris Thomas, Seth Grenke, Nathaniel Weber, Rainlilly Weber, David Silva, Crystal Silva, Sergio Guzman, Sara Guzman, Israel Hernandez, Idalia Silva and Hailey Hernandez, this dissertation would not have been possible.

Lastly, the support of my family, especially of my mother and father, has been my continuing inspiration for this project.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. INTRODUCTION: THE ORIGINS OF TEJANO AMERICAN NATIONALISM, 1850-1919

Since their incorporation into the United States at the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, many Mexican Americans have often struggled to maintain their distinctive Tejano identity when faced with Anglo encroachment. Despite seemingly overwhelming circumstances, some Tejanos have pursued the goal of Americanization and self-determination tirelessly since the earliest days of the American occupation. Over time, Tejano elites have encouraged support for the American system and embraced certain grass roots movements by non-landowning and working class Tejanos to adapt and assimilate to the mainstream political culture.[1]

Complete cultural assimilation into the United States was never completely realized by a vast majority of Tejanos.[2] Some of the more influential and wealthy Mexican Americans quickly assimilated into the political and social life of the United States. Almost from the beginning of the Anglo-American occupation of Texas, local Tejano elites sought and received some rudimentary level of acceptance from Anglo peers. These Tejano elites who were heavily involved in local politics and the regional economy took it upon themselves to disseminate the new status quo to other Tejanos. In

[1] This project will use Mexican Americans as a way to identify all ethnic Mexicans who were American Citizens. The term Tejano will be used to describe ethnic Mexicans living in Texas, regardless of citizenship. Mexicanos will be used to describe ethnic Mexicans who are citizens of Mexico, living there or otherwise.

[2] In this context, cultural assimilation and Americanization will be taken to mean the assumption of certain American practices, most notably the use of English as a primary language. A majority of Tejanos during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries maintained their linguistic and cultural ties to Mexico far longer than they did with their political ties.

other words, they wanted to bring the lower classes into the new political and social order.

"Hijos de la Gran Guerra: The Creation of the Mexican American Identity in Texas, 1836-1929" will examine the evolution of a nascent Mexican American identity from the mid nineteenth century until the years following the First World War. Some historians argue, for the most part, that a "Mexican American" identity evolved during the 1930's with the creation of the civic organization known today as LULAC. However, as this study argues, the Mexican American community already evidenced support for the American system before the American Civil War. This dissertation will view the creation of Mexican American identity through both social activism as well as military participation. It explores the growth of Mexican American participation in American political systems beginning with elite Tejano support for secession and the Confederacy during the American Civil War. It will then examine the tumultuous early years of Anglo-Tejano relations during the twentieth century in south Texas. Lastly, this dissertation seeks to show that cultural institutions such as the print media and the Catholic Church were instrumental in creating community support for the United States.

Hijos De La Gran Guerra will be composed of four topical chapters beyond the historiographical introduction. The second chapter of this dissertation, "Esta Sanguina Guerra," focuses on the initial Mexican American involvement in American politics during the prewar period, and especially through an examination of Tejano participation on both sides of the American Civil War. It will cover the years from 1836 through 1865. This chapter is supported from research on the Benavides Cavalry Regiment at the

Texas State Archives and the University of Texas Benson Latin American Collection and the Center for American History. Next, I examine Tejano political involvement in the First World War, including the only existing first-hand view of Tejano veterans who fought in it. For chapter three, "Sin Nuestra Ayuda, Jamas Hubieran Obtenido el Triumfo", my research focuses on documents obtained from the José de la Luz Sáenz papers at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Studies Collection at the University of Texas, as well as an examination of muster rolls from the Texas State Archives and the discourse of political figures during the early twentieth century.[3]

Chapter four examines the changes in print media during this time, especially the shifting focus away from the Mexican Revolution and towards the increasing American involvement in Europe. This chapter, "En Nuestro Concepto el Problema Mas Serio," utilizes numerous Spanish language newspapers to show a transition in the way the First World War was discussed, and how the Spanish language print media in the United States came to increasingly discuss the First World War.[4] It also studies the growing radicalism of the Mexican Revolution against the dictator Porfirio Diaz and the effect that all this had on Tejano identity. Lastly, I analyze the Catholic Church as a notable instrument of Americanization in chapter five, "¡Como Puede Dios Oirnos en Estas

[3] The name of chapter two comes from Jose de la Luz Saenz's memoirs of the First World War *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra y su contingente en pro de la Democracia, La Humanidad y La Justicia*. The work has since been published as an editied work by Emilio Zamora in *The World War I Diary of José de la Luz Sáenz* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014).

[4] Quote taken from *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 13, 1914. Excerpt translated from *El Problema mas seriocon que tendra que enfrentarse el Gobierno que suceda a Carbajal."* The title of this chapter comes from this excerpt of the article. The English translation of this chapter is "In our concept, the most serious problem."

Circunstancias!"[5] The Catholic Church during the last years of nineteenth and beginning of the twentieth century provided support for the Mexican American community, especially during the period of upheaval during the Mexican Revolution following 1910. Sources for this examination include the San Antonio Archdiocese papers as well as materials at the Catholic Archives of Texas in Austin.

This dissertation engages several crucial interpretive debates of U.S. history. For example, discussion of the Mexican American experience and their identity is not complete without a discussion of the literature of whiteness studies. David R. Roediger argues in his book *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* that whiteness, as a doctrine, has benefits that are unique to those who operate within its boundaries, and by its very nature, is exclusionary and defined by a non-white other. [6] Building on Roediger's work, Noel Ignatiev argues that certain ethnic groups such as the Irish, in their wish to become White, made alliances of convenience with Whites to reject nativism and embrace racism in such a way as to conform to white society.[7] Both Ignatiev and Roediger examine the Irish and their accommodation and adaptation into American society. The Irish provide many interesting points of comparison to the Mexican American experience, and whiteness studies are one of the best ways to compare and contrast the experiences of these two ethnic groups. Also, Neil

[5] Jose de La Luz Saenz, *The World War I Diary of Jose de la Luz Saenz*, Emilio Zamora, ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 320. This work is a translated edition of Saenz's World War I diary. The entry is dated December 9, 1918. Translation of the title to this chapter is "How can God possibly hear us under these circumstances!"
[6] David R. Roediger, *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: Verso Press, 1991), 14-15.
[7] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1995).

Foley has expanded whiteness studies to examine Mexican Americans and their experiences in the United States, but much later in the twentieth century.[8]

Military service is one of the classic ways in which to assert National identity. In his work *Boundaries*, Peter Sahlins explores not only the way that identity is formed, but also the many ways that ethnic groups adopt and exploit national identity. Much as Tejanos and Mexicanos are separated by nationality, but not by ethnicity, so too are the Cerdanyans of Spain and France.[9] Mexican Americans asserted their national identity through military service with both the Union or Confereracy during the American Civil War.[10] Historian Carole E. Christian argues that the men who fought in the Civil War were not Americanized by their experience because the Union and Confederacy made no effort to formally educate them.[11] The fact that Tejanos were not culturally assimilated into the United States by their service during the American Civil War does not imply that these men were unaware of the issues that were being contested during the Civil War or that they were uninterested in a new national identity. The most famous Tejano to serve during the American Civil War, Santos Benavides, was an active political figure

---

[8] Neil Foley, "Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness," in *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies,* ed. Neil Foley (Austin: University of Texas-Center for American Studies, 1997).

[9] Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 269.

[10] For Mexican American participation in the American Civil War, see Jerry Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray* (Austin: State House Press, 2000). Other Works on this topic include Ella Lonn, *Foreigners in the Confederacy* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940) and Ralph Edward Morales III, " The Tejano-Anglo Alliance: Tejanos, Ethnicity, and Politics in Texas, 1832-1865" (M.A. Thesis, Texas A&M University, 2008).

[11] Carole E. Christian, "Joining the American Mainstream: Texas's Mexican Americans During World War I, " *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92 (Apr., 1989), 561.

before the war and continued to be so for years after.[12] For Tejanos and other Mexican Americans, the period between the American Civil War and the First World War was one characterized by discrimination and nearly constant violence. As a result of frequent incursions into the United States by Mexican bandits, Mexican Americans, especially those in Texas were subjected to violent treatment by state police authorities such as the Texas Rangers.[13]

Scholars have focused on the contribution of Mexican Americans to the First World War and sought to reemphasize the importance of the war and the changes it made to their sense of American cultural and political life. In his work *To the Line of Fire: Mexican Texans and the First World War,* José A. Rámirez examines the wartime participation of Mexican Americans and the suspicion with which the Anglo community viewed the Tejano community.[14] Likewise, Alexander Mendoza has examined Tejano military involvement since the beginning of American governance in his article " 'For Our Own Best Interests': Nineteenth-Century Laredo Tejanos, Military Service and the Development of American Nationalism." Mendoza shows that despite American misgivings about the loyalty of Tejanos, even small communities, such as Laredo, have

[12] Gilberto Miguel Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town in Transition: Laredo, 1755-1870* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983). Hinojosa mentions the dominance of the Benavides family in Laredo politics well into the 1870's.
[13] Benjamin Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and its Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).
[14] Jose A. Ramirez, *To The Line of Fire: Mexican Texans and World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009).

had Tejanos willing to serve in the American military as a sign of loyalty to the American system.[15]

Since the time of Texas independence, Mexican settlement in South Texas and outside of San Antonio was tied to the Nueces strip, or the land that fell between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. By the early years of the twentieth century, this settlement pattern began to change. Increasing numbers of Tejanos and Mexicanos moved to the cities to meet the rising demand for labor.[16] During the early years of the twentieth century, approximately one million documented and undocumented immigrants from Mexico crossed the Southern American border.[17] The Southwestern United States at the turn of the twentieth century was a major market for labor, and many Mexicanos made the journey north to seek better opportunities.[18] While this was indeed a positive for many Mexicano workers, it undoubtedly lowered wages, and drove some Tejanos to the cities.[19] Despite the trends experienced by cities such as San Antonio and Houston, Tejanos and Mexicanos were still a predominantly agricultural workforce at the time of the First World War.

Despite their mistreatment by American Anglos, some Tejanos wanted to serve the nation, no doubt for some of the same reasons Tejanos had supported the Union and

---

[15] Alexander Mendoza, "'For Our Own Best Interests': Nineteenth-Century Laredo Tejanos, Military Service and the Development of American Nationalism," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 115 (October, 2011), 125-153.
[16] Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 12.
[17] Cynthia E. Orozco, "The Origins of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Mexican American civil rights movement in Texas with an analysis of women's political participation in a gendered context, 1910-1929," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992), 35. See also Cynthia E. Orozco *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).
[18] Ibid.
[19] Zamora, *World of the Mexican Worker in Texas*, 21.

Confederacy fifty years earlier. Much like those Tejanos, the generation that enlisted and was drafted into the First World War may have been undoubtedly surprised by the temporary thawing of relations between Tejanos, Mexicanos Anglos and the local, state and national government. As with the American Civil War, state and local authorities attempted various methods to try and gain the support of ethnic Mexicans to fight their war. Whereas the Civil War ended for a time the vicious violence against Mexicano and Tejano workers, the First World War prompted Governor James E. Ferguson to order the Texas Rangers to decrease their attacks on Mexicans. Also like the Civil War, the state was dependant on immigrant labor to continue the booming agricultural production during the First World War.

During the Civil War, Mexicans and Tejanos were not subject to the draft. This was to enable them to continue serving in the transportation industry. On the eve of America's involvement in the First World War, Governor Ferguson assured Mexican citizens that they would not have to fight, so long as they could prove that they were Mexican citizens.[20] As a direct result of the First World War and the labor shortage caused by conscription and enlistment, the United States passed the Immigration Act of 1917, which permitted 73,000 additional Mexican laborers to enter the United States.[21] This, however, did not mean that Mexican Americans and Mexican citizens living in the United States were immune from conscription. All foreign nationals living in the United States would eventually be required to register for the draft. Mexican citizens who could not find proof of their Mexican citizenship were either imprisoned for evading the draft

[20] Christian, "Joining the American Mainstream," 572.
[21] Orozco, "The Origins of LULAC", 36.

or promptly sent to training camps to prepare for the war.[22] Naturalized citizens were eligible for the draft, and were sent overseas as part of the American Expeditionary Force. While not every Tejano who was eligible for the draft registered, many who did were motivated not only by traditional reasons, such as patriotism and peer pressure, but by media pressure from Spanish language newspapers such as San Antonio's *La Prensa* and Laredo's *Evolucion*.[23]

With the onset of war in 1914, the journalistic approaches of both English and Spanish language newspapers to the crisis was different. While the San Antonio newspapers *The Express* (English) and *La Prensa* (Spanish) were both concerned with the beginning of the war, their journalistic biases were obvious. *La Prensa,* a newspaper published predominantly for the Mexican expatriate community, focused its reporting on the ongoing Mexican Revolution and American occupation of Vera Cruz.[24] The San Antonio *Express*, meanwhile, also published reports of the American intervention in Mexico, but focused much more on the onset of the war in Europe.[25]

During the next few years, the war dominated both *La Prensa* and the *Express*. As expected, *La Prensa* continued to focus the majority of its attention to the war and revolution in Mexico, but also began to devote a specific section of the paper to the War in Europe, notably geared to the French and Italian war efforts. Historian Carole Christian argues that this is due to feelings of a similar Latin connection between Italy,

---

[22] F. Arturo Rosales, *Testimonio: A Documentary History of the Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights* (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2000), 77.
[23] Christian, "Joining the American Mainstream," 570.
[24] *La Presa* (San Antonio), August 1, 1914.
[25] For discussion of Anarchism within the Mexican American community and the print media, see James Sandos *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

France and Mexico.[26] The San Antonio *Express* likewise continued with its Anglophile coverage of the war.

This is not to suggest that the Spanish language press stood unified in its wish to have Mexican Americans support the United States in their involvement in the Great War. *El Democrata Fronterizo*, the Laredo competitor to the *Evolucion*, suggested that its rival was caving in to American business interests and that it was acting as a government propaganda machine.[27] *El Democrata Fronterizo* softened its rhetoric by the end of the war, unlike some other Spanish newspapers. *Regeneracion*, a Spanish language Socialist paper published in California, urged Mexicanos to join with their fellow workers in a grand revolution against capitalist society.[28] As this paper was on the fringe of the Spanish language press, it is doubtful that it was as influential as papers such as *La Prensa* were in convincing Texas readers.

While the debate on enlistment and conscription continued in the Mexican American press, there still remained the question as to where Mexican American loyalty truly belonged. As with the American Civil War, which was until 1917 the largest military conflict in which Mexican Americans fought, business interests were overwhelmingly with the United States. Merchant families in Laredo were undoubtedly behind the American war effort.[29] This trend predated even Mexican American

---

[26] Christian, "Joining the American Mainstream," 568. Christian may overstate this connection. A few Spanish language newspapers show bias towards France in some respects, but not in the overwhelming amounts expected. See Chapter 4.
[27] Ibid., 570.
[28] Ibid. See Also Ward Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992)
[29] As mentioned, the Laredo paper *Evolucion*, owned by Mexican American businessmen, endorsed participation and enlistment, even at the risk of drawing criticism from its rivals.

involvement in the American Civil War. Historian Andres Resendez, in his work *Changing National Identities at the Border: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* examines the shift of many Tejano and Mexican American elites to a more capitalist friendly attitude towards the United States. However, historian Rodolfo Rocha argues that many Mexican Americans in South Texas still considered themselves either Mexican or Texan.[30] Rocha and Orozco both acknowledge that a Mexico-Tejano identity was still the most prevalent form of Mexican American identity going into the war.[31] Even within the Mexican American community, the question of identity and loyalty was not a united ideal. Rather, the Mexican expatriate community was split in its definition of "Mexican" because of the varying ideals of the Mexican revolution. As Orozco argues, when a community itself is not united in its identity, there can be no outside ideal of solidarity within that group.[32]

Following the 1914 U.S. military intervention in Vera Cruz, many border Anglos expected Mexican Americans to be involved in planning some sort of retaliation against the United States.[33] This was, for the most part, untrue. As Orozco shows, there were a number of factions operating in what some scholars refer to as Mexico de Afuera.[34] Some of these communities were actively involved in revolutionary activities in Mexico, and some were not. However, this did not prevent Anglo-American authorities in Texas

[30] Rodolfo Rocha, " The Influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Mexico-Texas Border, 1910-1916," (Ph.D. Dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1981), 47.
[31] Orozco, "The Origins of LULAC," 95.
[32] Ibid., 97.
[33] Ibid., 99.
[34] Translated, it literally means Mexico outside, but Orozco and other Chicano Historians use it to describe any of the numerous Mexican communities in Texas.

from stereotyping all Mexicanos and Tejanos as disloyal.[35] Such a perception, once it existed, provided ample fuel for the hysteria surrounding the Plan De San Diego.

The Plan de San Diego, a document which came to light in 1915, called for an armed rebellion from Texas to California by Mexican peoples. The purpose of this uprising was to give Mexicanos, Indians, and African Americans a place to escape the oppression and violence they faced at the hands of Anglo Americans.[36] The Plan had an extreme racial overtone in this regard, for its ultimate goal called for the killing all Anglo males over 16 years of age.[37] When the plan was discovered, racial tensions were already high, and the newly discovered plan gave many Anglos, especially the Texas Rangers in the Rio Grande valley the excuse they needed to engage in a wave of violence which reached pogrom-like levels against the Mexican American and Mexican immigrant community of South Texas. This is not to say that Tejanos and Mexicanos were the only victims. The violence spread to the Anglo community as raids increased from across the Rio Grande, and the Tejano community itself was divided as influential Tejanos who shared power with the Anglos in South Texas found themselves fighting against rivals and poorer members of their own community.[38] As such, social class was extremely important in determining who the targets of the plan would be, and with whom Anglo law officers would side.

While Orozco states that many Tejanos belonged to the working class, Benjamin Heber Johnson convincingly demonstrates that some wealthy Tejano merchants and

[35] Ibid., 99.
[36] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*, 80.
[37] Ibid., 94.
[38] Ibid., 82.

landowners were targets of violence as well as its instigators.[39] This is not to imply that wealthy Tejanos were exempt from the violence, merely that they were as often the cause of violence as they were victims of it. As with any wealthy community, and as had been done in Texas from the time of its annexation, the wealthy rancher class of Tejanos was a frequent target of oppression from their jealous Anglo neighbors.[40]

Once Mexican Americans were drafted or enlisted in the United States Armed Forces, their experiences were little different from that of their countrymen, except in one regard. While many Tejanos and Mexicanos were aware that they were performing their patriotic duty to their country not all had a full grasp of the ideals for which they were fighting. According to José De La Luz Sáenz, a Tejano World War I veteran, many Mexican Americans fought bravely with little idea for the bigger picture and how they fit in it.[41] Saenz, like many Tejanos and Mexicanos who fought for the United States, hoped that their sacrifice as American soldiers would hasten the eventual arrival of civil rights.[42] After all, many of the Wilsonian ideals, such as the freedom from oppression and the rights of ethnic groups, had been drilled into American fighting men as the major justifications of the war.[43] As such, it would appear that more men who fought did so for more abstract ideas of their national identity than those who were intimately familiar with Wilsonian idealism.[44]

---

[39] Ibid., 84.
[40] See Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque, University of New Mexico Press, 1998). Alonzo shows the numerous Anglo challenges to Tejano land tenure and the steps taken by Tejanos to protect their property rights.
[41] Christian, "Joining the American Mainstream," 581.
[42] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 160.
[43] Ibid.
[44] See Zamora, *The World War I Diary of José de la Luz Sáenz.*

Mexican Americans distinguished themselves as part of the Allied Expeditionary Force. Nicolas Lucero, a Mexican American from Albuquerque, New Mexico received the French Croix de Guerre for capturing two German machine guns. During his time at the front, Private Marcelino Serna accumulated a Croix de Guerre, a Distinguished Service Cross, and two Purple Hearts.[45] Tejano David Barkley Cantu of Laredo, Texas, was awarded the Congressional Medal of Honor for swimming the Meuse River under fire to reconnoiter the German position.[46] Barkley, as he was known to his comrades on the front lines, drowned in the river due to cramping. Barkley's mixed heritage was not known until many decades after the war. He is now recognized as the first Mexican American to win the Congressional Medal of Honor.[47]

The Wilson administration desired for all ethnic groups become involved in supporting the war effort.[48] The U. S. government, in passing legislation like the 1917 Immigration Act, sought to placate its immigrant community, which Wilson and others regarded as potentially disloyal.[49] Ethnic soldiers were taught basic English and Anglo soldiers were instructed to discontinue the use of ethnic slurs in regards to these soldiers. While this was not especially aimed at the Tejano/Mexicano community or its soldiers, they were partial beneficiaries of it.[50]

---

[45] Leticia M. Garza-Falcon, *Gente Decente: A Borderlands Response to the Rhetoric of Dominance* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998), 228.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Ibid.
[48] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*, 158.
[49] See Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All!: Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), for more on ethnic soldiers.
[50] Ibid., 159.

As involved as they were in the war itself, Mexicanos and Tejanos were also involved on the home front. Tejanos such as J. T. Canales and Clemente Idar advocated Tejano support of the American war effort.[51] Canales was a "Four-Minute Man," or a community leader chosen for his oratory skills to bring awareness of the war to the community. Idar, while not a Four-Minute Man, did help to mobilize Tejano support for the war and to convey the issues of the war to the Tejano community. [52]

While many Mexican Americans may not have been familiar with the Wilsonians framing of the reasons for war, this does not mean that they came away from it without a greater understanding of their country and their place in it. In the 1920's, Alonso S. Perales, along with many other veterans of the First World War, took part in founding the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).[53] LULAC promoted citizenship and patriotism amongst Mexican Americans as the best possible avenue toward civil rights. They did so along with other groups, such as the Sons of America and the Knights of America. These groups were started by veterans who advocated a push toward assimilation into the America mainstream, in part by adapting American ideas of national identity.

Following the war, Perales testified to Congress that he and LULAC were dedicated with an "unquestionable loyalty to the ideals, principles, and citizenship of the

[51] Ibid.
[52] Sarah Deutsch, *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 111.
[53] Rosales, *Testimonio*, 91.

United States of America."[54] While many men did not understand what the war meant as it occurred, the impact it had on men such as Perales is unmistakable. Just as in the American Civil War, Mexican Americans stood for their country despite the history of violence and oppression. The desire to adopt an American identity drove Mexicanos to put aside the legacy of conflict between themselves and the Anglos. The adaptation of the rhetoric of citizenship and the English language was thought to be the first steps for Mexicanos to achieve recognition by Anglo America as being a part of their nation. As historian Benjamin Heber Johnson argues, Tejanos along the Rio Grande discovered that they could no longer inhabit the nebulous territory between being Mexican and American.[55] Tejanos and Mexicanos needed to completely become American or retreat back to Mexico for the simple fact that they had no inherent protection in this nation against Anglo outrages, such as those perpetrated by the Texas Rangers without citizenship. Tejanos needed to be American to avail themselves of the protection of agencies such as the United States Army. To the Tejanos and Mexicanos of the turn of the twentieth century, American citizenship meant much more that the ability to vote. Indeed, it meant that the government could act as a check on the powers of the state, and that for once, they could escape the cycle of violence that had been nearly constant for over 80 years.

By the end of the First World War, many things had changed. Not the least of these changes involved Tejanos and Mexicanos serving in integrated units in the

---

[54] Alonso S. Perales, "Alonso S. Perales and Mexican Immigration," *Testimonio: A Documentary History of the Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights,* F. Arturo Rosales, ed. (Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2000), 91.
[55] Johnson, *Revolution In Texas*, 209.

American Expeditionary Forces. Many, like Alonso Perales, came home with little else but the desire to have their sacrifices acknowledged. Like many ethnic groups before them and many other ethnic groups from other nations, Tejanos had elected to or been forced to serve in their nation's military. While the experience may not have been a pleasurable one, it no doubt influenced the way that Tejanos began to imagine themselves, their community, their country and the world around them.

This dissertation examines these events as they unfolded during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. It argues that this was the formative era for the creation of the Mexican American identity. Tejano contributions to a new national allegiance during the American Civil War and the First World War show that these Tejanos were more fully aware of the issues confronting their communities than previously thought. It shows that Tejanos wholeheartedly embraced both the concepts of the southern Confederacy as well as the ideals of Wilsonian idealism.[56] It argues that Tejano nationalism was heavily influenced by the Mexican Revolution and that the emergence of U.S. focused Tejano nationalism is in many ways a rejection of the ideals of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. It will show that with the increasing radicalization of the Mexican Revolution, preconceived notions of Mexican identity were being challenged in ways that were odious to many Tejanos and Mexicano exiles living in the United States. This dissertation will show that the shift in Tejano identity occurred as previously held ideals of Tejano nationalism from the earliest days of American

[56] This dissertation will use Ezra Manela's book *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007) to show that minority communities across the world were captivated by the ideals of postwar Wilsonian Idealism.

occupation of the borderlands came into contact with the changing and unstable political reality of the radical idealism of the Mexican Revolution. Using documents obtained from the Spanish language print media as well as papers published by the South Texas Roman Catholic Church, this dissertation argues that older ideals of Mexican identity were no longer relevant by the U.S. entrance into the First World War. The sum total of these interactions by Tejanos within the American system can be construed to show an increased amount of involvement in the American system and acceptance of their unique position within that system. This dissertation uses the concepts of society, war, religion and the popular press to show that this process was underway long before previously acknowledged origins during the 1930's and the Second World War.

2. ESTA SANGUINA GUERRA: WAR, ANNEXATION AND THE ORIGINS OF THE TEJANO IDENTITY, 1835-1900

Although it could hardly have been foreseen at the beginning of the American Period, the 1860's found many Tejanos traveling far beyond the boundaries of Texas. One such Tejano, Antonio Bustillo of San Antonio, Texas, found himself in Georgia as part of the Confederate army in 1864. Like many soldiers, Bustillo longed to return home, and corresponded with his mother frequently. In March of 1864, Bustillo wrote home telling his family of the war which he was witnessing and his wishes to return home. "Everyone assures me that this bloody war will end this year, sooner or later," he wrote home.[1] While there are many aspects of this letter that may seem extraordinary to the modern observer, perhaps none is more so than the idea that Tejanos would invest themselves so heavily to their new nation as to take part, even if in minor ways in its darkest hour.

Beginning in the 1820's, Americans traveling west and seeking new lands to farm and settle encountered the farthest outposts of Spanish settlement in Texas. Following Mexico's independence from Spain, the Mexican government encouraged settlement of Texas in order to stimulate economic growth of the border region. It also

[1] Antonio Bustillo to Petra Martines de Bustillo, March 1, 1864, Bustillo Family Papers, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas. Hereafter referred to as Bustillo Papers, DRT Library. This is translated from the sentence in the letter dated March 1, 1864. "Todas me aseguran que esta sanguina guerra debe de finalizar en este ano cuando mas tarde, y espero que asi suceda, pues ya tengo muchas ganas de ver a todos ustedes, pues ya va para dos anos que me alla ausente de mi casa, en fines de este mez se cumplen los dos anos."

encouraged political cooperation between Americans and Mexicans.[2] While both nations had embraced, to greater or lesser extents, the revolutionary idealism that had allowed them to break away from their colonial parents, the prejudices and misperceptions that these two cultures brought with them into Texas contributed to conflict between Tejanos and American Anglo settlers.

Despite the distance between their parent cultures, some Tejano and Anglo settlers in Texas made concerted efforts to reconcile their differences. While the antebellum and Civil War alliance between Tejanos and Anglos was often tenuous at best, it did allow for a unique example of the steps undertaken by two different peoples to bridge the gap between their cultures and nations. Although the end results may have been disappointing to both Anglos and Tejanos, the brief alliance showed that, under certain circumstances, Tejanos could form an important part of Texan, and American, life.

When Anglo settlers arrived in Texas during the 1820's, they found the frontier between the United States and Mexico devoid of any kind of central governmental control. Therefore scholars argue that Anglo settlers rarely adapted to Mexican life. Rather, they retained their Anglo-American identity as English speaking Protestants. Despite strong efforts by the Mexican government to absorb Anglo settlers into Mexico's culture, such as making Spanish the official language of Texas, making the

[2] Gilberto Miguel Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town in Transition: Laredo, 1755-1870* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983), 47. While this work discusses Laredo, Hinojosa does make mention of the western frontier and its lack of concentrated settlement. Andres Resendez also mentions the warm welcome received by Anglos at the beginning of colonization from Tejanos in *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 37.

settlers Mexican citizens, and requiring Texans to convert to Roman Catholicism, Anglos generally retained their prior identities as Americans.[3] Since many of the American settlers came from the southern portion of the United States, the Mexican ban on slavery was a concern to those Mexican authorities that administered the American colonization of Texas. Stephen F. Austin, like his father Moses Austin, sought to obtain rights for Americans to colonize the northern territories held by first Spain then Mexico following their war for independence. When negotiating settlement rights in 1823, Stephen Austin ensured that African slaves could be brought into Texas.[4]

A major part of the settlement rights was the Mexican Constitution of 1824, in which the Federalist government of Mexico allowed for provincial freedom, and gave some autonomy to the local governments, rather than have power vested exclusively in the central government in Mexico City. The roots of the Texas Revolution lay in the repudiation of this constitution by Mexican President Antonio Lopez de Santa Anna in 1835.[5] Historian Andres Resendez argues that regardless of the victor of the Federalist-Centralist conflict, Texan slaveowners came to the realization that neither side would be committed to the preservation of slavery in Texas.[6]

Directly following the Texas Revolution in 1836, Tejanos found themselves in a difficult situation. They could either leave Texas as Mexicans or create a new Texan and American identity for themselves. Since the Texans succeeded in their bid for independence from Mexico, this ushered in a new government. Despite some Tejano

[3] Randolph B. Campbell, *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 105.
[4] Ibid.
[5] Ibid., 106-107, 127.
[6] Resendez, *Changing National Identities,*162.

support for the Texas separatists, especially from those who lived in Bexar County, negative Anglo perceptions of Tejanos still prevailed.[7] The Texas Revolution was brutal for both Anglos and Tejanos, but many Tejanos found themselves victimized by both sides, regardless of their affiliation. Anglos distrusted Tejanos and suspected them of continued allegiance to Mexico. Mexican authorities considered all settlers in Texas who did not show outright support for Santa Anna and the Centralists in Mexico to be in league with the rebellious Texans. Many Tejanos, most notably Juan Seguin, supported the move for Texas independence, and served in several engagements, including San Jacinto.[8] Resendez has a unique theory as to why these men sided as they did. According to him, Tejanos, while maintaining a deep personal connection to the Republic of Mexico, made the practical choices necessary for survival in Texas.[9] Furthermore, Resendez asserts that the people of Texas had considerable room in which to maneuver politically. He contends that all people in Texas had choices and exercised their ability to make them in a very confined political arena.[10] These two assertions, taken together can be used to support the view that, although their choices were limited, Tejanos did have some agency in deciding their loyalties. As important as this was during the Texas Revolution, many Tejanos again exercised their choice by siding with the Confederacy in 1860-1861.[11]

---

[7] Paul D. Lack, *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992), 184-185.
[8] Paul D. Lack, "Occupied Texas: Bexar and Goliad, 1835-1836" in *Mexican Americans in Texas History,* Emilio Zamora, et al., eds. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association Press, 2000), 45.
[9] Resendez, *Changing National Identities*, 170.
[10] Ibid., 5-6.
[11] This is not to suggest that Tejanos only served in the Confederate forces. Some Tejanos and Mexicanos served with Union forces under the leadership of Edmund J. Davis during the American Civil War.

Juan Seguin, descendant of Mexican elites who helped settle Texas, was one of many Tejanos to serve during the Texas Revolution.[12] Seguin's father, Erasmo Seguin, had aided Moses and Stephen Austin in their efforts to bring Anglo settlers from the United States in an effort to help modernize northern Mexico.[13] Seguin came to prominence during the Texas War for Independence against Mexico as the captain of a small company of mounted volunteers.[14] Seguin was even present at the Alamo, but escaped as a messenger to warn Colonel James Fannin of Santa Anna's advance into Bexar and San Antonio.[15] Seguin and his men were renowned for their hatred of Santa Anna. Houston initially sought to protect them from their bloodthirsty compatriots during the battle of San Jacinto. Seguin protested this and was eventually allowed to join the attack on Santa Anna's position.[16] Houston wrote Seguin in 1837 assuring him of the high esteem in which he was held by his President.[17] After San Jacinto, Seguin was cited for his bravery by Sam Houston, and it is clear some social interaction occurred between the two veterans in the years following the war.[18] The actions of Juan Seguin during the Texas war for independence, coupled with those of the men who fought in the Federalist-Centralist wars in Mexico, served to establish the basis for Texan nationalism for some Tejanos, as these men were indeed fighting against their

[12] As mentioned, many Tejanos who served during the Texas Revolution were from the areas around San Antonio, much like Seguin. Of their service, Lack concludes that "they uniformly acquitted themselves to their credit as patriots and soldiers." See Lack, *Texas Revolutionary Experience*, 185.
[13] Juan N. Seguin, *A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin*, ed. Jesus de La Teja (Austin: State House Press, 1991), 6-7.
[14] Ibid., 24-25.
[15] Ibid., 25-26.
[16] James L. Haley, *Sam Houston* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002), 148.
[17] Ibid., 182-183.
[18] Seguin, *Revolution Remembered*, 27.

former countrymen. Likewise, the Texas Revolution and the Federalist-Centralist wars created a distinctly Tejano revolutionary tradition that may have inspired those men who served in the American Civil War.[19]

A large number of non-combatants fled contested areas during the Revolution. Those who supported the Revolution and doubted its success followed the Texan Army on its flight towards American Louisiana. Likewise, Tejanos who supported Santa Anna or simply did not wish to engage themselves in the conflict fled towards Mexico. This movement did not stop with the surrender of Santa Anna after San Jacinto. After Santa Anna's surrender, many Tejanos escaped to Mexico from unrestrained Anglos seeking revenge on Mexican civilians for the recent war. Among those exiles was none other than Colonel Juan Seguin, one of the major heroes of the Texas Revolution.[20]

Those that stayed in the new Texas Republic found themselves the targets of vengeful Anglos who did not wish to share their nation with Tejanos. Despite official orders to the contrary, Tejanos had their property seized and had to leave towns now controlled by Anglo settlers. Many Tejanos were forced from their homes by recent arrivals from the United States, and the situation was not helped by the indifference of Texan commanders such as Thomas J. Rusk.[21] None other than Sam Houston, commander of the Texas Army during the Revolution, urged the soldiers of the Texas

[19] See Ralph Morales, "The Tejano-Anglo Alliance: Tejanos, Ethnicity and Politics in Texas, 1832-1865," M.A. Thesis, Texas A&M University, College Station, 2008.
[20] Haley, *Sam Houston*, 238.
[21] Lack, *Texas Revolutionary Experience*, 205.

Republic to treat Tejano settlers with "all moderation and humanity that is possible."[22] It is worth noting that the orders to the Texan Army for dealing with Tejano settlers were made out not in English, but in Spanish. Whether the order was meant to be distributed to Tejano soldiers or whether it was meant to reassure Tejano settlers is uncertain. Judging from the general behavior of the Texan army, it is likely that Houston intended the order to be read or distributed to the local inhabitants of areas through which the army was moving. Houston seemed to imply that good treatment of Tejano settlers was a point of honor to the Texas Army. But the fact that Houston demonstrated concerns of how Tejanos would be treated by his men is especially telling of the adversarial relationship between Tejanos and the new Texas Republic. That Houston needed to involve the sensibilities of the men as soldiers also gives evidence to how vital he thought Tejano-Anglo relations were.[23]

Sam Houston was certainly a controversial figure to many of his contemporaries for his friendship with what many Anglos considered were the undesirable portions of society, such as Indians and rowdy whites.[24] This reputation was probably not enhanced by Houston's familiarity with some of the more prominent Tejanos of the early Texas Republic. As hostilities once again rose with Mexico in 1844, Houston wrote President Santa Anna asking for the release of Jose Antonio Navarro, then a prisoner of Mexico

---

[22] Sam Houston, General Order of August, 1838, Rabia Santiago Papers, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo. This is translated from the Spanish "Con toda la moderacion y la humanidad que se pueda poner en practica."

[23] Ibid. Translated portion reads: "Los actos de humanidad, son los caricteristicas del valeroso y del soldado."

[24] Marquis James, *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988), 305. Llerena Friend, considered to be a pre-eminent biographer of Sam Houston, made no mention of Houston's relations with Seguin or Navarro in her book *Sam Houston: The Great Designer* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1954).

from the abortive Santa Fe Expedition.[25] Houston appeared to be close to the Navarro family, as when word reached him of the plight of Jose Antonio Navarro, Houston visited Navarro's family near Seguin, Texas, in order to give assurances of aid to secure his release.[26]

While not mentioning the Tejano question overtly in his writings, Sam Houston was still open in his dealings and affections for Tejanos. Among these were Juan Seguin and his wife, Gertrudis Flores Seguin, with whom he hoped to make a social call sometime in 1842.[27] This connection with the Seguins does not necessarily translate into Anglo acceptance of Tejanos as a whole, but it does show that high-ranking Anglo officials, like Houston, were socially active with influential Tejanos in the community, such as the Seguin family. [28]

Jose Antonio Navarro was another influential figure in the movement towards both Americanization and Tejano support of the Confederacy. Prior to the Texas Revolution, Navarro had been a mid-level Mexican politician, who lent his voice to Stephen Austin's call for slavery in Texas. At the onset of the Texas Revolution, Navarro, whose family lived in Bexar County, served on the constitutional committee to formulate the creation of a Texas Republic. Navarro stayed active in Texas politics and

---

[25] Joseph Martin Dawson, *Jose Antonio Navarro: Co-Creator of Texas* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 1969), 69.
[26] Ibid., 75.
[27] Sam Houston to Margaret Houston, January 21, 1842, in *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, ed. Madge Thornall Roberts (Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2001), 5 vols., 1:185.
[28] The biographies of Sam Houston vary on their treatment of the Houston-Seguin relationship. Some mention Seguin, sparsely if at all, as an able subordinate to Houston during the Texas War of Independence, but do not mention their personal relationship. It is clear from Houston and Seguin's writings that they did visit on social occasions.

his family sent several sons to serve under the Confederate banner in Texas. One of them served under Santos Benavides as a captain.[29]

Tejanos living north of the Nueces Strip developed a more accommodating relationship with Anglos following Texas independence from Mexico. During the period from 1836 to 1845 most border contact between Anglo Texans and Tejanos was limited to this area north of the Nueces River, as the boundary between Mexico and Texas had not been solidified. Following Santa Anna's defeat, the Mexican government did not recognize the creation of the Texas Republic and asserted that if it did exist, the border was located at the Nueces River in South Texas. Texas, however, considered the Rio Grande the dividing line between Texas and Mexico. Therefore, people in the Rio Grande valley, where few Anglos had settled during early colonization, became isolated from Anglo encroachment.[30] The Rio Grande valley became a staging area for frequent military incursions into Texas by Mexicans eager to reclaim it as part of their nation.[31] These forays into central Texas made life considerably more difficult for Tejanos seeking to accommodate to Anglo control. Incidents of ethnic violence spread in the years leading to the U.S-Mexican War, with vigilante groups running Tejanos off of their land.[32]

By 1847 Texas had become a state in the American Union. In November of that year, John B. Hayes, a Texas Ranger, captured Laredo and Mirabeau B. Lamar, then

---

[29] Dawson, *Jose Antonio Navarro*, 59-61. A check of Census records from 1850 and 1860 did not reveal any slaves owned by Navarro.
[30] Arnoldo De Leon, *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), 13.
[31] Ibid., 14.
[32] Ibid., 14-15.

governor of Texas, annexed it as part of the United States.[33] With the border pushing further south, into areas more densely populated by Tejanos, Anglos encountered more resistance to Americanization. In Laredo, instances of Tejano/Anglo violence rarely occurred, and Anglos in an area demographically dominated by Tejanos acculturated to Tejano ways of life. In this area, it was important that Tejano landowning families intermarry with Anglo elites to solidify their political hold on South Texas and ensure that they retained possession of their land.[34] Many Tejano families in South Texas maintained their political dominance of the region. One of the best examples of this was the Benavides family of Laredo.

The Benavides family had longstanding ties to the northern bank of the Rio Grande and had a revolutionary tradition well in place before Santos Benavides sided with the Confederacy. This family was descended from Tomás Sanchez, one of the original founders of the town of Laredo.[35] The patriarch of the family in the years before the Civil War was Bacilio Benavides, uncle to Santos and a prominent merchant and political leader along the Rio Grande. Basilio Benavides was involved in the abortive attempt to separate northern Mexico from the control of its national government in the late 1830's and was deeply involved in the Centralist-Federalist war as a guerrilla for the Federalist cause.[36]

Following the U.S. annexation of Texas and the Southwest, violence along the border accompanied Anglo political domination. The most notorious of these incidents

[33] Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town*, 55-56.
[34] De Leon, *Tejano Community*, 17.
[35] John Denny Riley, "Santos Benavides: His Influence on the Lower Rio Grande, 1823-1881" (Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1976), 4.
[36] Ibid., 37. See also Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town*, 82.

was the Cortina War of 1859. Juan N. Cortina was the son of wealthy landholding elites in Brownsville who was angered by the blatant land seizures by Anglo Texans.[37] The Cortina War began when Juan Cortina attacked a city marshal in Brownsville, Texas while the marshal was attempting to arrest a drunken Tejano.[38] Following this incident, Cortina founded a bandit group that attacked American Anglos and wealthy Tejanos from south of the river. Sam Houston, then governor of Texas, asked that the people of Mexico, and by extension, Tejanos, not be blamed for the actions of a few rogues. Rather, Houston concluded that "Mexicans are a mild, pastoral and gentle people" and that "demagogues and lawless chieftains" were those responsible for outrages against Texas.[39]

According to historian Arnoldo De Leon, Cortina's acts of violence could be interpreted in different ways. Although some historians hold that Cortina sought to avenge the Tejano loss of power in south Texas, others argue that he acted out only in the spirit of banditry.[40] These perceptions of Cortina's intentions were also present at the time. Many Anglos saw Cortina as a brigand, but many Tejanos saw his actions as someone who was standing up for their traditional rights and as one who stood firm against blatant Anglo land seizures. Cortina himself contended that he sought vengeance for the outrages committed upon Tejanos. "Many of you have been robbed of your

---

[37] Campbell, *Gone to Texas*, 193.
[38] Lyman L. Woodman, *Cortina: Rogue of the Rio Grande* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1950), 7.
[39] Sam Houston, as quoted in Haley, *Sam Houston*, 366. Haley provides a brief excerpt of a speech given by Houston at his inauguration on December 21, 1859. Here, Houston is speaking in regards to the Cortina affair and is quick not to lump in other Tejanos and Mexicanos with Cortina and his band of outlaws.
[40] Kenneth L. Stewart and Arnoldo De Leon, *Not Room Enough: Mexicans, Anglos, and Socioeconomic Change in Texas, 1850-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993), 46.

property, incarcerated, chased, murdered and hunted like wild beasts," wrote Cortina in one of his "Pronunciamientos," or proclamations that he authored trying to inflame Tejano sentiment against Anglos in Texas.[41] Cortina took such provocative steps as engaging Anglo forces and flying a Mexican flag in Texas to show that some loyalty to the old country still existed.[42] Cortina's approach toward rebellion against Anglo hegemony in South Texas highlights the need for an examination of identity in the south Texas bandits by historians. Violence constituted a necessary or reasonable alternative to powerlessness in the eyes of some Tejanos. This ethnic violence continued along the border for many years, but the American Civil War shifted the forms of violence from ethnic lines to the greater conflict between Yankee and Confederate, and between soldiers and outlaws from both sides of the border.

At this point, it is important to note that while negative perceptions of Tejanos proliferated, these perceptions were not shared by all of those in political power. Even as Cortina's actions inflamed ethnic tensions between Anglos and Tejanos along the Rio Grande, Governor Sam Houston sent commissioners to seek out the causes of the Cortina conflict. Among those he sent was Angel Navarro III, a son of Jose Antonio Navarro.[43] Jose Antonio Navarro even sent along a letter assuring Cortina that Anglo outrages committed along the Rio Grande were the acts of individuals, and not

[41] Juan Cortina, *Juan Cortina and the Texas Mexico Frontier, 1859-1877*, ed. Jerry Thompson (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1994), 24.
[42] Randolph B. Campbell, *Sam Houston and the American Southwest* (New York: Longman Press, 2002), 180.
[43] Ibid.

representative of Americans as a whole.[44] The Cortina episode concluded when Houston sent a force of Texas Rangers and U.S. Army Regulars to chase Cortina from his strongholds near Brownsville with the help of Mexican Army Regulars from the border town of Matamoros, Mexico.[45] For their part, the Rangers sent to capture Cortina and chase away these outlaws did little to change the view Cortina and other Tejanos had of them. Upon their arrival in Brownsville, William G. Tobin, commander of the Ranger contingent, incited mob violence. In a public square, Tobin lynched one of Cortina's lieutenants who was being held in the Brownsville jail.[46] Thompson concludes that if Cortina had not used his brief occupation of Brownsville to settle personal scores the incident would not be perceived so negatively.[47]

The prominent and wealthy Benavides family of Laredo stood ready to accommodate to the new order in Texas. Influential Tejano political leaders such as Jose Antonio Navarro also took part in urging state unity and looked to transcend ethnic lines.[48] Although Navarro fought for the cause of Tejano rights he, along with Basilio Benavides, also championed the drive towards secession from the Union during the American Civil War.[49] Both men sent members of their families to war, and had enough influence throughout the state of Texas to allow their kinsmen to become officers for the Confederacy.

---

[44] Jerry D. Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007), 88.
[45] James, *The Raven*, 394.
[46] Robert M. Utley, *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 111.
[47] Thompson, *Cortina*, 41.
[48] Stewart and De Leon, *Not Room Enough*, 46. See also Riley, "Santos Benavides," 109.
[49] Riley, "Santos Benavides," 109. See also Hinojosa, *A Borderlands Town*, 82.

Without considering the roots of the Tejano alliance with the Anglos, it may seem odd that Tejanos joined with the slaveholders of the South. Tejano attitudes toward slavery varied substantially. Some Tejanos sided against it and aided in the escape of African slaves across the Rio Grande. This led to local ordinances being passed by city councils and local government officials to prevent the fraternization of Tejanos and slaves in towns, such as the one passed by the town of Seguin in 1854.[50] But many Tejanos favored the continuation of slavery in Texas as a means of stimulating the economy and to accommodate southern whites into Texas. For example, Jose Antonio Navarro supported slavery and ideas of white supremacy.[51] In his journey through Texas, Frederick Law Olmsted observed the sometimes severe ways that some Tejanos treated their slaves, while at the same time others socialized with them.[52] Olmsted also saw that Anglos treated Tejanos with contempt and suspicion because they saw them as a risk and competition to slave labor.[53]

As conflicts over slavery continued, Anglo Democrats in Texas faced their first real threat to political power in the state with the creation of the nativist Know-Nothing Party.[54] The organizers for the Know-Nothings sought to exclude Tejanos and other

---

[50] De Leon, *Tejano Community*, 15.
[51] Stewart and De Leon, *Not Room Enough*, 46. In Randolph Campbell's *An Empire For Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas, 1821-1865* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), there are no mentions of Tejanos owning many slaves. This is almost certainly due to the concentration of Tejanos along the Mexican border. In Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas: Or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York: Edward Dix, 1857; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 272, the author mentions that Tejanos did own slaves, but makes no mention of the number of slaves owned by them.
[52] Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas*, 272.
[53] Ibid., 163.
[54] Gregg Cantrell, "Sam Houston and the Know-Nothings: A Reappraisal," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, XCVI (Jan., 1993), 329. Here, Cantrell acknowledges the threat the Know-Nothings posed to

ethnic groups from American society. In response to this threat to their traditional way of life, Tejano, Germans and Czech immigrants began joining the Democratic Party to aid in defeating the Know-Nothing Party. The alliance between the Democrats and Germans was short lasting, since recent German immigrants vehemently opposed the pro-slavery platform being pushed by the southern branch of the Democratic Party heading into the election of 1860. Some Tejanos had no problem with the Democrats being pro-slavery. As a part of their accommodation into Texan, American, and southern society, Tejanos had a decision to make regarding their loyalties. Germans could afford to oppose the traditional southern views on slavery. Tejanos, most of whom occupied a seemingly lower racial status, could not. For this reason, and to stake their claim in the new southern order, Tejanos such as Basilio Benavides, Jose Antonio Navarro and their families, pledged allegiance to the Democratic Party and to the Confederacy.[55]

The various implications of Mexican American political alliances prior to the Civil War are open to interpretation. Historians have begun to examine the complex political culture of the antebellum Tejanos. Several issues separated Tejanos from their Anglo neighbors. Politically and racially, Tejanos were still considered second class citizens. As seen with the Cortina affair, many Tejanos remained angry at Anglo encroachment or Anglo dominance over Texas society. Culturally, Tejanos had also

---

Democrats in Texas, but argues that Houston supported them as they were the least sectional political party.

[55] *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home,* Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006). Kamphoefner and Helbich show that there is a division between older settlements which had acculturated to Southern life, but that recent German immigrants who settled in the Hill Country of Texas were very opposed to slavery (15).

been forced in many parts of the state to give up traditional rights to open land and been forced to discontinue traditional celebrations. Nevertheless, after years of violent clashes between Anglos and Tejanos, many Tejanos were willing to go along with such a radical act as secession. The Tejanos saw the Confederacy for what it was: a new beginning in which they could try from the start to stake out their own place in society and accommodate the Anglos with whom they had so much tension in the early American period.

In the provocative book, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*, historian Peter Sahlins explains that national identity "is the expression of cultural unity and national consciousness consolidated within the political framework of a centralized state."[56] It is evident that Tejanos such as Benavides had decided upon a definite national identity. Some Tejanos in Texas began to see themselves as Americans during the latter antebellum period. It is during the Know-Nothing popularity in Texas that many Tejanos become politically active as they saw that they may become marginalized in American society. In Texas, pressures of war and annexation forced Tejanos to try and solidify themselves culturally and politically within Texas, the old South, and the United States as a whole. Given their relative geographic isolation from the rest of America, Tejanos and Anglo Texas began identifying themselves more with the local authorities rather than the national power. Traditional federalist values, such as

[56] Peter Sahlins, *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), 7.

regional autonomy, were holdovers from the time of the 1824 Mexican Constitution and were reflected in the political identity for many Tejanos.[57]

If Sahlins is correct in contending that national identity is created from the center outwards and the reflected back, then Texas may well be an excellent case study.[58] Any influence that Laredo or San Antonio may have had on Washington or Richmond was negligible, but these national capitals did have an influence, for a short time, on what the definition of "Texan" would be. The national identities that were being argued over in the East also needed resolution in the West. Therefore, Tejanos such as Navarro and Benavides, as well as myriad others among the common people invested themselves, their effort, and their lives to becoming politically more like their Anglo neighbors who were also Confederates.[59] During the later antebellum period, Tejanos attempted to show themselves capable of Americanism and to show that they had detached themselves from Mexico, if not completely culturally, then at least politically.[60]

Sahlins claims that the process of crafting a national identity for people in the region between France and Spain took several centuries. If one would look at the Tejano experience in Texas before the American Civil War, it is possible to see that same behavior exhibited in the Cerdanya in the centuries after the initial remapping of the political boundary. Sahlins asserts that Cerdans used the national identities of France and

[57] Riley, "Santos Benavides," 125. Riley also attributes Benavides's elite "Blue Blood" as a basis of support for the Confederacy.
[58] Sahlins, *Boundaries,* 8.
[59] Riley, "Santos Benavides," 109. For Navarro's support of slavery in Texas, see Andrew Anthony Tijerina, "Tejanos and Texas: The Native Mexicans of Texas, 1820-1850" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Texas at Austin, 1977), 267. Navarro was influential in getting slavery allowed into Texas.
[60] See Morales, "The Tejano-Anglo Alliance," 36.

Spain to their own benefits.[61] The same is true of Tejanos during the early American period in Texas from 1848-1865, choosing to be Mexican, Texan, American or Confederate as it suited them. Sahlins' argument that Cerdans defined themselves in regards to the defense of their social and territorial boundaries can be applied in Texas during the antebellum period. Tejanos formulated an alliance of convenience with the Southern Democratic Party when it became apparent that their social boundaries were being challenged. To some Tejanos, the violation of their traditional property rights by Anglos was met with violence by men such as Cortina. To others, such as the families of Benavides and Navarro, the Anglo encroachment prompted greater degrees of cooperation between the two peoples to prevent further loss of rights.

Sahlins asserts that national identity has nothing to do with so-called natural geographical boundaries.[62] Rather, national identity is *socially constructed* over many years and involves a "continuous process of defining 'friend' and 'enemy'." [63] Even though the Rio Grande provided a clear natural boundary, it did not do much to sever the ties of the old and new country. That the border was porous enough to allow incursions of Northern Mexico by Benavides during the Civil War with little effort and little to be done by Governor Albino Lopez of the Mexican State of Tamaulipas speaks to the very fluid nature of the national boundaries. From 1838 through 1865, as a new shifting national identity was being crafted by the Tejanos themselves, the distinction between

[61] Sahlins, *Boundaries,* 269.
[62] Ibid., 270.
[63] Ibid.

those who sought to identify politically and nationally with the United States those that sought to identify with Mexico were very clear. [64]

The Civil War was a turning point for race relations in the United States. While the most important changes were made in relations to Anglos and African Americans, Mexican Americans also made advances during this period. One avenue in which different ethnicities, such as African, Mexican and Irish Americans made advancements into American society was in military service. The military career of Santos Benavides and the men of the Benavides Partisan Cavalry Regiment permits drawing conclusions in regards to the ongoing process of Americanization.

While Mexican Americans have received mention in Civil War historiography, the process of Americanization has been largely ignored. Remarkably, one of the first writers to acknowledge Mexican Americans in historical works, albeit superficially, was Marcus J. Wright, a brigadier general in the Confederate army. In his posthumousy published wartime memoir, *Texas In The War: 1861-1865*, Wright discussed the wartime career of the Santos Benavides Partisan Cavalry Company and Regiment.[65] Wright referenced that unusual unit in passing without recognizing of the role played by Benavides' Cavalry Regiment in consolidating Confederate war goals along the Rio Grande, nor does Wright discuss any of the engagements in which the unit participated

[64] In *The Central Republic in Mexico, 1835-1846: Hombres de Bien in the Age of Santa Anna* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), Michael P. Costeloe concludes that there is a constant struggle to find a definite Mexican political identity (1). This may help to understand why people such as Benavides and other Mexican Revolutionaries found it so easy to adapt to a new nation and simply carry over ideas of government and how it should best be run and organized.

[65] Marcus J. Wright, *Texas In the War: 1861-1865,* ed. Harold B. Simpson (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Junior College Press, 1965), 28-29. This work was written by Wright sometime after the war, and was found by Simpson in the Texas State Archives and first published in 1965.

Historians of Mexican American participation in the war have focused more on the military contributions. In 1977, Jerry Don Thompson, in his book *Vaqueros Blue and Gray,* addresses on the war along the Rio Grande without discussing the wider implications for race relations and for Americanization.[66] Thompson followed this work with another which examined solely the contributions of Mexican Americans who served in the Union army, but this work is largely a restatement of some of the conclusions and work previously stated in *Vaqueros*.[67] Although Thompson does not delve deeply into the implications of Tejano military service in the Civil War, these are still the two most important works dealing with Mexican Americans in the Civil War. Since the publication of these books, several others have been published that look at the war in Texas, but also take only passing interest in the contributions of Mexican Americans. Ralph A. Wooster, in his work on Texas Confederate units, only briefly examines the Mexican Americans who were a part of Benavides' regiment.[68] Alvin M. Josephy, Jr. likewise discusses the plight of Mexican American troops, but relates only on the contempt with which they are treated by Anglo officers.[69] Undoubtedly, the high illiteracy rate amongst Tejano troops makes research difficult.[70] Many of the Tejano units had illiteracy rates going as high as 100 percent, with only the officers able to write and read.[71] For this reason, resources such as the correspondence between Colonel Santos Benavides and Colonel John Ford are invaluable in the study of the contributions

[66] Jerry D. Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue & Gray* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1977; reprint, Austin: State House Press, 2000).
[67] Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army* (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1986).
[68] Ralph A. Wooster, *Lone Star Regiments in Gray* (Austin: Eakin Press, 2002), 214.
[69] Alvin M. Josephy, Jr., *The Civil War in the American West* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991), 63.
[70] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 7.
[71] *Ibid.,* 10.

of Mexican Americans to the Confederate war effort in Texas during the American Civil War.

Following the Texas referendum on secession, Texas seceded from the Union on February 23, 1861. On April 17, 1861, elite Tejano Santos Benavides, a shopkeeper and former mayor of Laredo, received a letter from Colonel John Ford, commander of the Rio Grande military district and former Texas Ranger, notifying him of his commission as a Captain of Partisan Rangers for the state of Texas. Colonel Ford told Captain Benavides, "If the civil authorities of Zapata or any other county call on you for aid in executing the law or suppressing insurrection or riotous assemblages, it is your duty to render all the assistance in your power."[72] Benavides proved to be the most important Mexican American to serve with either side during the war and most influential with regards to the origins of a new Mexican American identity.

Santos Benavides was born in Laredo on November 1, 1823. As a young man during Mexico's Federalist-Centralist wars of the 1830's and 1840's, Benavides fought for the Federalist forces in south Texas. During the 1850's, Benavides had been employed in chasing down fugitive slaves after Texas was annexed by the United States.[73] Benavides was elected mayor of Laredo in 1856, a position that his brother, Refugio, held twice. As such, the brothers were familiar with many of the influential men on both sides of the river.

[72] John S. Ford to Santos Benavides, April 17, 1861, John S. Ford papers, Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. Hereafter referred to as Ford Papers, TSA.
[73] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 12.

When Santos Benavides was commissioned as an officer, he also obtained commissions for his two brothers, Refugio and Cristobal. Late in the war, Benavides granted a commission to his brother-in-law, John Z. Leyendecker, as assistant quartermaster of his regiment.[74] As historian Walter Buenger asserts, Tejanos mirrored the commitment of Anglos to the land of their birth.[75] Benavides belonged to an elite family in South Texas that had made efforts towards accommodation and adaptation to the Anglo presence along the Rio Grande. As such, Benavides showed his loyalty to his home state much as others did, by enlisting to serve. Early in their career as officers for the state of Texas they encountered the man that would prove to be a difficult and pervasive adversary to them well into the war, the Mexican bandit Juan Nepomuceno Cortina.

Hardly a month had passed since Benavides had received his commission when on May 19, Cortina crossed the Rio Grande, launching a raid on south Texas. While Benavides had received notice from Ford that war had begun between "the Confederate States and Mr. Lincoln's government" on April 19, 1861, it probably came as no surprise that Cortina, rather than a unit of Yankees, should be the first enemy in this war.[76] Upon getting word of Cortina's incursion into Texas, Benavides deployed his men to meet Cortina at the ranch of a Mr. Redmond outside of Carrizo, Texas. In a letter reporting the incident to Col. Ford, Benavides claimed to have had 27 men at his command when making his stand against Cortina at the Redmond ranch, and he was opposed by a

[74] Ibid., 121.
[75] Walter L. Buenger, *Secession and the Union in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984), 90.
[76] Ford to Benavides, April 19, 1861, Ford Papers, TSA.

"considerable force."[77] While it is only speculation as to the number of men Cortina had with him on this raid, the number may safely be estimated at or around 30, with some local outlaws joining in as Cortina rode by.[78]

Benavides' troopers met with an advance party of Cortina's force but fell back because they were outnumbered. Cortina had positioned his men so as to surround Benavides and prevent his escape. What the outlaw did not count on was the dispatch Benavides had sent to Lieutenant Callahan, who was stationed at Fort McIntosh some 65 miles away. Callahan, arriving with reinforcements including Refugio Benavides, added another 36 men to aid Benavides in his fight with Cortina. Benavides set out to meet Cortina and the approximately 70 men he had with him. According to Benavides, Cortina's men were "completely dispersed," with Benavides' men killing seven bandits outright and wounding others.[79] Evidently, Benavides ordered to his men not to take any prisoners. Since his men had succeeded in taking eleven prisoners, it is not an unreasonable assumption that Benavides ordered these men summarily executed.[80]

After the battle at Carrizo, Ford wrote Benavides congratulating him on turning back Cortina. Colonel Ford had some experience with Cortina. Ford had become a Texas Ranger after a term in the Texas legislature. In 1859 Cortina and Ford clashed several times. Ford fought in conjunction with U.S. Regular Army troops before the war. In fact, historian Lyman L. Woodman argues that the battles against Cortina were a type of "training prologue which benefited a number of officers who were to serve in gray

[77] Benavides to Ford, May 29, 1861, Ford Papers, TSA.
[78] Thompson, *Cortina*, 99-100.
[79] Benavides to Ford, May 29, 1861, Ford Papers.
[80] Ibid.

and blue between 1861 and 1865."[81] On May 27, 1861, Ford praised Benavides for his actions against his old foe. Benavides' "highly satisfactory" effort against Cortina merited recognition for "judgment, ability and gallantry."[82]

Of all the difficulties faced by the Confederacy, supply was arguably the worst. And while this logistical issue was worst in the East, the Confederate troops fighting in the West were no exception. Although Texas was not the site of major battles, it still found itself low on provisions necessary to field effective armies. In the letter acknowledging his commission, Ford told Benavides that he "will endeavor to procure the bugle required" of a volunteer company. While this was certainly not a major problem in supply, and a bugle may not have been one of the war materials most desperately needed by the new company, there were other short comings that highlighted the supply problem in the Rio Grande. After Benavides' engagement against Cortina in late May, Ford seemed to have solved at least some of this problem. On May 29, 1861, Ford issued a dispatch to Benavides telling him that a boat had been sent to Benavides with "fifty rifles and accoutrements" that were "the only kind on hand."[83] On this same boat, Ford sent "rations of subsistence" and believed that "your command will be properly supplied."[84]

In this letter, Ford also touched on another sensitive issue which was important not only to the Confederacy, but to the Mexicans and Mexican Americans who fought in the war. The crossing of the Rio Grande frontier of Texas was an issue that bothered the

[81] Woodman, *Cortina: Rogue of the Rio Grande*, 43.
[82] Ford to Benavides, May 27, 1861, Ford Papers, TSA.
[83] Ford to Benavides, May 29, 1861, Ford Papers, TSA.
[84] Ibid.

commanders of the Confederacy and the men who fought for it. In 1863, with the backing of French Emperor Napoleon III, Emperor Maximilian had seized control of Mexico, deposing Mexican president Benito Juarez, who continued to lead a resistance movement against the occupying forces. This intervention by France was a blatant violation of the Monroe Doctrine. It opened the possibility of yet another hostile force to contend with along the Rio Grande. The French intervention also meant that Union activity would intensify in Texas as a show of force to France's occupation forces. Eventually, the Imperialists and Nationalist forces would ally themselves with the Confederacy and the Union, respectively, but during the initial stages of the conflict, the reactions and intentions of the new regime in Mexico City were still unclear.

In the course of pursuing Cortina, Benavides sometimes found it necessary to follow Cortina across the river. Violating the border line presented a problem to both his superior officer and to the government of Mexico. This is not to say that there was no cooperation between Mexican and Confederate authorities. On June 2, 1861, Ford wrote Benavides notifying him of the intention of General Guadalupe Garcia from Matamoros, Mexico, to cross the river and to "aid in putting down the partisans of Cortina and Ochoa" and to help in "giving peace and tranquility to the frontier."[85] Antonio Ochoa was another Mexican outlaw and sometime ally of Cortina, who had also been sought for inciting rebellion in Zapata County.[86]

Cooperation, however, was not the norm. In correspondence to General Hamilton P. Bee, Governor Albino Lopez complained that Benavides and his men, in

[85] Ford to Benavides, June 2, 1861, Ford Papers.
[86] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 17.

crossing into Mexico, have trampled "on civil and military authorities."[87] Adding to the outrage felt by Governor Lopez was the apparent abduction of former Texas judge and Federal Colonel Edmund J. Davis, who was at the time organizing troops of Texas Unionists and Mexicans willing to fight for the Union. Lopez was apparently concerned that these attacks would "produce bitter feelings; the slightest motive may render fruitless all efforts of the chief authorities to settle existing differences," and perhaps lead to further violence between Mexican bandits, Mexican troops and Confederate soldiers if Bee's subordinates (including Benavides) "do not act with more prudence."[88] Lopez, in his correspondence to Bee, asserted Mexico's neutrality and stated that he would not tolerate "acts which violate the neutrality of Mexico," including Colonel Davis' attempts to raise troops to fight against the Confederacy.[89]

For his part, Bee disavowed the border crossing that seized Colonel Davis.[90] But even then, Bee was unapologetic in doing so. After all, Davis was an enemy, and it appeared, at least to Bee, and probably also to Ford and Benavides, that Governor Lopez was, if not completely supporting the actions taken by Davis, then at least allowing them to go on by his inaction. On the topic of Davis' release from custody of the Confederacy, Bee stated that "Were I to consider the many instances in which the dignity of my country has been outraged, and the lives and property of my fellow-citizens sacrificed, by persons operating under the advice and control of this same E. J.

---

[87] Albino Lopez to Hamilton P. Bee, March 15, 1863, in War Department, *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (128 parts in 70 volumes; Washington, D.C.: 1880-1901), Series I, Volume XV, 1129. Hereafter referred to as *O.R.* All citations are to Series I unless otherwise indicated.
[88] Albino Lopez to Bee, March 17, 1863,*O.R.*, XV, 1131.
[89] Albino Lopez to Bee, March 18, 1863, *O.R.*, XV, 1133.
[90] Hamilton P. Bee to Lopez, March 16, 1863, *O.R.*, XV, 1130.

Davis, while harbored on the neutral soil of Mexico, I might perhaps be justly led to a different determination."[91]

Accordingly, Bee also praised Benavides in a letter to Lopez after Davis was returned to the south bank of the Rio Grande. Bee said that he held a "high appreciation" of Captain Benavides "as a man of prudence and discretion" and that he was "satisfied that the authorities on both sides of the line may equally confide in him as not likely to do any act to compromise the relation which should exist."[92] Even as the relations between the Confederacy and Mexico remained tenuous and strained, Bee recognized the ability of his subordinate and, in effect, did nothing to stop Benavides from making any further raids into Mexican territory.

It is important to note that not all Mexican Americans fought for the Confederacy. Edmund J. Davis had fled to Mexico after secession and had begun enlisting men in Federal service. In Mexico, Davis found an ally in Leonard Pierce, U.S. Consul to Mexico at Matamoros. In his own right, Pierce raised many troops for the Union cause, mainly Germans from the Texas Hill country who had escaped lynching by secessionists and some old veterans from the regular army.[93] While Davis' 1st Texas (Union) Cavalry consisted of some Tejanos, John L. Haynes wanted to recruit Tejanos exclusively for his newly formed unit, the 2nd Texas (Union) Cavalry Regiment.

[91] Hamilton P. Bee to Lopez, March 18, 1863, *O.R.*, XV, 1132.
[92] Hamilton P. Bee to Lopez, March 22, 1863, *O.R.*, XV, 1135.
[93] Thompson, *Mexican Texans*, 13.

Haynes was a Unionist, but openly opposed the election of Abraham Lincoln, calling him an "obnoxious man."[94]

Haynes began circulating handbills promising a bounty on signing up, clothing, another bounty at the end of the war, and a salary of thirteen dollars a month for the duration of the war.[95] Apparently, these offers prompted a large number of Mexican nationals and Tejanos who had not enlisted for service in one of the Confederate units to enlist in Federal forces. If there was a difference to the men who served with Benavides and the men who served with Haynes and Davis, it must have been purely ideological. The men who served on either side seemed to come from similar backgrounds. Perhaps these men were more like Juan Cortina who had previous grievances with the South and with Texas, and these grievances contributed to their choice in allegiance. However, as had been the case since before even the Revolutionary War, men who were given bounties sometimes deserted their newly formed unit. The problem seems appeared to be so bad in the 2nd Texas (Union) Cavalry that the commanders decided to make an example of one of the men for desertion. This unfortunate man, Private Pedro Garcia, who was believed to have been a twenty-five-year-old farmer, was executed on June 22, 1864.[96] Historian Jerry Thompson argues that the reason for the mass amounts of desertion is due in large part to not receiving the clothing promised these men before enlisting.[97] It seems, however that Private Garcia was not nearly the coward many thought he was. According to Benjamin F. McIntyre, Garcia refused the bandage

[94] Ibid., 14.
[95] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 85.
[96] Thompson, *Mexican Texans*, 29.
[97] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 89.

offered him to hide his eyes from the firing squad.[98] Private Garcia showed the men who executed him something of the bravery he would have had, if the Union lived up to its end of the bargain. As infamous as Private Garcia's case was, it was still just a basic case of desertion. There is a more telling example of how a young idealist can be shifted away from a cause due in no small part to institutional racism and the inability of both Union and Confederate governments to make good on their promises.

Such was the story of Adrian J. Vidal. Vidal was born in Mexico before the Mexican American War. He moved to Texas when his mother married a wealthy landowner in south Texas named Mifflin Kenedy.[99] In October of 1862, Vidal enlisted as a private in a Confederate partisan company being formed in San Antonio. Soon, due in no small part to the influence of his stepfather, Vidal became a lieutenant of a partisan company, under the command of Captain Richard Taylor.[100] The conditions under which Vidal served were difficult. His men often lacked shoes and clothing, and many of the items needed for camp, such as tents, pots and pans.[101] At least at the beginning of his Confederate career, Vidal made the best of the situation, even capturing a Union gunboat in July, 1863.[102] For unclear reasons, Vidal and his men chose to abandon the Confederacy, and fled to Mexico after his desertion and the murder of two of their

[98] Ibid., 91.
[99] Ibid., 71.
[100] Jerry D. Thompson, "Mutiny and Desertion on the Rio Grande: The Strange Saga of Captain Adrian J. Vidal," *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 12 (1974), 161.
[101] Ibid.
[102] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 72.

former comrades.[103] Some of these men were captured by Cortina, who was by then a Mexican military officer.[104]

Cooperation between Mexico and the Confederacy prevailed during the mutiny of Vidal and his men. Like General Garcia and Colonel Benavides, men from both sides of the river decided that perhaps the best course of action would be to hunt down these men for the crimes they committed while in Texas, and for any crimes they might commit in Mexico. In a letter to Governor Manuel Ruiz, General Bee speculated that "one who would violate his allegiance, to plunder his own people, would not be likely to be more lenient in a foreign country, and the cause of humanity and justice both appeal for prompt and united action."[105] In his reply, Ruiz assured Bee that "I at once gave orders that all the troops on the line should unite in pursuing the insurrectionists" and that "combined efforts" on behalf of Mexican and Confederate troops would provide the best results to concluding this affair.[106]

Had this been the end of the Vidal affair, it would have been enough, but Vidal apparently was not done fighting the Civil War of his adopted country. On November 26, 1863, Vidal volunteered for service with Union forces gathering in the newly occupied city of Brownsville, and agreed to raise a company of partisan rangers attached to Davis' 1st Texas (Union) Cavalry.[107] Vidal and his men served the Union army well into 1864, but the same problems arose for Vidal yet again. Vidal, who was still a young man at the time, soon began to reject the authority that was being placed over him by the

[103] Bee to Capt. Edmund P. Turner, Assistant Adjutant General, October 28, 1863, *O.R.*, XXVI, I, 448-49.
[104] Bee to Turner, October 31, 1863, *O.R.*, XXVI, I, 451.
[105] Bee to Manuel Ruiz, October 28, 1863, *O.R.*, XXVI, I, 450.
[106] Manuel Ruiz to Bee, October 28, 1863, *O.R.*, XXVI, I, 450.
[107] Thompson, "Mutiny and Desertion", 165.

Union army. To his credit, it seems Vidal remained loyal to his second army longer than many of the men whom he recruited. Prior to Vidal's desertion, 53 men had already deserted, with more men leaving after their captain had left.[108] Of the men who joined Vidal and served the Union army, only 23 served out the remainder of their time.[109] Vidal met his end eventually at the hands of the imperialist troops of Maximilian after joining up with Benito Juarez and his revolutionaries.[110]

Even as the Union had its trials and tribulations with the use of Mexican American troops, the Confederates still enjoyed the success of theirs. While Davis and Haynes organized their men into fighting units, Benavides continued his fight against outlaws and Union troops. For Benavides, 1863 was an eventful, and highly successful, year. Early in the year, the Texas State Legislature acknowledged Benavides along with his brother Refugio for "their vigilance, energy, and gallantry in pursuing and chastising the bandits infesting the Rio Grande frontier."[111] Shortly thereafter, Benavides was promoted to major. As a major, Benavides proceeded to execute his war against outlaws on the Rio Grande. In September of 1863, Benavides received an opportunity to finally crush a band of outlaws under Ocaviano Zapata, who had been receiving arms and support from the Union army at New Orleans.[112] Benavides took command of the company of his brother Cristobal and crossed the Rio Grande, surprising the Zapatistas

[108] Ibid., 166.
[109] Ibid., 166-167.
[110] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 79.
[111] Steven D. Yancey, Acting Assistant Adjutant-General, to Headquarters, District of Texas, New Mexico, and Arizona, San Antonio, March 30, 1863, *O.R.*, XV, 221.
[112] Thompson, *Mexican Texans*, 9.

in a ravine and killing most of the leaders, including Zapata himself.[113] Nearly two months later, Benavides was given permission by W. R. Briggs, chief of staff to Lieutenant General E. Kirby Smith, to "raise a regiment of partisan rangers in western Texas, from any men, whether within conscript age or not, not now in service, which regiment you will be appointed to command" due in large part to Benavides' "gallant and distinguished services."[114]

In many ways, 1864 was the year that defined both Benavides and his regiment. Supply troubles still prevailed along the Rio Grande, just as they did along the Rappahannock River in Virginia. The only possible advantage the western Confederacy, especially Texans, had was the border with Mexico and the booming cotton trade through Matamoros which resulted from the Union naval blockade on all southern ports. Even with the cotton trade, supplies were still hard to come by. In a letter from Ford to Benavides in December of 1863, Ford began to order Benavides to hoard supplies. Furthermore, Ford directed him to confiscate "a large quantity of flour at or near Laredo" and to "have it transported to some point near the Sol Del Rey and protected by a sufficient guard."[115] Ford told Benavides that capturing horses and mules should also become a priority."[116]

In March of 1864, Benavides and his men received what would be their greatest challenge of the war. On March 19, 1864, Benavides was attacked while camped at the border city of Laredo by 200 enemy cavalry composed of "Mexicans and Americans,"

---

[113] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 60-61.
[114] W. R. Briggs to Benavides, November 3, 1863, Ford Papers, TSA.
[115] Ford to Benavides, December 28, 1863, Ford Papers, TSA.
[116] Ibid.

and expected 300 more enemy infantry and two pieces of artillery to face off against his force of only 60 men.[117] According to one of Benavides' men, the colonel blamed himself for being taken by surprise, since Benavides had been laid up sick in Laredo for several days.[118] Nearly three years in the saddle were taking their toll on Benavides. The day after the battle, W. W. Camp wrote to Ford telling him that the Colonel was "seriously ill, owing to the fatigue and exposure he has undergone lately," and that Benavides "cannot much longer stand the strain of it."[119] The Union troops, part of Haynes' 2nd Cavalry, attacked Laredo for nearly three hours, but were turned back by Benavides' men and their staunch defense of the city.

Benavides again received acclaim from his Anglo superior officers for his actions. As the eyes of the Confederate Army on the Rio Grande, Benavides and his men had witnessed various and increasing Union activity. Earlier in the year, Benavides' men had reported several large columns of troops leaving the Union-controlled city of Brownsville, including a large force on January 27, 1864, which "consisted of 300 Mexicans and 200 Negroes" out of a combined total of about 1500 troops.[120] Benavides himself did not have the numbers to confront a force of this size, and instead kept a steady flow of messages going to Ford in San Antonio about their whereabouts and movements.[121] Around this time, Benavides was presented with the

[117] Benavides to Ford, March 119, 1864, *O.R.*, XXXIV, I, 647.
[118] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 108.
[119] Camp to Ford, March 20, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA.
[120] Benavides to Ford, January 27, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA.
[121] *Ibid.* Benavides informed Ford that he would keep him apprised of Federal movements in South Texas, but these messages are not present in the collection of correspondence between the two men collected at the Texas State Archives.

opportunity to gain the rank of brigadier general if he could raise a brigade of troops. Although he never did so, Benavides greatly desired the rank to further his prestige.

With the Confederate fortunes fading in the East, the men of Benavides' Regiment were forced ever more to look after themselves. Again, supplies from Confederate sources were a necessity and Benavides was running out of money to buy them. Benavides was often forced to confiscate cotton shipments and sell them for the supplies he needed. In doing so, charges were leveled against Benavides, saying that "he has seized cotton and sold it, after it had been disposed of by the agent of the Cotton Bureau."[122] The Cotton Bureau was the agency created by the Confederate government in Richmond to regulate cotton sales in hope of raising demand and forcing foreign intervention. In seizing this cotton, Benavides was in violation of Special Order No. 157, issued by Ford on June 5, 1864, that prohibited the transportation of cotton over the border into Mexico.[123] The investigation against Benavides, while having some basis, was more than likely a direct result of a growing feud between Ford and Benavides over the prospect of Benavides being awarded a brigadier general's commission.[124]

For Benavides, the issue was simple: equip his men properly or face more mutiny and desertion like that of Adrian Vidal and his men. His men had, in some cases, been poorly equipped since the beginning of the war. On January 18, 1864, Benavides wrote Major A. G. Dickinson, a commander at San Antonio, telling him that "there are some of the men in my command who have no guns. If possible send me 50 Enfield rifles – If

[122] W. L. Newsom, Assistant Inspector General to Lt. W. Kearney, Acting Assistant Adjutant General, September 4, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA.
[123] Santos Benavides, Special Orders No. 12, June 25, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA.
[124] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 119-120.

you have not got the Enfield send the best possible."[125] As of July of that same year, Benavides still had not received arms for his men. In his correspondence to Ford, Benavides told him that "the men of Capt. Garcia's company are without arms, and until supplied are of very little service."[126] Even Benavides' men, who had thus far been loyal, nearly took to rioting at Ringgold Barracks while demanding new uniforms. Only the intervention of Captain Cristobal Benavides, who ordered the uniforms to be handed out, stopped a riot.[127]

As the American Civil War neared an end in South Texas, even Benavides' regiment, that had been spared thus far of a spectacle the likes of a Vidal-type mutiny, began deserting.[128] Despite increasing desertions, Benavides still had ten companies in the field as of February, 1865.[129] With the war ending, Benavides took his men out of the towns on the border, intent on keeping them from engaging in lawlessness.[130] On June 30, 1865, Ford wrote Benavides with his final instructions as to how to parole his men. Ford informed Benavides that General E. Kirby Smith had surrendered to Major General E. R. S. Canby on May 26.[131] Benavides gave his officers thirty pesos each and sent them on their way home.[132] For Santos Benavides and his men, the war of rebellion was over.

---

[125] Benavides to Dickinson, January 18, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA.
[126] Benavides to Ford, July 19, 1864, Ford Papers, TSA. Emphasis in original.
[127] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 122-123.
[128] Ibid., 121.
[129] Ibid., 122.
[130] Ibid., 124.
[131] Ford to Benavides, June 30, 1865, Ford Papers, TSA.
[132] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 124-125.

In the end, why Tejanos fought was not a simple matter. Thompson argues that the Mexican Americans who fought in the war did so in an attempt to improve their economic or class standings. This, however, is debatable. In the various examples seen here, class does not seem as important a factor as Thompson makes it out to be. In many cases, the Confederate Army was not paid for months at a time, and when they were paid, it was in devalued Confederate currency. It could be argued that many of these men, including Benavides, Vidal, and even Private Garcia, fought to find a better understanding of if and how they belonged in American society. Benavides and Vidal both came from wealthy families, and would have no reason to fight for some abstract ideals of class or economics. Instead, these leaders fought on behalf of an ethnicity which was considered to be inferior to their Anglo neighbors. If, as Thompson argues, economics and patronage were the important reasons for enlisting in the opposing armies, there were, at the time, better, less risky alternatives to becoming soldiers.[133] Juan Cortina and his men, being so active, should have been a better alternative to Tejanos looking solely for profit from war. Certainly, a deserter from Cortina's bandits would not have met the end that Private Garcia met.

In the case of Adrian Vidal, he joined three different armies before facing a firing squad at the hands of Maximilian's forces. A coward, or someone looking only for economic benefit, would have found a different way to have done so without risking their lives. Vidal, who was still a young man of twenty years old, and already the veteran of three armies at his death, could have just as easily used his stepfather's

[133] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, xii.

influence to stay out of the war.[134] Benavides, already a much older man (37 years old when the war began), almost certainly had more patience than Vidal. This is perhaps why Benavides never wavered from his loyalty to the Confederacy.

Tejanos fighting for the Confederacy along the Rio Grande did not play a vital role, either in the final victory or loss of the Confederacy. They did, however, provide valuable men to the Confederate government in Texas. The Tejanos helped to control border raids by bandits, Indian attacks from the west, and Union incursions at Brownsville and Laredo. For the Confederate war effort in Texas, the Tejanos were invaluable.

James McPherson contends a revolutionary tradition was drawn upon by both the Union and the Confederacy.[135] It was no different for Tejanos. Santos Benavides came from a family with deep roots in both martial and revolutionary traditions. The same could be said for some of the men in his command. It is well known that Texas and Northern Mexico was a hotbed for insurgent activity in revolutions against both Spain and Mexico's Centralist government. It was also in Northern Mexico where Benito Juarez launched his attacks against Maximillian's Imperialist government.

Tejanos, such as Santos Benavides, took a positive step towards the creation of a new identity, one that identified with their Anglo neighbors. Benavides' service shows that his Anglo superior officers were willing to over look his ethnicity based on his service, loyalty, commitment to Confederate ideals, and most likely, his social class. As

---

[134] Ibid., xv.
[135] James McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 21.

historian Peter Sahlins argues, rhetoric is a tool that is used by border populations to begin their identification both toward and from a nation.[136] As a Tejano in 1861 could not have conceptualized what the United States was in the same terms that men in Massachusetts or Indiana did, they did recognize that they could use the rhetoric of the South to form alliances for self-protection. Tejanos saw the American Civil War as a means to advance their struggle for equality and recognition as Americans. The Civil War provided an opportunity for Tejanos, such as the Benavides family, to declare themselves interested in the internal affairs in American politics.

Antonio Bustillo, that enlisted soldier from San Antonio serving with the 6th Texas Volunteers near Dalton, Georgia, with Cleburne's Division, wrote to his mother in March of 1864 that he believed that he would be home soon.[137] He concluded, "I very much wish to see you all again, for it has been nearly two years that I have been absent from my home."[138] While those who served in south Texas no doubt were less apt to the home sickness that Private Bustillo showed, many still endured four years of hardship in their service to the Confederacy. Even as the enlistees of 1861-1862 continued to serve honorably, the enthusiasm had long since worn off, replaced by a desire only to return home. The sentiments expressed by Bustillo in his letter could have just as easily been those of many German, Irish or Anglo soldiers.

---

[136] Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 269.

[137] Antonio Bustillo to Petra Martines de Bustillo, March 1, 1864, Bustillo Family Papers, Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas. Hereafter referred to as Bustillo Papers, DRT Library. This is translated from the sentence in the letter dated March 1, 1864. "Todas me aseguran que esta sanguina guerra debe de finalizar en este ano cuando mas tarde, y espero que asi suceda, pues ya tengo muchas ganas de ver a todos ustedes, pues ya va para dos anos que me alla ausente de mi casa, en fines de este mez se cumplen los dos anos." The sentence goes on to describe the election of Eugenio Navarro, a member of Jose Antonio Navarro's family, to the rank of lieutenant.

[138] Ibid.

With the surrender of Confederate forces under Edmund Kirby Smith, the Civil War in the Trans-Mississippi ended on May 26, 1865.[139] Along with the end of the war, hopes for Tejano inclusion into Texas society and life also had been placed on hold. While Santos Benavides and his brothers remained fixtures in Laredo politics for years to come, Anglo Texan attitudes towards Tejanos reverted to their antebellum position. For a large majority of Tejanos the wartime political expediency of the Anglo-Tejano alliance was over.

The steps for Tejano assimilation into Texan culture which began before Texas gained its independence from Mexico by men such as Juan Seguin and Jose Antonio Navarro had carried on past annexation, War with Mexico, and secession. Aided by a national debate over the nature of immigrants, Tejanos had, in part, found shelter within the Democratic Party.[140] The Democrats, in allowing the inclusion of Irish and Tejano immigrants into the party, had consolidated their control over immigrant groups in hope of maintaining their hold both on the South and the institution of slavery. While it is true that many Tejanos had no interest in maintaining slavery in Texas, they, like some Germans, had accepted this tenet of the Democratic Party in order to gain acceptance into Texan society.[141]

The creation of a Mexican Texan identity was well underway by the time Fort Sumter was fired upon. Acceptance into the Democratic Party was only one step in the creation of this identity. Prominent Tejano families, such as the Navarro, Seguin and

---

[139] Ford to Benavides, June 30, 1865, Ford Papers, TSA.
[140] Riley, "Santos Benavides", 109.
[141] *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home,* ed. Walter D. Kamphoefner and Wolfgang Helbich (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 15.

Benavides families, not only socialized with prominent Anglo families, but also in many cases intermarried. In Mexican Texas, where a strong national identity had not been established by either Spain or Mexico before 1835, national identity was negotiable and fluid. According to Peter Sahlins, national identity is a negotiable characteristic that groups along national frontiers often adopt in self-interest.[142] That the northern provinces of Mexico and Spain had so often been seats of rebellion further supports this view.

In his provocative book *For Cause and Comrades: Why Men Fought in the Civil War*, James McPherson asserts that the men who fought for the Union and Confederacy did so based on previous revolutionary traditions, amongst other things.[143] This is certainly true for the German "Forty-Eighters," the Irish exiles from the Famine, and the Tejano rebels against the Centralist government in Mexico. That Tejanos such as the Navarro and Benavides families took an active part in the Confederacy should come as no surprise, any more than the involvement of ethnic Irish such as Thomas Meagher and Michael Corcoran on the Federal side. Part of the negotiation of identity between Tejanos and Anglos involved the Tejanos accepting of American cultural mores, which in the South included acceptance of the system of slavery. In Noel Ignatiev's influential book *How the Irish Became White*, the author argues that the alliance between the Democratic Party and the Irish was an alliance of convenience, which rejected nativism as championed by the Know-Nothings, and then the Republican Party, in favor of an

[142] Sahlins, *Boundaries*, 269.
[143] McPherson, *For Cause and Comrades*, 104.

institutional form of racism.[144] This assertion is one that is very close in nature to the reason that Tejano elites allied themselves with the Democrats. While there is evidence, as reported by Frederick Olmsted, that a certain degree of camaraderie, or a "culture of the low," as described by Ignatiev, existed between Texas slaves and Tejanos, the same author reports of the brutal treatment of slaves at the hands of Tejano masters.[145]

The wartime experience of Santos Benavides and his Tejano soldiers does much to show the extent of dedication to the Texan and Confederate causes. The identity that was adopted by Tejanos was a reflection of the men and women who lived around them. The governments and policies in Washington and Richmond had little to do with the day-to-day lives of the Tejanos who served with Santos Benavides, and antagonistically, with Union General Edmund Davis. Nonetheless, traditional scholarship that treated the men of the Benavides Partisan Cavalry Regiment and the 1st and 2nd Texas (Union) as little more than hirelings no longer appears viable. While there was higher than average desertion rates among some of the units composed of Tejanos, many units composed of Anglos had similar desertion rates when faced with little or no pay and unsatisfactory provisions and equipment. The Benavides Regiment, which was manned by a majority of the Tejanos who served with the Confederacy, still had ten companies of troops in the field as of the surrender of the Trans-Mississippi Army under General Kirby Smith.[146]

The Tejanos' service to the Confederacy, while certainly not important in the way that many of the famous Confederate regiments were, still served an important

---

[144] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 69.
[145] See Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey Through Texas: Or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York: Edward Dix, 1857; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004), 272, and Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White*, 2.
[146] Thompson, *Vaqueros*, 122.

function and may be taken to demonstrate unexpected racial acceptance by Anglo Confederates, at least within nineteenth century racial attitudes. Before the interdiction of the Mississippi River in July of 1863 by Union forces, Texas, and its southern border, were lifelines of supplies in to the Confederate Southwest. The Tejano units along the Rio Grande allowed supplies to escape the predation of Juan Cortina and his bandits. As shown by the Benavides Regiment's involvement in the Battle of Laredo, Tejano units also helped to defend the border of the state. The true legacy of the Benavides Regiment's combat service to the Confederacy is therefore at the local level. On the other hand, the regiment's *military* service may be interpreted as less significant than the exceptional steps toward social acceptance of the Tejanos by Anglo Confederates.

Following the end of the war, Tejanos continued to assert themselves as active participants in the new American poitical system. As with many aspects of the old South, the Tejano political machine of south Texas remained entrenched in Laredo. Following a brief period of inactivity during reconstruction, the Benavides family reasserted itself during the election of 1873, managing to sway enough Republican votes to defeat Democrats from a rival faction.[147] Despite the admittedly major setback of the loss during the Civil War, most Tejanos continued to identify themselves as Democrats. By 1873, only 3.3% of the Texas Republican party was composed of Tejanos.[148] With strong local and state candidates like the Benavides faction, most Tejanos were content

[147] Roberto Ramon Calderon, "Mexican Politics in the American Era, 1846-1900: Laredo Texas" (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1993), 459.
[148] *Ibid*, 454.

to continue their support for the Democrats. This was a trend that continued well into the twentieth century.

Despite their former adversarial relationship during the war, the Benavides faction, led by patriarch Santos, formed political alliances with Reconstruction Republicans, most especially Edmund Davis, then serving as Reconstruction governor of Texas.[149] This is not to say that there was a general feeling of peace and prosperity in postwar Texas. The 1870's were categorized as a period of intense social and racial violence as Anglos further encroached on Tejano strongholds in south Texas. While land fraud was rampant, the most serious forms of violence were ranch seizures by so called "skinning" gangs.[150] By the latter years of the 1870's, Tejanos were also facing a more fundamental type of societal change. Following the end of the War, the northern railroad companies had begun making significant inroads into south Texas, bringing with them new settlers and new concepts of business and capitalism. While the old Anglo settlers accommodated and adapted into the Tejano system, the new American settlers brought new ideas of racial hierarchy into Texas with the rails.[151]

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, Tejanos occupied a more precarious position in Texas than before their failed attempts at acoomodation. Nonetheless, a strong sentiment already existed linking the Tejano to the northern side of the Rio Grande. To many Tejanos, their homeland was Texas, despite the shared cultural similarities to Mexico. That Tejanos were eager to take up a struggle they did not

---

[149] *Ibid,* 516.
[150] David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexican in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 53.
[151] *Ibid,* 92.

understand and that they were savvy enough to political maneuver to secure themselves a place in the American system speak to it. While the complete fulfillment of the Tejano and Mexican Identity was still in the future, the groundwork of this transformation had already begun. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Tejanos had decisions to make on whether or not they could continue to embrace this new identity in the face of a expansionist American system which was not afraid to use violence to force removal of unwanted elements. The early years of the twentieth century, filled with violence of all kinds, would provide even greater challenges, and ultimately, a solution to the identity issue of Tejanos.

3. SIN NUESTRA AYUDA, JAMAS HUBIERAN OBTENIDO EL TRIUMFO: THE MEXICAN AMERICAN IDENTITY IN THE BEGINNING OF THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

During the 1930's, far removed from his time as a soldier in the 90th Infantry Division of the United States Army, José de La Luz Sáenz, a Tejano educator and civil rights activist, decided to publish his collected memoirs and papers describing his service as an American soldier during the First World War. Amid the economic and social upheaval of the Great Depression, Sáenz perhaps saw the opportunity to reexamine the place of Tejanos in American society. His reflections on the war in the preface to his memoirs states a rather obvious fact for those looking back on the war. " The Allies, without our help, could never have obtained the triumph."[1] Sáenz may as well have included that phrase in reference to the alliance between Tejanos and Anglos during the war and the amount of social and economic unity required to win the First World War.

This chapter will examine the role played by Tejanos in the latter years of the nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the creation of the Mexican American Identity. It will examine the history of southern Texas in relation to conflicts and alliances made by Tejanos and Anglos in the years leading up to the First World War. It

[1] Jose de la Luz Saenz, *Lose Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra y su contingente en pro de la Democracia, la Humanidad y la Justicia* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1933), 9. Translated from "*Los aliados, sin nuestra ayuda, jamas hubieran obtenido el triunfo."* The name of this chapter is taken from this quotation.

will trace the increased U.S. nationalism within the Tejano community through the upheavals of the border revolutions of Catarino Garza and the Plan de San Diego as well as the onset of the Mexican revolution of 1910. This chapter will contend that the current generational scheme argued by many Chicano historians does not adequately explain the presence of Americanism within the Tejano community as it emerged from the nineteenth century.

Beginning with historian Mario Garcia, Chicano historians have divided the Tejano community into several different "Political Generations."[2] As defined by Marvin Rinalta, these generations are defined by undergoing "the same basic historical experiences during their formative years."[3] To Garcia, these generations were defined by their willingness, or lack thereof, to assimilate to the dominant culture of the United States. Garcia concludes that the Tejano is defined politically by being part of a conquered people.[4] As such, Tejanos and Mexicanos living within the United States had very different ideals and goals as far as assimilation was concerned.

The first Tejanos who arrived in the United States, or were present when the United States began its occupation of territory conquered during the 1848 war with Mexico, are often referred to as the Mexicanist generation.[5] Garcia and others have

---

[2] Mario T. Garcia, *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), 3.
[3] Marvin Rintala, *The Constitution of Silence: Essays in Generational Themes* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979), 8.
[4] Garcia, *Mexican Americans,* 14.
[5] This particular political generation is a particularly long one. One of the criticisms that this dissertation makes is that there is no accounting for the length of the political generation, as it is not defined by time, but rather by national identity. This Mexicanist generation does not account for the changes to the Tejano that took place during the latter years of the nineteenth century, especially in regards to the American Civil War.

argued that this generation, which lasted from the nineteenth century until the 1930s, retained a backward looking mentality giving these Mexicanos and Tejanos a much more Mexican oriented identity, both politically and culturally.[6] This long-lasting generation in many ways identified with and hoped to remain part of Mexico. This particular outlook by an immigrant community seems to be an anomaly in the study of American immigration. Typically, immigrant groups to the United States sought to assimilate into the American culture. It is because of the proximity of the Mexican border that the Mexicanist generation still had great hopes of returning to Mexico one day. It was the Mexicanist generation that contributed cheap Mexicano and Tejano labor into the American Southwest in the late nineteenth century. These immigrants typically maintained the lowest rung of the socioeconomic ladder in the areas where they lived.

Chicano scholars conclude it is that background which inevitably led to the creation of the Mexican American identity. Garcia argues that the Tejano and Mexicano communities in the United States reached the demographic numbers that were needed to push a more aggressive stance on civil rights in the 1930s. Traditional scholarship asserts that the Mexican American generation comes about during the 1930s in the United States as a result of the children of the Mexicanist generation becoming more acculturated into the American system while never truly becoming assimilated.[7] While

---

[6] For examinations of the Mexicanist Generation, see Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993); Armando Alonzo, *The Tejano Legacy* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998); F. Arturo Rosales, *¡Pobre Raza!: violence, justice, and mobilization among México Lindo immigrants, 1900-1936* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999).
[7] Garcia, *Mexican Americans,* 16. For other discussion of the Mexican American Generation, see George Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993); Ignacio Garcia, *White but not Equal: Mexican Americans, Jury Selection and the Supreme Court* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008); and Cynthia Orozco,

the frustrations of the Mexicanist generation in regards to civil rights brought on uprisings such as the Cortina War, the Catarino Garza Revolt and the Plan de San Deigo, this second generation, the acculturated Mexican Americans, decided to work within the political system to achieve reform and equality within the United States. In contrast to the orthodox interpretation in the field of Chicano History, this chapter challenges or modifies this orthodoxy.

To many Chicano Historians, the origins of the Mexican American identity can be traced back to Tejanos and Mexicanos growing up in the United States and being exposed to Anglo American education. While Garcia notes that these generations are typically not defined by years, but rather by politics, some of the shortcomings of this particular interpretation are that the supposed members of the one generation exists within a time that is usually attributed to another Generation. In this chapter I argue that the foundations of the Mexican American generation had its roots deep within the nineteenth century. Historians such as Garcia have argued that Tejanos who fought in the First World War were the vanguards of the Mexican American generation, but this dissertation argues that the Tejanos who did serve did so because of an already present sense of duty to the United States.

There is a third grouping in the generational interpretation of Mexican Americans, and that is the Chicano generation. This generation were those children of the Mexican American generation that longed for more fidelity to their cultural roots and

---

No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009).

embraced the parts of their heritage that were uniquely Mexican.[8] This generation falls outside the focus of this dissertation and will not be extensively discussed.

As the new century dawned on January 1, 1900, most Tejanos could not envision any great changes coming to the world in which they lived. Since the end of the Anglo-Tejano Alliance after the end of the American Civil War, relations between Anglo Texans and their Tejano neighbors had returned to the contentiousness of the 1850's. Long gone were those Texans who recognized the contributions of the Tejano population towards common political endeavors such as Texas independence or Confederate secession. In their place now were Texans who wholeheartedly embraced the Jim Crow South. However, this new racial hierarchy provided some problems for Anglo Texans.

Anglo Texans were secure in their opinions that whiteness was the peak of their society, and therefore, the African American Texans living amongst them constituted the very bottom of that social ladder. Where, then, did the Tejano fit in? Texans of Hispanic origin were labeled as white on their birth certificates. Obviously, Jim Crow statues should not apply to them. Nonetheless, Tejanos existed in a position within Texan society that classified them as definitely something other than white.[9] Tejanos had long been enduring systematic discrimination and sometimes under attack by Anglo Texans

---

[8] For discussions of the Chicano generation, see Ignacio Garcia, *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997); Juan Gómez-Quiñones and Irene Vásquez, *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014); and Ernesto Chávez, *¡Mi Raza Primero! (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978* (Berkley: University of California Press, 2002).

[9] Benjamin Heber Johnson, "The Cosmic Race in Texas: Racial Fusion, White Supremacy and Civil Rights Politics," *Journal of American History* Vol. 98, No. 2 (September, 2011), 407.

seeking to remove them as business competition, as land owners, and in many places, as neighbors.[10]

The world of the Tejano had not changed considerably in more than seventy years. For the most part, Tejanos remained tied to the land in much the same way that their ancestors had been. For the Texan economy, Tejanos provided cheap labor.[11] The border and increased market opportunities in South Texas ensured that there would always be a consistent flow of available labor. For their part, the Anglo business classes would accept this infusion of labor into the American markets, as it kept costs down.[12]

The Tejano population of Texas was overwhelmingly working class. Due to the violence and racism of the latter years of the nineteenth century, many of the Tejanos who made their homes in Texas for years fled back to Mexico. Those upper class elites who remained were already deeply entrenched in the American system.[13] These landholding Tejano elites were part of the old *Ranchero* system, and knew how to leverage their socioeconomic class into a position of relative peace.[14] This does not imply that this *Ranchero* class had become political insiders by the beginning of the twentieth century. Rather, These old landholding elites were becoming more

---

[10] For discussion on Tejano land adjudications and land removal, see Armando Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy: Ranchers and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998). David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987) also discusses the precarious position of Tejanos during the late nineteenth century.
[11] Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker,* 33.
[12] *Ibid.*
[13] *Ibid., 13.*
[14] Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy,* 142. The *Ranchero* class is defined as the wealthy landowning elite in Texas of Mexican descent. In many cases, the *Ranchero* class had owned their property since the period Mexican occupation of Texas. Alonzo shows the systematic attack against this group from White landowners, but shows that this class resisted Anglo incursion.

marginalized as the capitalist economy of the United States finally arrived in south Texas with the railroads.[15]

But even with the arrival of the railroads, the old ways of the Texan economy died hard. South Texas remained a bastion of agrarianism. It was undoubtedly served well by its position to the border.[16] Mexican and Tejano labor was cheap. Where available, however, Anglo business interests preferred to engage Mexican Labor, and with good reason. Mexican labor was less likely to challenge the conditions and prices that Anglo businessmen were willing to pay for a day's wage. Clearly, this older class of Tejano worker, born in the U.S. or immigrants long since acclimated to their American surroundings, were less likely to stand for the questionable business practices of their employers.[17]

While the Tejano agrarian classes were engaged in confronting their management and seeking improved working conditions, the beginning of the twentieth century also saw the beginnings of Tejanos migration towards the growing Texas cities. Few places in Texas were openly friendly to the arrival of Tejanos and Mexicanos, but some cities were notably better than others. The growth of cities such as San Antonio proved a draw for Tejano labor, and many were willing to undertake the challenge of working within a city that had an entrenched Anglo stranglehold on labor.[18]

Although seemingly unimportant at the time, Tejano movement to the cities allowed for increased opportunities outside of their traditional labor roles. Tejanos then

---

[15] See David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987) 89.
[16] Zamora, *Mexican Worker in Texas*, 33.
[17] *Ibid., 36-37.* .
[18] *Ibid., 43.*

entered into social conditions that forced increased acculturation and assimilation. Tejanos would need to adapt to their urban surroundings to compete for the labor and positions already held by Anglo urban workers. This, of course, did not endear them to their Anglo competition. Historian Emilio Zamora, among others, has observed that an increase of racial incidents and rhetoric often accompanied Tejano and Mexicano movement into these traditional Anglo strongholds.[19]

Another significant matter confronting the Tejano community during the early twentieth century was the issue of citizenship. What was the status of Tejanos in regards to their national identity and status as citizens? Many Tejanos, even though they were born in the United States and had roots in Texas going back for some time before the annexation of the state, believed themselves to be *Mexican* citizens.[20] For Tejanos and Mexicanos of this generation, the concept of *Mexico de Afuera* was still very much the prevailing identity.[21] The period surrounding the First World War heightened the awareness of Tejanos and other Americans about the importance of citizenship and civic participation.[22] The landed Tejano elite in many cases were not exempted from this lack of nationalist understanding.[23]

Tejano political activism manifested itself in the same traditional ways it had since the annexation of Texas into the United States. Tejano elites continued to lean on

---

[19] *Ibid., 30.* This trend was nothing new. As early as the 1850's, Tejano competition for jobs in Texas had led to racial violence. The Cart War was simply one of the most notable instances of said tension.
[20] Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed,* 50. See Also Garcia, *Mexican Americans*, 14-15.
[21] Garcia, *Mexican Americans,* 15. Mexico de Afuera is defined as "Mexico of the outside" by Garcia. For another examination of Mexican identity at the turn of the twentieth century, see Henry C. Schmidt, *The Roots of Lo Mexicano: Self and Society in Mexican Thought, 1900-1934* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978).
[22] George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 94.
[23] Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed*, 50.

their political connections, all the while claiming a different heritage than those lower than they on the sociopolitical ladder. The Tejano working class continued to support south Texas political machines, such as the Benavides machine in Laredo. These machines represented the interests of Tejano elites since the end of the American Civil War.[24]

The flow of capital into south Texas as a result of the changing nature of American business and politics in the beginning of the twentieth century undid a great many of the advances of the Tejanos from the nineteenth century by moving the economic power in south Texas further away from the landed *Ranchero* class. Tejano politicians and political machines found opposition from seemingly every angle. The old *Ranchero* class, which had been so prominent and domineering in the nineteenth century, was on the wane. Protections, such as they were, that had been extended to Tejanos were now being removed, replaced by increasing oppression by Texas governmental agencies. Historians Charles Harris and Louis Sadler show that the Texas Rangers, one of the premiere law enforcement agencies in Texas, frequently made Tejanos and Mexicanos in south Texas their targets.[25] The Tejano became the target of a society eager to proclaim the dominance of the Anglo-American ways of life.

---

[24] Following his career as a Confederate officer, Santos Benavides and his brothers Cristobal and Refugio served as representatives and judges. Their elections were organized by political machines in South Texas. See Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982).

[25] Charles H. Harris III and Louis R. Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 3. See Also Ben Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2004).

If a solution to these issues were evident to the Tejano population of Texas, it would not be implemented for some time. Events in Mexico began to change the dynamic of the Tejano situation. Beginning in 1910, the Mexican Revolution drove millions of Mexicanos from their homes and into the United States.[26] Some were driven by the politics of revolution and war while others were driven by the simple need for security and safety. This is, of course, simply the extension of policies pioneered by the reigning Mexican president, Porfirio Diaz, who encouraged the growth of the *Hacienda* class at the expense of *los peones* and the agricultural communes, *los ejidos*.[27]

Historian George J. Sanchez shows the incredible amount of American capital flooding Mexico during the early years of the twentieth century, and the profitable returns received by American businesses.[28] For his part, Diaz encouraged this investment. Coupled with his ongoing attacks against the Mexican agricultural classes, Diaz and his American backers created the situation which spawned the revolution.

For those already convinced of the inferiority of the Mexicano and his Tejano cousin, this new influx of immigrants accelerated their pre-existing prejudice towards Mexicans. Rather, it seemed to confirm their greatest fears. The Mexicanos were flooding Texas with cheap labor, bringing the lawlessness of their homeland with them. There was something absolutely foreign in the Mexicano. These were neither Indian nor

---

[26] Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 16. Zamora here demonstrates that it is difficult to estimate how many Mexican citizens immigrated to the United States during the Mexican Revolution as the number cited by the Census was certainly low.

[27] Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 20. See also John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Oakland: University of California Press, 1997), 33. Hart describes the traditional antagonism between the capitalistic classes and the *Pueblo* communities in Mexico going back to the nineteenth century.

[28] Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 22.

White. The Mexicano could not be accurately categorized into some other preconceived race. But, as an "other," an outsider, the Tejano could still be categorized as a potential enemy. [29]

Texas governmental agencies already used to dealing harshly with Tejanos were now even less apt to give quarter to Mexicanos fleeing from their homeland. Texas Rangers and other law enforcement in south Texas became much more apt to use force when dealing with Mexicanos and increasingly saw all people of Mexican descent as the equivalent of recent immigrants.[30] The United States, throughout its history, has feared not only the immigrant as a source of change and a threat to American life, but also the possible infusion of foreign ideals. With the onset of the Mexican Revolution, Texas naturally became a hotbed of revolutionary and counterrevolutionary activity. Tejanos with families from Mexico argued for American intervention of some kind.[31]

Despite calls for intervention from the Tejano and Mexicano expatriate community in Texas, the American government had ideas of their own in regards to Mexico. Under the leadership of President William Howard Taft, the government of the United States wished to remain clear of the conflict in Mexico. Seeing no possible profit for the United States, the Taft administration would not allow an increased American presence on the border, nor would Taft authorize the pursuit of Mexican bandits back

---

[29] Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas*, 111. Montejano argues this is likely in response to the lack of modernization by Tejanos and the old *Ranchero* class.
[30]Sadler and Harris, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution,* 54. Sadler and Harris seem to imply that the lack of Federal intervention into south Texas was one of the main reasons the Rangers were used so pervasively in the efforts to guard against Mexican insurrectionary activity.
[31] *Ibid.,* 12. Revolutionaries in Texas frequently spread their ideology into Mexico. During the early twentieth century, The Magon brothers were especially active in spreading revolutionary ideology across the Texas-Mexican border. See James Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992).

across the border.[32] Historian John Mason Hart argues that the Taft administration had deep ties to the revolutionary movement led by Francsisco Madero, and accepted their representatives over those of aging Mexican President Diaz.[33] The capitalist system which had brought new opportunity to Texas and provided jobs, albeit menial ones, for Tejanos now kept the United States from interfering in Mexico.

This is not to say the U.S. did not eventually become involved. Naturally, the intervention in Mexico during the early twentieth century followed the familiar rhythm of American foreign policy. During the flare-ups of civil war between the Diaz administration and the revolutionaries led by Francisco Madero, the United States sent naval vessels to Veracruz to protect American citizens and property.[34] The unseating of Diaz did nothing more than open the floodgates of further revolution.

Because of this Mexican Revolution beginning in 1910, the steady flow of immigrants into Texas became a flood.[35] From 1900 to 1920, demographic census data shows that the Mexican-born population of the United States grew by more than 178,000 people.[36] To the Tejano population, this did not constitute a problem. Rather than reject new immigrants to the United States, the Tejano community embraced these new arrivals. This should be considered a rather unique occurrence in the history of American immigration. Those Tejanos, especially of the lower classes, did not reject the recent arrivals. The proximity of the Tejano community to the Mexican border kept the culture of Mexico vibrant. Historian Armando Alonzo believes that this is due to a factor which

[32] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire,* 3.
[33] Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico,* 249.
[34] Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico*, 267.
[35] Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas,* 211.
[36] *Ibid.*

he calls "*lo Mexicano*."[37] To a large degree, the Tejano community, while adapting to their American surroundings, had kept something within themselves that was still, even after all those years, inherently Mexican.

This acceptance of recent Mexicano immigrants to Texas undoubtedly allowed for greater amounts of political activity within the Tejano community. Faced with revolution in their ancestral home and repression within their new nation, undoubtedly many Tejanos of all socioeconomic classes began to seek out new alternatives to better their situation. What then was the tipping point in Mexicano and Tejano relations with their Anglo neighbors? What was the catalyst for the change in their relations? Repression and violence was nothing new to the Tejano community, but the declaration of the *Plan de San Diego* only added more fuel to an already explosive situation.[38]

Tejanos and Mexicanos, tired of the oppression from their Anglo neighbors, began to plot a rebellion in very much in the same vein as the revolution occurring to the south. Whereas the romantic revolutionaries of Mexico, such as Pancho Villa, sought to redistribute land from the wealthy *Hacienda* classes, the revolutionaries in Texas were committed to creating an egalitarian republic that would not only restore the dignity and respect of the Tejano people, but also rid themselves of the older generation of Anglo residents who had used the apparatus of the state and society to keep them in a position of subservience.[39]

---

[37] Alonzo, *The Tejano Legacy*, 142.

[38] James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 79.

[39] *Ibid.,* 79-80. Tejano residents in south Texas frequently decried the "Yankee yoke" and calls to return Texas to Mexico were frequent.

The fact that these Tejanos and Mexicanos decided that they had no other recourse but violence was one thing, but the bloody reaction of the state government to this violence speaks volumes as to the political position of the Tejano. There was no fear by the state of Tejanos using the vote to unseat them. The rangers sent into south Texas were given carte blanche to act as they would and to do what was necessary to restore order.[40]

The use of rangers as a tool of social and political oppression was nothing new in Texas. *Los Rinches*, the Tejano slang for rangers, had been using violence as a tool of oppression against the Tejano population of south Texas since the mid-nineteenth century.[41] The rangers were mindful of the Tejano citizen in south Texas, and not simply because of the perceived racial inferiority. Many of these rangers believed the Tejanos and Mexicanos of south Texas to be a source of disloyalty and radicalism in Texas.[42]

Already by the beginning of the twentieth century, the southern frontier of Texas had given rise to a culture of rebellion. Rangers had been conditioned to see Tejanos not only as part of the threat from the outside, but also a threat from within. Several times in their history, Tejanos had risen against perceived and real Anglo oppression, using violence to alter the dialogue of racial relations. The most famous of these risings occurred just before the onset of the American Civil War with the so-called Cortina War.[43] Likewise, the revolution of Catarino Garza in the 1890s had a definite racial undertone. Historian Elliot Young attributes the attacks on American authorities by

---

[40] Sadler and Harris, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution,* 248. This decree to maintain order in the face of the Plan de San Diego was also extended to local law enforcement.
[41] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas*, 12.
[42] Sadler and Harris, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution,* 253.
[43] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 22.

Garza and his revolutionaries as venting frustration for years of mistreatment and violence from the state government of Texas and the rangers in particular.[44]

By 1914, some in south Texas knew that a confrontation was coming. The arrival of the twentieth century had not been kind to many Tejanos, even those of the landowning *Ranchero* class. As previously stated, Tejanos still clung to power in a few key locations in south Texas, but more and more that was becoming marginalized.[45] Contemporary observers claimed that south Texas was quickly becoming an armed camp.[46] Seemingly, south Texas was ready for trouble.

Historian Benjamin Johnson states that the status quo of 1915 was a troubling one for many of the old guard Tejanos of south Texas. These Tejanos were being placed in a position where they were the guardians against both incoming Mexicano radicalism and Anglo disenfranchisement.[47] These Tejano elites, so long the lynchpin of Tejano-Anglo relations, were unable to contain much of the brewing dissent from the lower classes. These lower classes had long born the brunt of the Anglo oppression while the upper class Tejanos used their political privilege and economic position to protect them and their interests from the most severe instances of Anglo violence.

The *Plan de San Diego* called for revolt against Anglo domination of south Texas. At its root, Mexicano radicals believed that the plan would restore Mexican dignity by removing the Anglos from their midst, a foolish notion, to be sure, and by creating a new nations for American blacks and Japanese immigrants and restoring

---

[44] Elliot Young, *Catarino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 21.
[45] Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas,* 114.
[46] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 38.
[47] *Ibid.,* 39.

portions of the American Southwest to Mexico.[48] In the eyes of these young revolutionaries, they were reclaiming the territory stolen from Mexico in 1848. The *Plan*, with its calls for ethnic violence and ideals of reconquest, reinforced Anglo suspicions of their Tejano and Mexicano neighbors. Raids against Anglo homes and violence against Anglo settlers in south Texas needed to be answered.

In response to the uprising, law enforcement officials, such as sheriffs and rangers, used overwhelming force against any and all that they perceived to be part of the lawlessness.[49] Rangers were ill inclined to accept the surrender of Tejanos, be they innocents or outlaws. Many Tejanos also became unlikely to surrender to authorities knowing the probable outcome.[50] Due process and the rule of law simply fell by the wayside in south Texas as this tide of ethnic violence swept over the region.

What was telling of the violence in south Texas during the *Plan de San Diego* uprising was that even though the manifesto called for action against Anglos, much of the violence was also targeted at wealthy Tejanos. Perhaps the raiders saw these Tejanos as being part of the problem and being a component of the system that had trapped them in their status as lower class citizens. Social class certainly played a prominent role in the *Plan de San Diego* attacks.[51] Despite the *Plan de San Diego* being a call for action against oppression, it seems much more likely that it was simply a ploy by many to settle scores that had long since been brewing in the armed camp of South Texas.

---

[48] Sadler and Harris, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, 212. Sadler and Harris find it ironic that the Mexican revolutionaries decrying the theft of Texas by the United States, did not mention any of the Indian tribes in Texas, or any in general, save for a mention of Arizona Apaches.
[49] Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 98.
[50] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 86.
[51] *Ibid.,* 94.

Whatever the reasons for the attacks or the heated rhetoric, the response of the Texas state government to the attacks is simply without pardon. Not only were rangers allowed to operate without restraint, their actions were implicitly sanctioned by the state government of Texas. As the violence abated in south Texas, Tejanos were forced to face their new position in society. Whereas certain Tejanos had been able to keep some of their prominence and land, many Tejanos found themselves dispossessed of lands that had belonged to their families for generations.[52] The state government of Texas was forced, mainly by State Representative J.T. Canales, to confront the actions of the rangers during and after the *Plan de San Diego* uprising.[53]

Canales hoped that new governor William Hobby would be more amenable to bringing the rangers to heel for their actions than previous governor Jim Ferguson.[54] His efforts ultimately resulted in very little. Canales proposed a bill in the Texas legislature which would have reduced the strength of the rangers in Texas and removed the "loyalty rangers," rangers whose job it was to root out disloyalty, from their appointed positions.[55] Instead, Canales was confronted with the fact that many in the state government, including Hobby, had a vested political interest in maintaining the rangers as a tool of political oppression. Instead of having his concerns listened to, Canales had his loyalty to Texas and the United States questioned.[56]

---

[52] *Ibid.,* 169.
[53] Sadler and Harris, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution,* 436.
[54] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 166.
[55] *Ibid.,* 171.
[56] Texas Legislature, *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the State Senate and the House in the Investigation of the State Ranger Force* (Austin, 1919), 1010-1019.

There was seemingly no recourse for Tejanos who had been injured, killed, disarmed and disposed of their property. Tejanos in south Texas and beyond began shifting their focus in terms of national identity. While it would remain important for them to keep ties to their traditional community, to keep *lo Mexicano*, they were entering a new age where they could no long continue looking backward. Mexico, because of its proximity, could not simply be pushed out of their lives altogether. In their communities, Tejanos were continually reminded of their pasts connected to Mexico, but also as outsiders in a system which was at best benignly negligent toward them and at worst outright hostile to their inclusion in society.

This was no new position to the Tejano. So far removed from their homelands, the Irish, German, Jewish, Italian or Eastern European immigrants could generally, within a few generations, become culturally indistinct from Americans. This was not something that was possible, or even desirable, for Tejanos.[57] What then was the solution? Surprisingly, it was the same one that had occurred nearly fifty years in the past. Find an external threat to refocus society. The first Anglo-Tejano alliance occurred when Anglo Texans focused more on the threat posed by the Federal Government than on the disdain they held for Tejanos.[58]

Previous scholarship on the trajectory of Mexican American history has argued that the earlier generations of Tejanos were naturally Mexicanist in their ideology. The

---

[57] Noel Ignatiev, *How the Irish Became White* (New York: Routledge Press, 1997), 76. Roediger argues that major American political institutions, such as the Democratic Party sought out immigrant groups in the east and began the process of assimilation toward accepting the American racial status quo. Efforts like this are not made towards Tejanos in Texas to the same extent that they are in the east.

[58] See Ralph Edward Morales III, "The Anglo-Tejano Alliance: Tejanos, Ethnicity and Politics in Texas, 1832-1865" (M.A. Thesis, Texas A&M University, 2008).

romantic idea of a *Mexico de Afuera* kept these Tejanos or Mexicanos focused on the past and on Mexico.[59] This same scholarship argues that the first generation to become politically active in the United States was the so-called Mexican America generation which arose in the 1930's.[60] While this theoretical frame work is useful in determining general generational trends within the Mexican American community of the United States, it does little justice to those Mexican Americans who had already begun the long and slow process of acculturation and accommodation. To be sure, as argued by historian Armando Alonzo, full on assimilation rarely occurred in Mexican Americans.[61] This, however, should not be taken to mean that there were no Tejanos and Mexicanos who had already begun considering themselves American in most respects.

This trend can and should be traced back to the very first generation of Tejanos, starting with Juan Seguin, Lorenzo de Zavala and their contemporaries. These early Tejanos very deftly navigated a complex political and social system that ostracized them for their alien qualities. Nonetheless, these Tejanos were active within political spheres and tried to balance their position within society and their identity as Tejanos. Whereas Seguin and his flirtations with Americanization failed, other Tejanos were successful in limited ways.[62]

---

[59] Cynthia E. Orozco, "The Origins of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Mexican American civil rights movement in Texas with an analysis of women's political participation in a gendered context, 1910-1929," (Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992), 35.
[60] Garcia, *Mexican Americans,* 16.
[61] Alonzo, *Tejano Legacy,* 142.
[62] See Andres Resendez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). Resendez argues that Tejano elites favored American Capitalism over the ideals of Mexican nationalism.

By the middle of the second decade of the twentieth century, those Tejanos that remained in Texas were either those who could not return to Mexico for political reasons, those who thought the economic realities of the United States provided too much incentive to stay or those who saw Texas as their home. In time, many of the first two groups would become converted to the latter. Already in the United States, there existed a small, but influential, class of Tejanos who already adopted a Mexican American identity. Tejano politicians should be considered the vanguard of this Mexican American movement throughout the nineteenth and early twentieth century. Certainly, political families such as the Benavides family in Laredo and the Navarro family in San Antonio were already deeply engrained in the Texas political scene. This required of them, and many of their supporters, to be much more aware of their nascent political power in Tejano or Mexicano dominated strongholds in South Texas. Elsewhere, Tejano politicians such as José Tomas Canales made significant political alliances with the leadership of the Texas Democratic Party.[63]

The turning point for Tejano Americanization was undoubtedly the First World War. While many Tejanos paid little attention to the war as it began in 1914, soon the United States was focused on the conflict abroad and what larger implications it held for the world. As with every other ethnic group, many Tejanos answered the call to action for their nation. This was certainly not universal throughout the Tejano community, as many Tejanos and Mexicanos did not serve in the American armed forces during the First World War. But studying those Tejanos who did serve provides an insight to the

[63] Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas,* 148.

already existing Mexican American identity in the United States. While Tejanos and Mexicanos could, and did, find exemptions to fight, those who did fight show that Tejanos, understanding the issues and potential hazards, still chose to fight for the United States.[64]

Such a step is puzzling because Tejanos seemed to have had little presence in the pre-war state guards. The *Biennial Reports* of the adjutant general of Texas show few Tejano officers with the peacetime ranks of Texas' National Guard units.[65] So where then does this sudden militarism within the Tejano community come from? One particular Tejano soldier had his ideas. José de la Luz Sáenz, a Tejano draftee from Alice, Texas seemed to believe that the Tejano was the heir to a warrior tradition.[66]

Certainly Sáenz is the most well known Tejano to fight for the United States during the First World War. Later in his life, Sáenz, like many Tejano veterans of the First World War, became increasingly active in the struggle for Tejano civil rights. As part of that struggle, Sáenz wrote a memoir of his time as a soldier of the United States. Initially published in 1933, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra* highlights

---

[64] Ramirez argues that the Tejanos who fought for the United States during the First World War did so out of a duty to their new nation. Certainly, this idea has merit, but it should be mentioned that Ramirez is perhaps too harsh with Tejanos who avoided serving, arguing that their ideals of nationalism were backward looking and more in line with the Mexicanist generation.

[65] For this dissertation, *The Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Texas* was examined as far back as the turn of the century. In those reports, the only officer with a Tejano surname that was listed was Captain August de Zavala, an officer in the Headquarters Company of the Fifth Texas Infantry Regiment. The absence of more Tejano names implies that Tejanos were not well represented in the leadership of the Texas state guard.

[66] Saenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,* 18. The manuscript used for this dissertation was found in the Jose de la Luz Saenz papers in the Nettie Lee Benson Center for Latin American History at the University of Texas at Austin. Saenz feels that his actions in France will reflect the valor of the Mexico-Americano. Saenz is not alone in this regard. Throughout Chicano history, this theme will reappear. See George Mariscal, *Aztlan and Viet Nam: Chicano and Chicana Experiences of the War* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1999), 27. Mariscal shows that "warrior patriotism" inspires many young Chicano men to serve in the military, even if it does serve American imperialist goals.

Sáenz's service in the war and his thoughts on why America was fighting in this conflict.[67]

Beginning in the preface to his work, Sáenz believed that it is the duty of a citizen to answer his country's call to war.[68] He decided that the "slackers", as he called them, did a disservice to others who willingly join and sacrifice for their country in time of war.[69] Where Sáenz took issue with America and its time in the First World War is that many do not recognize the sacrifices of the Mexican American community.[70] Doubtless, these sentiments would have been the same coming from Tejanos who had fought in previous conflicts, such as the Texas Revolution and the American Civil War.

Identity, for many of the Tejanos who signed up for service in the First World War, was something of which to be wary. While there had never been any attempts by the United States armed forces to segregate soldiers of Mexican heritage, it was something that Tejano soldiers still feared. Soldiers such as Sáenz had no real choice to declare their Tejano ethnicity due to the color of their skin. Sáenz would simply have been too dark to be believable as anything other than Tejano. This, however, was not always the case.

One of the most celebrated cases of Tejano service in the Great War is that of David Barkley. Barkley was born to an Anglo father and a Mexicano mother and was

---

[67] Saenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra* . In this work, Saenz collected his wartime records and thoughts on his service as well as letters sent to and from his family. This work has recently been translated and edited by Emilio Zamora. See Jose De La Luz Saenz, *The World War One Diary of Jose De La Luz Saenz*, Emilio Zamora, ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014).
[68] *Ibid.,* 7.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Ibid.*, 8.

thus somewhat lighter in his skin color.[71] Historian José Ramirez claims that Barkley did not wish to be placed in a unit where he would not be allowed to fight at the front lines for the American Expeditionary Forces.[72] Barkley's fears of segregated Tejano units forced to do manual labor for the Allies never materialized. During the Great War, Tejanos fought in whatever unit they were needed, such as the 90th Infantry Division, which was comprised of soldiers from Texas and Oklahoma.

Sáenz served in one of the units of the 90th Infantry Division, the 360th Infantry Regiment.[73] He registered for the draft, along with millions of other men in the United States.[74] Altogether, nearly 110,000 Texan men of Mexican ethnicity were registered for the draft in Texas, and 5,000 served with the American Expeditionary Forces in Europe.[75] Private Sáenz was drafted into federal service on February 22, 1918, nearly a year after the United States entered the war on behalf of the Allied powers. His memoirs recorded the same manner of feelings, fears, and anticipation that hundreds of thousands of soldiers must have felt before leaving home.

This is not to say that the draft and its impact on the Tejano community was a process that occurred without controversy. An incredible amount of opposition had grown up around the Selective Service Act of 1917. In a war that many claimed was

[71] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, xiii.
[72] *Ibid.*
[73] An Identity Card from the American Expeditionary Forces can be found in the José de la Luz Sáenz Papers in the Nettie Lee Benson Center for Latin American Studies in Austin. The card identifies Sáenz as having served in the Headquarters Company of the 360th Infantry Regiment.
[74] Sáenz's Draft Card can similarly be found in his paper collection. He was classified A-1 on January 12, 1918. A-1 status meant that this person was both eligible and able for draft status.
[75] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 22.

being fought on behalf of democracy and human rights, the draft certainly raised objections as it forced men to fight in a war they may not completely have agreed with.[76]

Tejano and Mexicano opposition to the Conscription Act of 1917 was not unique to south Texas. Throughout the South, there were serious objections about conscription and its place in how the Great War was fought. Needless to say, this stance was not a popular one in an America that had been overtaken with wartime zeal and jingoism. During the First World War, objection to conscription could be taken by its champions as being unpatriotic and detrimental to the American war effort.[77]

The place of Tejanos in cases of conscription has been an issue as far back as the American Civil War. There existed a lingering question as to whether the United States could draft Tejanos and Mexicanos without experiencing negative repercussions from their neighbor to the south. For the most part, the drafting of Mexican citizens into the military of the United States during the First World War was a non-issue. American relations with Mexico had become strained long before the prospect of American intervention in Europe became a likelihood. The only issue many in the state and federal government of the United States were concerned with as far as Tejano conscription was concerned was the mass exodus of workers from the fields of Texas during the war.[78] The rumor flowing through south Texas at the time was that Tejanos and Mexicanos would be specifically targeted for conscription and foreign service. Many, including then governor James Ferguson, blamed this misconception on supposed German agents

---

[76] *Ibid.,* 21.
[77] Jeanette Keith, *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 47.
[78] Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs*, 50.

prowling through the rural Texas countryside.[79] The perception of the draft negatively influencing the Tejano and Mexicano work force was such that Ferguson asked Wilson to exempt people of Mexican descent from the draft due to fear of shortfalls in agricultural production.[80]

Although Mexico had strong economic ties to the United States during the beginning of the twentieth century, those ties became strained under the pressure of revolution.[81] Mexican revolutionaries such as Francisco "Pancho" Villa actively courted American intervention in the revolution. President Woodrow Wilson did his best to distance himself from any potential Mexican entanglements in American foreign policy.[82] Setbacks to the revolutionary forces under Villa led Wilson to recognize the government of Venustiano Carranza, a military dictator who took power from Huerta.[83]

For the young Tejanos that joined the American Expeditionary Force, there was naturally a source of pride. In one of the letters from home, José de la Luz Sáenz is told by his father that there was an incredible amount of pride in his service to the United States Army.[84] Sáenz, of course, should not be taken to be the archetypal Tejano who served in the First World War. Sáenz is one of the few Tejano veterans who left his recollections of the war and his reasons for fighting in it. Patriotism, and the sense of

[79] *Ibid*., 51 and Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 51.
[80] Orozco, *No Mexicans Women or Dogs,* 51.
[81] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 16.
[82] *Ibid.,* 12. This does not imply that Wilson did not direct the United States military to act against Mexico. Wilson directed American intervention in Veracruz and in the use of General John Pershing's Army to chase Mexican Revolutionary leader Pancho Villa after the attack on Columbus, New Mexico in 1916.
[83] *Ibid.*
[84] Saenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,*, 29.

purpose that Sáenz felt, might not have been as common as his recollections might imply.

Once war was declared by the United States Congress in April of 1917, many Mexican laborers began to flee back across the Mexican border.[85] Contemporary accounts claim that this was not a small number of Mexicanos and Tejanos fleeing Texas, but a significant exodus of families fleeing from potential conscription.[86] Regardless, many Tejanos chose to stay in the United States and lend their support to the war effort. As the United States mobilized for war, it became increasingly necessary for the government and Woodrow Wilson's administration to sell the war to the American people. Germany's declaration of unrestricted submarine warfare and the interception of the Zimmermann telegram played their part in convincing Americans that war was the only solution.[87] Nonetheless, many Americans had followed the war for years, and were doubtless troubled by the prospect of Americans taking part in the kinds of bloodletting seen at Verdun, the Somme and elsewhere during the previous three years.

President Wilson sought to frame American intervention in the war as a war for democracy.[88] Many young Tejanos, eager to fight for such principles, were quick to buy into the ideals of fairness and equality that such a fight entailed. Perhaps it is because so many of these young Tejanos had experienced the loss of equality and dignity at home

---

[85] *San Antonio Express News* (San Antonio, Tex.), May 5, 1917.
[86] *Tucson Daily Citizen* (Tucson, Ari.), May 30, 1917. The paper states that Mexican nationals living in the United States needed to register, but would not be drafted into the army. According to the *Grand Forks Daily Herald,* Mexicans men were "quitting U.S." for fear of being drafted. See *Grand Forks Daily Herald* (Grand Forks, N. Dak.), June 6, 1917.
[87] David M. Kennedy, *Over Here: The First World War and American Society* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), 10.
[88] *Ibid.,* 42.

that Wilsonian idealism resonated so well with the Tejano community. In the early months of America's involvement in the Great War, prominent Tejano businessmen and landowners sought to create volunteer companies to fight overseas.[89] Here again, we see the echoes of earlier American conflicts and the Tejano responses to them.[90]

For those who wished to fight, the opportunity for enlistment was there. But, for those still unconvinced by the war, further persuasion was needed. The Committee of Public Information, led by George Creel, had the unenviable task of convincing Americans that the war was in their best interests.[91] To do so, Creel and his committee recruited nearly 75,000 public speakers to advertise the war to the masses. These "Four Minute Men" were men of stature within their communities and endorsed by civic leaders.[92]

Among these "Four Minute Men" was Tejano politician J.T. Canales. Canales was one of the very few Tejanos who was selected by the Committee of Public Information to carry their message to the Tejano community.[93] Nonetheless, the Committee doubtless understood the importance of selling the war to non-English speakers throughout the United States. Historian David Kennedy states that nearly 75 million copies of the Committee's pamphlets in several languages.[94] For the Tejano and Mexicano speakers, bilingualism was often mandatory, as their duties would frequently

---

[89] *Evolución* (Laredo, Tex.) May 11, 1917. Papers found in the Nettie Lee Benson Center for Latin American History at the University of Texas at Austin.
[90] Here, one notes the similarities to the behavior of Santos Benavides during the outbreak of the American Civil War.
[91] Kennedy, *Over Here,* 40.
[92] *Ibid.*
[93] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 61.
[94] Kennedy, *Over Here,* 61.

require them to speak to mixed audiences on the importance of the support for the American war effort.[95]

With this focus on "100 percent Americanism," the nativist tendency of the United States once again came to dominate discussions of loyalty. Any divergence from accepted American institutions, including use of the English language, could be seen as disloyal.[96] While most of the ire of these tendencies was aimed squarely at German Americans, Tejanos were also exposed to some of the backlash.[97]

The U. S. Army escaped from the era of the *Plan de San Diego* relatively unscathed in the eyes of Tejanos. Unlike the Texas Rangers who were responsible for the worst violence against Tejanos and Mexicanos in south Texas, The United States Army was often looked up to protect the property rights and the very lives of those targeted by state officials.[98] Perhaps this is the reason many Tejanos had a positive opinion of the army. When confronted with a state government that was happy to turn a blind eye to ranger excesses under the Ferguson administration, the United States Army provided an excellent contrast to their behavior. Instead of continuing an imaginary war against the Tejanos, the Army went out of their way to guarantee the safety of Tejanos

[95] Nancy Gentile Ford, *Americans All! Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001), 109. Ford illustrates that the army wanted its bilingual soldiers to teach English to the non-English speaking troops. This was especially looked for in non-commissioned officers.
[96] Kennedy, *Over Here,* 69.
[97] Carlos Kevin Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 53-54. Blanton shows that Tejano Spanish speakers organized civic groups to try and combat the English only trend in Texas schools.
[98] Johnson, *Revolution in Texas,* 127.

and Mexicanos trying to return to their homes in Texas.[99] Tejano leaders, such as J.T. Canales, applauded army intervention against rangers.

Perhaps because of this tradition of army protection, Tejanos, such as José de la Luz Sáenz, remained fiercely loyal and patriotic during the First World War. Sáenz, writing to an old friend in Kingsville, Texas, told his friend that Tejano service in the military was vital in showing the devotion to the United States.[100] Sáenz, although incredibly idealistic in his service, still regularly encountered racism and prejudice in the army.[101] Sáenz described an incident in which a captain and lieutenant in the camp censors office questioned his ability to write and read. Apparently, the lieutenant used the term "greaser" to describe Sáenz. That Sáenz wrote letters to his friends in Spanish was apparently a small cause for controversy.

Despite this, Sáenz soon found a niche for himself in camp. He and his unit had yet to depart for the front by mid-April of 1918. Sáenz helped many of his brothers in arms write letters home, as he says, "many of them could not even read in their first language (Spanish)."[102] Sáenz wrote that many of his compatriots, presumably of Tejano descent, were eager, as were many young men of many different backgrounds in the American army, to prove themselves on the field of battle. What is remarkable in Sáenz's writing is that he envisioned his service not just as a sacrifice for his nation, but

[99] *Ibid.*
[100] Sáenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra*, 42.
[101] *Ibid.,* 43.
[102] *Ibid.,* 46.

also for his race.[103] Sáenz clearly felt that his service to the United States was an opportunity not to be wasted.[104]

By April 22, 1918, Sáenz and his compatriots began to grow anxious to be deployed to the Western Front. As Sáenz writes in his memoirs, the rumors were circulating and many of the men training with Sáenz looked forward to being sent overseas, if for no other reason "to see something new and have a story to tell."[105] In other words, Sáenz and his men simply wished to see something different and have a story to tell.

As a young Tejano eager to prove himself in the eyes of his nation, Sáenz had doubts about whether his contribution, and the contributions of other Tejanos fighting in the Great War, would even be recognized by other Tejanos and Mexican Americans. On the April 23rd, Sáenz wrote "it does not seem certain that many of my racial brothers are aware of its exact importance."[106] Sáenz's journal is in many ways incredibly forward looking. It seemed that Sáenz, even when confronted by the minutiae of camp life continued to romanticize his service and hoped that it will be seen as an inspiration for generations of Tejanos to come.[107]

Likewise, Sáenz continued to examine the past of the Tejano in relation to the United States. In his journal entry of the sixth of May, 1918, Sáenz once again meditated

---

[103] *Ibid.,* 47. Entry dated, April 15, 1918.
[104] *Ibid.,* 49. Letter to Professor W. J. Knox of San Antonio, Texas dated April 19, 1918. Knox was one of Sáenz's friends from San Antonio as well as a professional acquaintance.
[105] *Ibid.,* 50. Entry dated April 22, 1918. Translated from "*par aver algo nuevo y tener que contrar."*
[106] *Ibid.* Entry Dated April 23, 1918. Translated from "*No parece sino que es cierto que muchos de mis hermanos de raza no se dan cuenta exacta de esta importancia."*
[107] *Ibid.*

on the role played by Tejanos in the past. To Sáenz, it seemed to be a minor tragedy that more people were not familiar with the roles played by Tejanos in military conflicts fought by the United States. Recalling his previous letter with William Knox, Sáenz lamented that few recognized Tejano contributions and that even fewer "know of the possibility of our race; they do not understand, or better said, they ignore our contribution to all that is the nation of the United States.*"* [108]

There is no question about how Sáenz saw the role of the Tejano in the First World War. "Who amongst us will be lucky enough to write our epic?" asked Sáenz.[109] Perhaps Sáenz fancied himself to be that person. Certainly, his recollection and recording of his time in the United States Army glorified the Tejano people and their place within American society. Sáenz doubtless expected that one day someone would read his recollections of the war. Or perhaps, as historian Cythnia Orozco argues, Sáenz had already begun asking himself the questions of why the United States fought oppression and upheld democracy abroad, but allowed racism and violent repression of minorities in the United States?[110]

Sáenz's descriptions of his comrades in arms seemed to laude this new Tejano militancy. Describing several of his comrades, namely Jesse Perez and Julian Martinez of San Antonio, Sáenz believed that military life seemed to fit these men.[111] Sáenz observed that these men are almost certainly of different socio-economic backgrounds.

---

[108] Saenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,* 58. Translated from "*Conocen las posibilidades de nuestra raza; no se dan cuentra, o major dicho, niegan nuestra contribucion sobre lo que es la nacion de los Estados Unidos."*
[109] *Ibid.,* 58. Entry dated May 6, 1918. Translated from ""*¿A Quien de nosotros le tocara en suerte escribir nuestra epopeya?"*
[110] Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs,* 50.
[111] Saenz*, Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,* 51. Entry dated April 26, 1918.

He described Perez as "intelligent and possed of regular intellectual knowledge*,"* whereas Martinez "lacks a school education. But in exchange, he is a hard worker and reveals and puts into action much natural intelligence*."*[112] Of his comrades, Sáenz hoped only that they will complete their service faithfully.[113]

The good humor and service of Sáenz and his close friends does not mean that there were no Mexicanos who served in the Army who had misgivings about fighting for the United States. In his journal entry on May 12,1918, Sáenz recalled one of his comrades, Eulogio Gomez of Bracketville. Describing Gomez, Sáenz said of him that "he is a little man of small stature, but of a great heart."[114] This "Small man with a big heart" stood in contrast to Sáenz as far as his reasons fort fighting in the American Army. Whereas Sáenz sought to correct racial injustice and perceptions of Tejanos held by Anglo Americans, Gomez signed up simply to fight. When told he would be going overseas to fight, Gomez seemingly answered with a curt "let's go."[115]

While Gomez may have been possessed of a belligerent spirit and was seemingly eager to get into the fight, Sáenz reflected that there was no greater calling for Gomez to go overseas. He cared very little for the cause of democracy or human rights. Sáenz went so far as to say that Gomez, had he been told he would be fighting "for the American flag", Sáenz almost could swear that Gomez would say "And why should I be defending

---

[112] *Ibid.* Translated from Sáenz's observations about his comrades. Perez is described as "*Inteligente y de regulares conocimientos intelectuales"* and Martinez "*le hace falta la educacion de las escuela. En cambio es laborioso y revela y pone en accion mucha inteligencia natural."*
[113] *Ibid.*
[114] *Ibid.,* 60. Entry dated May 12, 1918. Translated from "*Es un hombrecito de pequena estatura, pero de alma muy grande*."
[115] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Pos Vamos.*"

the flag of the 'Gringos'? Let them defend theirs and I will defend mine!*"*[116] Feeling that Gomez prefered to defend his own over the interests of the United States showed that there was contention and dialogue within the Tejano community over exactly what their role was going to be in American society. Doubtless, Sáenz felt that he was indeed defending his own by serving overseas.

As mentioned above, many of the Tejano young men serving in the Army with Sáenz thought little about nationality. As far as their own identity was concerned, many of these young men considered themselves Mexicanos. When confronted with army propaganda filled with patriotic rhetoric, many of the Tejanos and Mexicanos serving with Sáenz did not feel these words applied to them.[117] This perception does give merit to the idea of a Mexicanist identity. However, it should also demonstrate that there was a very definite overlap in the existence of these identities. On one hand, we have Sáenz, the idealist, fighting to define his and his race's place in the American system. Gomez and others like him certainly represented an earlier mindset. Mexico loomed large in the lives of south Texas residents. Sáenz claimed that some of his comrades were from Mexico, and therefore, it is to be expected. But it is also worth reiterating that the United States had given very few reasons for these young men to love it.

Actually, the opposite was usually the case. In his memoirs, Sáenz recalled that some of his comrades were rounded up in south Texas and forced to sign papers

---

[116] *Ibid.* Translated. Original Spanish notes that if Gomez had been told he was fighting "*por la bandera de los Americanos*", he would certainly say "*Y yo que tengo que defender la bandera de los 'Gringos', que la defiendan ellos, que yo defendere la mia!"*
[117] *Ibid.*

enrolling them in the draft and in the United States Army.[118] "There at the point of a rifle, like criminal bandits, they were brought to sign a registration that they did not understand".[119] For his part, Sáenz seemed to struggle with this. "What rewards await for men such as these, when they return from this great crusade for humanity and democracy or to make a better world?"[120] That indeed was an important question for one concerned with civil rights to ask.

Like many of the young men going overseas, Sáenz had no illusions of his chances of return. While filling his days with the duties of a garrison soldier, Sáenz was constantly reminded of the actual human costs of the war. Sáenz recalled the call to attention for Camp Travis, which was done in remembrance for those who had fallen on the battlefields in Europe.[121] Describing the short call to attention, Sáenz recalled "this was the most solemn and dignified form to render the profound memories of the heroes who to this day have fallen on the battlefields of the Great War that consumes the world."[122] This daily reflection on the costs of war must have taken its toll on Sáenz as he recalled visiting with his brother and making plans for his children should he not return from Europe.[123]

Throughout the month of May, 1918, Sáenz's unit made preparations to depart for Europe. His unit endured heavy marches, drills on how to use the one pounder

---

[118] *Ibid.,* 60-61.
[119] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Alli a punta de carabina, como a bandidos criminales se les anduvo trayendo para que firmaranel registro que no entendieron.*"
[120] *Ibid.,* 61.
[121] *Ibid.*, 54.
[122] *Ibid.,* 53-54. Translated from "*Esta es la manera mas solemne la forma mas digna para rendir recuerdo profundo a la memoria de los heroes que hasta la fecha han caido en los campos de batala alla en la gran Guerra que consume al mundo."*
[123] *Ibid.,* 54.

cannon, and marksmanship drills with their rifles.[124] As with any unit preparing to go to the front, the men in Sáenz's unit, the 360th Infantry Regiment, did not know too much about where they would be headed. Sáenz and others in his unit nonetheless believed that soon they would be departing for Europe. The rapid pace of preparation for action quickly replaced the slow tedium of camp life. During their preparations, the command of the 360th reiterated to the men how important their conduct overseas would be. These men would be the agents of the United States and their conduct reflected on their nation.[125]

The rapidity with which the 360th prepared to depart was a trying time for Sáenz. The constant drills and exercises that were undertaken by his unit were exhausting, often lasting well into the evening. "These moments of military life, though common and perhaps necessary, are nothing pleasant to the private." [126] But even these momentary trials do not seem to have discouraged him from his service. Even as Sáenz gives the nearly universal lament of the private, he continued his restatement of ideals for why he is fighting. "Do we, the most humble contingent in this global tragedy, the Mexican Americans, have a motive to face this struggle that they say is for humanity, democracy and justice? Yes, no more or less than our allies."[127] Sáenz reaffirmed his commitment

[124] *Ibid.,* 54, 65.
[125] *Ibid.,* 62. Entry dated May 15, 1918.
[126] *Ibid.,* 67. Entry dated May 28, 1918. Saenz reflects on the plight of the lowly army private. Translated from "*Estos momentos de la vida military aunque son muy communes, y tal vez necesarios, no son nada gratos para el soldado raso*."
[127] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Nosotros, el mas humilde contigente en la tragedia mudial, los Mexico-Americanos, tenemos o no motivo para afrontar esta lucha que dizque es pro la humanidad, la democracia y la justicia? Si, y no menos elevado y preciso que el que puedean tener nuestros co-aliados."*

to the allied cause and claims that his concern, and the concern of other Mexican Americans, is no less than any other of the allies.

On June 6, 1918, Sáenz and his fellow soldiers finally received the order to move out for the ships that carried them across the Atlantic Ocean. On the train ride from Camp Travis, Sáenz reflected on the state of Texas and on the places that he passed by on his voyage. His travels also brought into his mind the injustices suffered by the Tejano at the hands of the Anglos. He saw the ranches and farmlands of Texas as another battleground, where as a teacher, he had already won victories.[128]

Sáenz hoped that as a soldier, he could win the victories for his people abroad. Somehow, Sáenz believed that Tejano service in the army will "bring justice to our race by making the sacrifice that suffering humanity demands by conscious and free men."[129] Sáenz found it insulting that other Tejanos and Mexicanos would fall for false promises from the Germans to return Texas to Mexico. He was incredulous that some would believe that Pancho Villa could become "*el Kaiser de Texas*."[130] This, in Sáenz's mind, did not excuse those who refused to stand for their nation and for the honor of their race, especially at a time of crisis.

On June 13, 1918, José de la Luz Sáenz and the rest of the 360th Infantry Regiment began loading on a ship for their trans-Atlantic voyage.[131] Before their crossing, Sáenz and his comrades were issued helmets, rifles, rucksacks and the other

---

[128] *Ibid.*, 73.
[129] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Hoy que ya llevo el uniforme del guerrero me lleva la esperanza de poder ganar otras batallas que traigan la justicia a nuestra raza como una de tantas que forman esa humanidad doliente que reclama el sacrificio de los hombres conscientes y libres.*"
[130] *Ibid.*
[131] *Ibid.,* 77. Entry dated June 13, 1918.

equipment that they needed when fighting along the Western Front.[132] Sáenz recalled being saddened by their departure from the United States. As with any conflict, it was possible that this would be the last time any of them would see the United States.[133]

The voyage across the Atlantic Ocean was a perilous one. The ever present threat of German U-Boats was a concern for all Allied shipping, but the troop transports were vulnerable. Earlier in 1918, the H.M.S. *Tuscania* was sunk off the coast of Ireland, killing 310 sailors and troops being transported to the battlefields of France.[134] Sáenz and those traveling with him would likely have been well aware of the fate of the *Tuscania*. Many of the troops aboard the vessel were Texans. Several Tejanos were listed amongst the dead following the sinking of the vessel.[135]

Sáenz and the rest of his unit arrived in Europe on the 23rd of June. On June 28, Sáenz wrote to his family to let them know that he had arrived. It is clear from his letters to his father that Sáenz held the French people in high regard.[136] "Finally we are in heroic France, the country of the illustrious Victor Hugo. Just being in this nation of heroes makes me remember that through my ancestry, I am also part of a race no less heroic."[137] Sáenz equated the struggle faced by the French people during the Great War to the struggle for civil rights that the Tejanos are facing back at home.

---

[132] *Ibid.* Entry dated June 12, 1918.
[133] *Ibid.,* Entry dated june 14, 1918.
[134] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 93-94.

[135] *Ibid.,* 94.
[136] Saenz*, Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,* 88. Letter dated June 28, 1918.
[137] *Ibid.,* 88. Translated from "*Por fin estamos ya en la heroica Francia,la patria del ilustre Victor Hugo. El solo estar en un pais de heroes, me hace recordar que por abolengo, yo tambien pertenezco a una raza no menos heroica."*

The men of the 360th Regiment settled into their new European surroundings rather easily. Sáenz and others from his unit were able to see some of the French countryside as their unit awaited orders to go to the front. If Sáenz felt any doubt or trepidation of going to the front, his writing did not reflect it. "Here I am following my flag and obeying the voice of my conscience. I crave only to play my part in this tragedy."[138] Perhaps Sáenz was fatalistic about his chances once he got into combat, but he felt that any disparities between German soldiers and American soldiers could be made up for in fighting spirit. "We will not be as disciplined as the sons of Germany, but we have the spirit to fight for something that is only understandable to the children of democracy - Freedom.*"*[139] Again, in his reflections of going into combat to his friend Eulalio Velasquez, Sáenz brought up his hopes for Tejanos. While noting that many Tejanos would not survive the war, "We hope that our ancestors recognize and are recognized for the value of our race."[140] Never one to pass up a chance at the poetic, Sáenz believed that Tejano soldiers fighting on the Western Front were like "the Aztec eagle, devouring the serpent."[141] Before entering combat, Sáenz, doubtless like many other American soldiers, simply wished to acquit himself well while fighting.[142]

---

[138] *Ibid.,* 93. Letter to Eulalio Velasquez, dated July 5, 1918. Translated from "*Aqui voy siguiendo a mi bandera y obedeciendo la voz de mi conciencia. Tengo ansia por desempeñar mi parte en la gran tragedia."*
[139] *Ibid.* Translated from "*No estaremos tan disciplinados como los hijos de Germania, pero llevamos el espiritu de pelear por aquello que solo es comprensible para los hijos de la democracia – la libertad."*
[140] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Esperamos que nuestros ascendientes reconozcan y sean reconocidos por el valor verdadero de la raza.*"
[141] *Ibid.* Saenz here is alluding to the great seal of Mexico, wherein an Eagle is devouring a snake. Saenz's constant references to himself and other Tejanos as people of the Aztec race indicates which he believes himself and his fellow Tejanos to be. Translated from "*el aguila azteca devorando la serpiente."*
[142] *Ibid.*, 103. Entry dated June 28, 1918.

Taken in context of his service and the history of racial discrimination against Tejanos and Mexicanos, this devotion and patriotism to the United States is clearly surprising. Sáenz and his compatriots were a mere three years removed from the worst excesses of the Texas repression of the Plan de San Diego. Sáenz was undoubtedly taken with Wilsonian idealism. Sáenz saw this war and his service as an opportunity to not only serve his nation, but perhaps to validate his race's place within that nation. Facing increased marginalization at home and encountering racism and discrimination in an institution he believed would be somehow more egalitarian did not seem to deflate Sáenz's sense of patriotism.

Historian Benjamin Heber Johnson argues that some Tejano progressives pushed for increased Americanization in the wake of the Plan de San Diego.[143] Here, we see Sáenz as potentially one of these Tejano progressives. Sáenz was not alone in this regard. Historian José Ramirez shows numerous examples of Tejano activism in the wake of the American declaration of war.[144] The Tejano community of Texas was already beginning to embrace the American system, as Johnson contends, because of the events of the Plan de San Diego. Tejano political activism, as evidenced by J.T. Canales combined with Tejano military service clearly shows that a definite Mexican American identity existed within Texas as early as the beginning of the twentieth century.

This is not to say that the Tejano community was united as a whole in this belief. Many Tejanos and Mexicanos, for various political and personal reasons, did not agree with the war, as is evidenced by the exodus from south Texas. Many Tejanos doubtless

[143] Johnson, *A Revolution in Texas*, 70.
[144] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire*, 72.

did not understand why they should serve the United States when the only things that nation had to offer were disenfranchisement and dispossession of property. While those Tejanos had their reasons for rejection of Mexican American nationalism, theirs was not the whole story. Tejanos who were engaged in this period were acting on principles and ideas which had long been present in their communities.

While some would argue that Tejano support for Mexican American nationalism is based on class, one should consider Sáenz's observations of his compatriots at Camp Travis. Sáenz recalled that many of the Tejanos and Mexicanos who served with him did not speak English nor write Spanish. This speaks to these young men belonging to the lower socioeconomic classes. These Tejanos who were conveying their excitement to serve were not the landed classes of the Benavides and Navarro families. They did not come from the politically connected families of J.T. Canales. Here, at the very beginnings of the twentieth century, not World War II, Mexican American nationalism had already taken root in south Texas.

This combination of fear of the state and love for the ideals of the state should not be taken to be a historical oddity. In his work *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, Benedict Anderson shows that even in colonial held territories, it is not uncommon for the people to have a positive feeling for the nation state.[145] Anderson argues that "nations inspire love, and often profoundly self-sacrificing love."[146] What then could be more self-sacrificing than those willing to lay

[145] Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London: Verso Press, 1983; 2006), 142.
[146] *Ibid.,* 141.

their lives on the line for a nations honor, specifically the honor of a nation that had marginalized them in a vicious, systematic manner?

Anderson asserts that one usually does not choose their nation, but does make the decision, at least in some cases, to lay down their lives for it.[147] The case of the Tejano and the adoption of a Mexican American Identity should be seen as an exceptional case in that they certainly chose their nation. Tejanos had the ability in many cases to return to Mexico, and indeed some did rather than face the prospect of service overseas. That many did not demonstrates that the adoption of a Mexican American identity occurred much earlier than scholarship has claimed for many years now.

William J. Knox, a friend with whom José de la Luz Sáenz corresponded to regularly during his time in the U.S. Army makes an interesting assertion to Sáenz in one of his letters. Knox told Sáenz that he was pleased that so many young men of Mexican American heritage had responded to the call for action overseas.[148] Knox also seemed aware that there had been significant Tejano participation in American conflicts since 1836.[149] Sáenz indicated in his letters that Knox was a teacher, and therefore he may have been much more likely to be aware of the significant Tejano contributions to Texas and the United States before the Great War. Regardless, it is indeed incredible that men such as Sáenz and his compatriots, including David Barkley, were so eager to fight for the United States.

---

[147] *Ibid.,* 144.
[148] Saenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra,* 54-55. Letter dated May 1, 1918 from William J. Knox to Jose de Luz Saenz.
[149] *Ibid.,* 55.

Sáenz and many of the Tejanos who fought along side him and in other units in the American Expeditionary Forces were indeed men of two nations. In many cases, they still held deep personal connections with Mexico. The shared history and culture of south Texas allowed many of these young men to feel that connection long after the war was over. The language that Sáenz used to describe this connection is indeed stunning. "The soldiers of my race, the noble Aztec race, nothing can deny."[150] Sáenz believed deeply that the warrior tradition from which he was descended, the Aztec tradition, meant that there was little that could deny him.

Sáenz wrote of an Aztec eagle devouring a serpent. Taken in the context of the First World War, one might imagine that this was an American eagle slaying the armed might of Germany. However, it was much more likely that Sáenz meant that the Aztec eagle, representing the Tejano and Mexicano people of Texas and the American Southwest, were doing their part by serving in the American military to slay the serpent of intolerance and racism. Sáenz placed a great deal of hope in the service of Tejanos during the First World War. He and other Tejanos likely hoped that Anglo America would recognize their service and patriotism and that their service would bring about a new era of understanding between *La Raza Azteca* and *Los Gringos*. Despite his hopes, recognition for Tejano and Mexicano service in the First World War did not occur for some time.

[150] *Ibid.,* 94. Translated from "*Los soldados de mi raza, la noble raza azteca, en nada desmienten.*"

4. EN NUESTRO CONCEPTO EL PROBLEMA MAS SERIO: THE SPANISH LANGUAGE PRINT MEDIA AND THE CREATION OF TEJANO NATIONALISM

On August 13, 1914, *La Prensa*, one of the Spanish language newspapers of San Antonio, Texas, ran a headline regarding the Mexican Revolution. "Before their unconditional surrender, Federal Forces are ready to keep fighting*."* Other news of note that day included indications that the United States would not be removing its occupation forces from the Mexican city of Veracruz, which the editorial staff of *La Prensa* called *"*The Most serious problem with which the government that succeeds Carbajal must contend*."*[1] This focus by Tejano newspapers on the ongoing Revolution in Mexico was not particularly surprising. No doubt, some of the readers of *La Prensa* still had family or friends in Mexico and were concerned as to how and when the U.S. incursion would end. Only at the bottom of the page did news of the war in Europe finally take focus. *La Prensa*'s attention to the Mexican Revolution over the World War in Europe was typical of Spanish language newspapers in south Texas.

The Spanish language print media in Texas and the United States has had an important function since the end of the Mexican American War. Spanish language newspapers not only provided information and news of what was occurring in the United States, but also provided a constant flow of information from Mexico. This allowed

[1] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 13, 1914. Excerpt translated from *El Problema mas seriocon que tendra que enfrentarse el Gobierno que suceda a Carbajal."* The title of this chapter comes from this excerpt of the article. The English translation of this chapter is "In our concept, the most serious problem."

many Mexicanos in the United States to remain connected to their *patria* and allowed for a continuation of their Mexicano identity. However, beginning in the twentieth century, this focus subtly began to shift. These Spanish language newspapers in the United States came to increasingly emphasize more involvement not only in U.S. foreign affairs, but also in U.S. politics.

This is not to suggest that the Spanish language press was used only as a tool of accommodation and acculturation. Indeed, many Spanish language newspapers in the United States were responsible for spreading what was considered radical ideology to their readers. Newspapermen, such as Ignacio Martinez, Catarino Garza and the Flores Magon brothers, were outspoken critics of the Anglo occupation of the Mexican borderlands. In Garza's case, such criticism led to direct action against perceived Anglo Americans injustices towards Tejanos as well as toward the regime in Mexico. That the U.S. government supported such injustices elevated them to fodder for a potential revolution.

The Spanish language press had an important impact on the Americanization of south Texas. This chapter will show how the political conflicts in Mexico related to pushing Tejanos and Mexicanos living in the United States towards a Mexican American identity as an alternative to the caustic revolutionary Mexican identity that was present south of the border. It will chronologically explore the varying ideologies that were prevalent in south Texas during the end of the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Furthermore, it will examine the American newspaper reaction to the Plan de San Diego and it will explore the Spanish language print media's coverage of the First World War.

This chapter will also addresses radical Tejano and Mexicano newspapers, their opposition to the war in Europe and their efforts to propose changes to the Mexican government and border society.

This chapter contends that several South Texas newspapers and some of the most prominent editors contributed in fomenting revolution in Mexico. The first of these editors was Ignacio Martinez, a devoted member of the *Partido Liberal Mexicano* or PLM. Martinez represented the old guard of revolution in Mexico, a relic from the earlier attempts at Mexican reform under leaders such as Benito Juarez. Martinez' calls for revolution in Mexico against the Diaz regime maintained much of that earlier nationalist character, and was certainly the more moderate of the revolutionary figures examined here.

Next, this chapter will argue that Catarino Garza's failed rebellion against both Diaz and U.S. influence in Mexico was influential in further radicalizing the Mexican Revolution. While Martinez' grievances were only against the *Porfiriato*, Garza expanded that criticism to include the United States as a culpable party. Garza blamed the economic transformation of Mexico by American capital for the persistence of the Diaz regime. Eventually, Garza's call for revolution was against not only Diaz but against the American backed system operating in Mexico.

This chapter will argue the writing and ideology of Ricardo Flores Magon and his brothers demonstrated that they were among the most radical Spanish language editors active in the United States during the early twentieth century. The Flores Magon brothers were descendants of the same political tradition that created Martinez and

Garza. However, the revolution proposed by Ricardo Flores Magon and his brothers was much more in line with anarcho-syndicalism and eventually anarcho-communism than any earlier nationalist ideologies.

In contrast to these newspapers, this chapter will show writings which were closely allied to the Diaz regime, such as the *Correo de Laredo*, a paper operated by Justo Cardenas, a pro-Diaz editor. Also, it will explore the much more politically moderate and neutral *La Prensa* newspaper of San Antonio. *La Prensa* was one of the papers that presented much more U.S.-centered coverage of Texan politics and of the War in Europe following 1914. That paper shifted a majority of its print space towards coverage of the First World War once the United States declared war on Germany in 1917. Anglo newspapers such as the *Dallas Morning News* clearly confirmed a strong pro-American political and print orthodoxy during the war years.

These newspapers show that there was a divided notion as to what a Mexican identity truly meant. The divisive factions of Mexican politics and revolution represented by these papers published articles and editorials showing Tejanos and Mexicano exiles the fading reality of earlier notions of Mexicanism. This chapter concludes that the increasing radicalization of the Mexican revolution presented by Garza and Flores Magon frightened many Tejanos away from associations with earlier Mexicanist identities. By the time the United States entered World War One in 1917, Tejanos and Mexicanos in the United States were eager for a unified national perspective and identity. Newspapers such as *La Prensa* were prepared to offer a more Americanized identity to take the place of those older ideals.

The revolutionary newspapers of South Texas, such as San Antonio's *Regeneracion* and Brownsville's *El Mundo* were intended to find an audience with dissident groups south of the Rio Grande. However, efforts by the Mexican government kept many of those papers out of the hands of Mexican citizens. Instead, many of the readers of these papers were Tejanos still interested in political activism within Mexico itself. *Regeneracion*, the most radical of the papers devoted to the *Partido Liberal Mexicano*, had a circulation of nearly 25,000 readers in South Texas alone.[2] These Spanish language newspapers presented both facts and interpretations of the ongoing revolution in Mexico to Tejanos. As a result of increasing radicalization of Mexican politics away from the classic liberalism of Benito Juarez, many of these Tejanos began the slow process of abandoning their older Mexicanist identity.

The phenomenon of Tejano and Mexicano radicals and revolutionaries using the press as an outlet to air grievances was not new at the beginning of the twentieth century. In 1859, Tejano revolutionary Juan Cortina issued revolutionary proclamations to Tejanos and Mexicanos encouraging them to participate in what Cortina called the "sacred right of self-preservation."[3] Cortina used his proclamations to outline grievances against the Anglo occupation of Texas and their continuing encroachment on Tejano

---

[2] Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 145.

[3] Robert J. Rosenbaum, *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest: "The Sacred Right of Self-Preservation"* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 44. For further examination of the Cortina Rebellion in south Texas, see Charles W. Goldfinch, *Juan N. Cortina, 1824-1892: A Reappraisal* (Brownsville: Bishop's Print Shop, 1950), Lyman L. Woodman, *Cortina: Rogue of the Rio Grande* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1950), and Jerry D. Thompson, *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007). The perception of Cortina's status as either a revolutionary or bandit was largely dependent on one's ethnicity. Cortina's willingness to use communication and the print media to spread his proclamation does speak to aspirations, or at least pretensions, beyond mere banditry.

land and traditional Tejano roles. Class played a tremendous part in Cortina's rebellion, as would future rebellions against Texas and Anglo occupation. Cortina's family had formerly occupied a high position in Texas society before the arrival of the American system. [4]

While Tejano resistance to Anglo encroachment had links to the print media during the mid-nineteenth century, the links between newspapers and Tejano radicalism became much closer during the Catarino Garza rebellion of the late nineteenth century. Since the ending of the American Civil War and the beginning of the twentieth century, South Texas had been transformed by stronger American cultural influence in South Texas along with economic modernization. These developments resulted in the increasing marginalization of Tejanos in the region. Adding to the already explosive social situation in south Texas was the increasingly unstable political system in Mexico. Historian Elliot Young describes Garza's outlook in South Texas during the 1870's as despondent and upset, both at the lip service paid to racial equality during election season and the blatant racism displayed during times when Tejano votes were not needed.[5]

As with many of the revolutionary figures along the Rio Grande border, Garza occupied a position that combined revolutionary activity with outright banditry. Many of Garza's thoughts on the plight of Tejanos in South Texas comes from an incomplete

[4] Goldfinch, "Juan N. Cortina 1824-1892: A Re-Appraisal", 27.
[5] Elliot Young, *Catatino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 32.

autobiography.[6] Throughout Garza's autobiography, he tends to romanticize his own importance to the Tejano movement towards civil rights. However, Garza was certainly not the only radical Tejano newspaper publisher during the latter years of the nineteenth century.

Late in the 1890's, as Mexican resistance to the repressive regime of Porfiriano Diaz grew, Texas newspapers became increasingly involved in the tensions in Mexico.[7] Some of these newspapers, such as *El Correo de Laredo*, were active participants in this ongoing civil strife. The editor of the *El Correo*, Justo Cardenas, was seemingly a journalist for hire and reported propaganda pieces for the *Porfiriato*.[8]

Garza, as a Tejano revolutionary, was not simply concerned with correcting the injustices of the United States. Garza's primary focus seemed on the ongoing infighting occurring in Mexican politics. South Texas been changed by the arrival of the American capitalist system and men like Garza and other Tejano and Mexicano journalists, such as Paulino Martinez of Laredo, blamed the same system for changing Mexican society.[9]

---

[6] *Ibid.,* 25. See also Catarino Garza, "La logica de los hechos: O sean observaciones sobre las circumstancias de los Mexicanos en Texas, desde el año 1877 hasta1889." Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection. Catarino Garza Papers.

[7] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), September 25, 1891, p. 3. The Article mentions that a friend of the paper and former editor of the *Chinaco* newspaper Paulino Martinez was arrested in San Antonio for supporting the insurrectionary activity. Translated from "*Antiguo redator de "El Chinaco", Valiente periodico de oposicion al Gobierno de Mexico, se dice que fue arrestrado en San Antonio, por complicidad con Sandoval en la revolucion de Junio del ano Pasado."* For a further examination of the Mexican Revolution, see John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkley: University of California Press, 1987).

[8] Young, *Catarino Garza*, 202. In his endnotes, Young cites a letter from Cardenas to Diaz claiming to have never been an enemy of his candidacy or his government. Cardenas apparently believes that the Diaz regime has brought a great deal of good to Mexico.

[9] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), September 25, 1891. The article announcing the arrest of Martinez criticized him for falling for such a foolish suggestion. Again, it is important to note that the editorial staff of the *El Correo* were paid to support the Diaz regime in Mexico. Section translated from "*No Comprendemos como nuestro buen amigo D. Paulino, con su buen juicio y claro talento, y con los antecedents que suponomos tenia de la famosa revolucion, pudo ser victima de sugestiones torpes."*

Garza's critiques of the *Porfiriato* earned him a great deal of support on the American banks of the Rio Grande. The repressive regime of Porfirio Diaz was indeed being propped up by massive investments of foreign capital, mostly from the United States.[10]

Border revolutionaries such as Garza, were not always of the same ideology. The border rebels of the late nineteenth century were willing to embrace classic liberalism, socialism, anarcho-sydicalism and outright anarchism to combat perceived injustices. Of these ideologies, the most mainstream of them, classic liberalism, seemed to attract the most support from Tejanos and Mexicanos in the United States.[11] It is easy to see what attracted Tejanos to the liberal ideology. Many of these Tejanos, especially those of the upper classes, had previously supported movements in Mexico that championed the decentralization of power.[12]

When discussing the events of the Garza rebellion in the Texas press, the interpretation of the actions of Garza and his revolutionaries differed naturally depending on the ethnicity of who was reporting, but also of their particular political allegiance. *El Correo de Laredo* was largely opposed to the actions of Garza based largely on the papers own allegiance to the Diaz regime. On January 22, 1892, the *Correo* published an article seeking to challenge the favorable interpretation that Garza's revolt was getting in some of the Texan press. Cardenas condemned support for the Garza revolt and called the journalistic supporters of Garza his "henchmen and the

[10] Young, *Catarino Garza*, 58.
[11] *Ibid.,* 7. Classical liberalism places a heavy emphasis on individual liberty and limited governmental power while also encouraging private property and economic growth.
[12] See pp. 34-35 in chapter 2, above.

heralds of his fame."[13] Cardenas called Garza's writings and manifestos against the *Porfiriato* as a "vile and vehement" attack against "all that signifies honesty, order and morality."[14]

Despite the cronyism displayed by Cardenas in supporting of the Diaz regime, a number of newspapers in South Texas opposed the *Porfiriato*. The Brownsville *El Mundo* had published attacks on the Diaz regime as early as 1886.[15] The editor of *El Mundo*, Ignacio Martinez, had already made a name for himself as an opponent to centralized power by the late nineteenth century. Martinez, in many ways, can be seen as a polar opposite to Justo Cardenas and his catering to the power in Mexico City. Throughout his career as a journalist and agitator, Martinez supported or opposed such different figures in Mexican politics as Benito Juarez and Porfirio Diaz. Though his allegiance to a particular politician may have waned, Martinez maintained a thoroughly liberal outlook on Mexican politics throughout.[16]

Along with Catarino Garza, Ignacio Martinez came to fame in the United States as the editor of an opposition newspaper. During the decade of the 1880's, Martinez was one of the primary voices of opposition against the *Porfiriato* in the United States. While living in the United States, Martinez was the target of harassment by Mexican intelligence officers, the Mexican Consulates in the United States, and supporters of the Diaz regime that happened to be residing in the United States or close by in Northern

---

[13] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), January 22, 1892. Translated from front page headline "*Los Secuaces de Garza y los Heraldos de su Fama."*
[14] *Ibid.* Translated from *"se escribio siempre del modo mas soez y vehemente contra todo lo que significa honradez, orden o moralidad."*
[15] Young, *Catarino Garza*, 60.
[16] *Ibid.,* 61.

Mexico.[17] While Martinez had once been a loyal follower of the Diaz regime, he had a reputation as a political troublemaker and fomenter of rebellion in Mexico. By 1886, the former Mexican Army general and doctor was one of the primary figures in backing rebellion against Diaz's government from the United States. In June of 1886, Mexican exiles living in the United States initiated a revolt. With the ideological support of General Martinez and his newspaper *El Mundo* in Brownsville, Texas, these revolutionaries were able to make significant gains in their first two months of activity.[18] Martinez was believed to have been a sufficient threat to the power structure in Mexico that there were efforts to extradite him to Mexico in order to stand trial for his efforts to aid revolutionaries and support their resistance to the Diaz Regime.[19]

Martinez was not sent to Mexico by American authorities, and after this revolution fizzled, he continued to play an active role in the opposition to the Diaz regime. Other Mexicano editors, along with Martinez, continued their criticism of the Mexican president and his crimes against the people of Mexico from the relative safety of South Texas. Nonetheless, the Mexican government was largely successful in thwarting the ability of these editors to sway internal Mexican politics, particularly after it was relatively clear that Martinez himself seems to have been involved in another

[17] Young, *Catarino Garza*, 86.
[18] *El Observador Frontizero* (El Paso, Tex.), August 22, 1886. Translated from "*Por un telegrama del correspensal del "*Globo Democratica" *de San Luis en Brownsville, dice quen en una conversacion con el gral. D. Ignacio Martinez dijo este, quen en menos de dos meses la revolucion tomara mucho incremento.*" Martinez is claiming in his letters to this paper to have made great gains in the fight against the Diaz regime, but does not say what these gains are.
[19] *Ibid.* Translated from "*El telegrama agrega quen un eminente jurisconsulto de la ciudad de Mexico trata de pedir la extradicion del Sr. General.*"

revolt in Nuevo Leon in 1886.[20] Historian Emilio Zamora argues that the circulation of revolutionary newspapers was higher in the United States than it was in Mexico. Many local Texan groups of PLM supporters read these papers aloud at their meetings for their members, increasing the circulation of revolutionary ideology and principles amongst Tejanos.[21] While that particular revolt had come to nothing, it was clear that the Diaz regime regarded Martinez as a very significant threat.

While Martinez continued to oppose the *Porfirato* throughout the end of the nineteenth century, the Mexican government continued its harassment of any effort to distribute opposition newspapers within Mexico itself. Indeed, Mexican agents became very active in trying to turn opposition newspapers against each other. In some cases, these agents were remarkably successful. While Martinez had been close with other Mexican journalists, such as Paulino Martinez of *El Chinaco*, eventually they had a serious falling out over who was the true voice of the Liberal Mexican opposition to Diaz. Ignacio Martinez became incredibly agitated over time by these insulations at disloyalty to Mexico by rival newspaper editors and began making verbal and physical threats against them. He threatened former allies Justo Cardenas and Paulino Martinez. In the end, however, Ignacio Martinez was likely seen by Mexican authorities as too much of a threat to be allowed to continue to operate in the United States. On February 3, 1891, while returning from seeing some of his patients, Doctor Martinez was assassinated by "Two Mexicans mounted on horseback, who immediately fled and

[20] Young, *Catarino Garza,* 62. Young claims that the reports from the time very seriously over-sensationalized the seriousness of the revolt in 1886. Under the orders of the Diaz regime, state governors such as Bernardo Reyes seized radical papers coming into Mexico from the United States.
[21] Emilio Zamora, *World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 145-146.

passed into their native country on the other side of the Rio Grande."[22] The assassination of Ignacio Martinez on the streets of Laredo was a shocking event to others in the U.S. press, even though many of these other papers did not believe in the cause to which Martinez had devoted himself.[23] While papers such as the *Latino-Americano* of El Paso grieved for the loss of General Martinez, the loss was much greater that than of a former revolutionary and popular exile in the United States. Many in the Mexican expatriate community in the United States believed that the death of Ignacio Martinez meant the end of any kind of formal opposition to the Diaz government in Mexico. According to the *Latino-Americano*, "With the death of General Martinez, so too ends the list of Mexican opposition editors to the administration of General Diaz, leaving without a doubt the complete obliteration of the free Mexican press for the future."[24] After Diaz's henchmen murdered of Martinez, the opposition to the increasingly tyrannical administration of Porfirio Diaz grew and became more committed to his removal.[25]

While the English language press in the United States and those papers that had a political interest in the survival of the *Porfiriato* were largely dismissive of the revolutionary Spanish language press, there were a number of newspapers in the United States that were supportive of the continuing efforts to rebel against the Diaz regime.

---

[22] *El Latino-Americano* (El Paso, Tex.) February 7, 1891. Translated from "*El periodico que nos da la noticia solo se limita a decir "que el martes fue muerto el Gral. I. Martinez en las calles de Laredo, por dos Mexicanos montados a caballo, quienes immediamente, echando a corer se pasaron a su pais natal, a traves del Rio Grande.*"

[23] *Ibid.*Translated from "*No eramos partidarios de las ideas del General Martinez, pero para nosotros era un appreciable y sincero amigo a quien resparabamos por saber lo profundo de su sentimiento y que lo que hacia solo era por su patria.*"

[24] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Con la muerte del Gral. Martinez, se da fin a la lista de los escritores Mexicanos oposisionistas a la Administracion del Gral Diaz, quedando sin duda la prensa libre Mexicana por completo obliiterada en el porvenir.*"

[25] *Ibid.* Translated from "*ha perdido Mexico otro hijo mas valiente y leal.*"

Catarino Garza's career in inflammatory journalism began soon after his arrival in Texas from Mexico. The Garza revolt against Diaz regime seems to have captured the imagination of Mexicanos living in the United States as far away as California. Again, the interpretation of the revolt varies in the eyes of those who witnessed it. Whereas the pro-*Porfiriato* press in South Texas viewed Garza's revolt as an attack against order and decency, papers such as the *Los Angeles Herald* considered the revolt against the regime in Mexico to be patriotic.[26] The *Herald* itself was dependent on the efforts of the Spanish language media to interpret the ongoing events in South Texas and Northern Mexico.[27] It is these Spanish language papers that were responsible for showing Americans in their mainstream English language newspapers that Diaz's regime in Mexico was not the progressive and liberal government its supporters trumpeted.

The idea of the *Pax Porfiriana* began in 1884 after Diaz resumed control of the Presidency of Mexico for a second time. Diaz, like Benito Juarez before him, abandoned the old liberal staple of disallowing presidential re-elections.[28] Both Juarez and Diaz began their careers in politics as adherents to the tenets of classical liberalism. As politicians, Juarez and Diaz believed in rolling back special privileges for traditionally protected groups, such as the Catholic Church and army.[29] These Liberals also advocated for the decentralization of power and an increase in individual liberties and

[26] *Los Angeles Herald* (Los Angeles, Cal.), January 19, 1892.
[27] Young, *Catarino Garza,* 204.
[28] Ward S. Albro, *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magon and the Mexican Revolution* (Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992), 4.
[29] James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: Oklahoma State University, 1992), 4.

freedoms.[30] Garza, along with other border revolutionaries, had a long history with the Liberal cause in Mexico. As opposed to the more redistributive leanings of fellow revolutionary Emiliano Zapata, Garza and other liberal norteño rebels were more interested in the opening of free trade and opposed to anything that designed to guarantee the ideals of communal landholding amongst the rural poor.[31] Ignacio Martinez, liberal editor of Brownsville's *El Mundo*, had roots in the liberal cause as early as the French intervention and its resistance in the 1860's.[32] Likewise, the father of the revolutionary Flores Magon brothers, Teodoro Flores, was a supporter of Juarez during the French intervention and even fought for Diaz when he rebelled against the perceived betrayal of liberalism during the Plan de Tuxtepec in 1876.[33]

The role of the revolutionary newspaper editor was an important one in South Texas. It is due in large part to the efforts of these newspaper men that the Diaz regime found it necessary to keep their own paid journalists on retainer, such as Justo Cardenas, during this period of insurrection and rebellion. Likewise, the Mexican government was eager that these journalists be suppressed by any means necessary. As was cynically reported by *El Correo de Laredo*, Paulino Martinez previously had been involved in the support of an abortive revolution in Mexico.[34]

---

[30] Young, *Catarino Garza,* 7.
[31] Young, *Catarino Garza,* 64.
[32] *Ibid.*, 60.
[33] Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 4. Ironically, one of the pledges that Diaz made during the Plan of Tuxtepec was not to seek re-election to the office of the presidency. Diaz did indeed vacate the office of the presidency in 1880, only to return in 1884 and continued on as a dictator until his ousting by the Mexican Revolution in 1911.
[34] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), September 25, 1891. Translated from "*Antiguo redactor de "*El Chincaco*", valiente periodico de oposicion al Gobierno de Mexico, se dice que fue arrestrado en San Antonio, por complicidad con Sandoval en la revolucion de Junio de ano pasado."*

Garza took it upon himself to defend the honor of Mexicans in Texas to Anglos who disparaged Mexican workers.[35] It is that same impulse to defend the racial honor of Tejanos and Mexicanos against the outrages of the Anglo "occupiers" that propelled Garza to his status as a revolutionary leader. It is important to note that this is very much the same way that earlier Tejano revolutionary Juan Cortina began his path towards an uprising against the real and perceived injustices of the American system.

The great difference between Cortina and Garza lies in the fact that Cortina was rebelling only against the racial injustices that he had witnessed first hand as a Tejano living under the new Anglo occupation. He personally experienced the loss of prestige and power that had accompanied the beginning of the Anglo occupation of Texas. Garza took a broader, more comprehensive view. He felt that the political situation in Mexico and Anglo racial outrages in Texas were closely related. After all, Diaz and his corrupt regime came into power with the support of wealthy American capitalists. The American government had taken steps to keep Diaz in power and protect American interests in Mexico. As a resident of the border, Garza and those who sympathized with him were able to witness the fact that these injustices did not occur in a vacuum, but rather were connected. But, in order to change the way Mexico was ruled, Garza first needed to weaken the authority of those whom Diaz had placed in power in northern Mexico.

To undermine Diaz's rule in Northern Mexico, Catarino Garza published a serialized and very unflattering biography of Mexican General Bernardo Reyes, the military governor of Nuevo Leon in July of 1891. While the biography was insulting to

[35] Young, *Catarino Garza,* 34.

Reyes, the true outrage for many, especially for Reyes and supporters of the *Porfiriato*, was the attack by Catarino Garza against Reyes' mother, Senora Ogazon de Reyes.[36] After the publication of the articles in Garza's paper *El Libre Pensador*, many in South Texas and Mexico realized that Garza intended an escalation of tension between himself and the Diaz government in Mexico. Inflammatory language was nothing new for Garza as both an editor and as an opponent of the Diaz regime, but for many the articles attacking Reyes and his family were seen as an escalation. In his pro-Diaz newspaper *El Correo de Laredo,* Justo Cardenas condemned Garza's articles: "The Insult, my friend, is the reason of those who do not have reason."[37]

The same day that Cardenas condemned his former friend for the articles being published in *El Libre Pensador*, *El Correo de Laredo* also reported that General Reyes himself had come to the northern Mexican city of Nuevo Laredo to bring accusations of libel against Garza for the publication of the scandalous biography and the defamation of his mother.[38] A week later, Cardenas once again claimed to represent the public sentiment of outrage over the articles attacking the private life of General Reyes.[39] Garza's attack did not perhaps have the effect he wished. Instead, these defamatory

---

[36] *Ibid.*, 99.
[37] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), August 8, 1891. Translated from "*El insulto, amigo mio, es la razon de los que no tienen razon*."
[38] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Ayer y antier se decia en esta ciudad que el Gral. Reyes se encontraba en N. Laredo. Unos decian que vino a presentar acusacion de libelo contra "El Libre Pensador."* Among the allegations listed by Garza was the claim that Reyes' mother was promiscuous in her youth. See Young, *Catarino Garza,* 98-99.
[39] *El Correo de Laredo* (Laredo, Tex.), August 13, 1891. Translated from "*Como nosotros fuimos los primeros en reprobar ese articulo tan inconvenmente, tenemos la satisfaccion de creer que hemos representado esta vez el sentimiento publico, aunque a decir verdad, no aprobamos los articulos inconvenientes y pecaminosos con quealgunos colegas han quierido castigar a "El Libre Pensador" Y a su estimable redactor que si se equivoco traspasando los limites marcados por la ley y la conciencia, al publicar un articulo que ofende la moral, tiene derecho a exigir de los que lo censuran los miramientos que reclaman para el Sr. Gral Reyes y su familia.*"

articles convinced many to regard Garza's methodology as objectionable and ultimately detrimental to his cause. It also gave those friendly to the Diaz regime, like Justo Cardenas, a somewhat unexpected moral high ground.

Regardless of Garza's intent, Reyes continued to be a popular figure in the United States. Reyes was invited by Texas state officials to attend the state fair in October of 1891.[40] Reyes attended this fair with other Texan dignitaries such as Governor James Hogg and a veritable who's-who of Texan society and government. As late as 1892, the *Dallas Morning News* reported that the *El Paso Herald* was glowing in their praise of the changes made to Nuevo Leon by General Reyes.[41] It seems that the initial salvo fired in the press by Catarino Garza did not resonate well within the Anglo press of Texas. There were still many who saw Reyes, and by extension, Porfirio Diaz, as the agents of progress and modernization in Mexico.

By September of 1891, Garza had finished his war of words with Reyes and initiated a more open rebellion against the Diaz regime. Garza and those who flocked to his banner were involved in cross border raids into Mexico. They garnered attention not only from Mexican officials, but also from the United States government. The *Dallas Morning News* claimed that Garza, "the self styled chief of the constitutional army of the north, is well known here, he having at one time edited La Commercio Mexicano at this place."[42] As previously noted, the *Dallas Morning News* held a favorable impression of the Diaz regime and declared in its reporting of the Garza rebellion that "the most

[40] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), October 6, 1891.
[41] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 29, 1892.
[42] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), September 20, 1891.

diligent inquiry fails to elicit any information as to his object or knowledge of what he expects to gain from his revolutionary movements."[43] But the *Dallas Morning News* was going against the tide. Border newspapers and their reports of the outrages and excesses of the Diaz regime had begun to influence the Anglo press in Texas. Indeed, the *San Antonio Express* was already raising serious allegations against Diaz himself, accusing him of enriching himself at the expense of the Mexican people.[44] Doubtless, the *Dallas Morning News* was being somewhat disingenuous when it asked what Garza sought to accomplish. The tyrannical policies of the *Porfiriato* were an open secret to the Texan Anglo press already.

Garza's rebellion attempt to affect real change in Mexico was unsuccessful, but it did provide several important changes in the perceptions of Tejanos in the United States. The majority of the Anglo press was quick to fall back on their standard stereotypes of all Tejanos as riotous lawbreakers. Some newspapers, such as the *San Antonio Express News*, claimed that a "better class of Mexican citizens" existed, and that it was these Tejanos and Mexicanos that were instrumental in reestablishing order in the Rio Grande in the wake of the Garza troubles.[45]

Following the suppression of the Garza Rebellion, another radical newspaper and its editors once again agitated for a revolt against the Diaz regime. The rebellious Flores Magon brothers began their career of fomenting rebellion against the *Porfiriato* as students in Mexcio during the 1880's.[46] On August 7, 1900, the three Flores Magon

---

[43] *Ibid.*
[44] *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), September 1, 1891.
[45] *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), September 25, 1888.
[46] Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 5.

brothers, Jesus, Ricardo and Enrique founded the subversive newspaper *Regeneracion*.[47] Although the paper was founded as an independent legal newspaper, it is clear that the Flores Magon brothers intended the paper to serve the greater cause of social justice. [48]

As sons of an avowed Mexican liberal, it is almost certain that the Flores Magon brothers were taught much about liberalism from their father. However, their political journey did not end at liberalism. In the beginning, they stayed in the fold. In early 1901, for example, Ricardo Flores Magon took the almost unprecedented action of speaking out in favor of traditional Mexican liberalism and against the Diaz Regime's rejection of many of those principles.[49] But the weakness of Mexican liberalism and its unwillingness or inability to do anything about the excesses of the Diaz regime in all likelihood led activists such as Ricardo Flores Magon to shift to radicalism and rebellion as the options for reform and change within Mexican society.[50] By 1908, Ricardo Flores Magon began to embrace a more anarcho-communist perspective on the impending revolution in Mexico. While traditional anarcho-syndicalism championed the ideas of workers and trade unions seizing the means of production for themselves, Ricardo was perhaps most closely allied with the ideals of anarcho-communism.[51] Ricardo believed that the workers would see that the fruits of any revolution should not be tainted with

---

[47] *Ibid.,*7.
[48] Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands,* 5. See also *Regeneracion* (Los Angeles, Cal.), September 5, 1910. Translated from "*Regeneracion es el anuncio de una nueva era.Viejo luchador es este periodico; pero siempre joven en sus entusiasmos por la libertad y la justicia, siempre viril en sus demandas por la igualidad y la fraternidad.*"
[49] *Ibid.* See also *Regeneracion* (Los Angeles, Cal.), September 5, 1910. In that issue, The Flores Magon brothers published an English article presenting the struggles of the Mexican revolutionaries in their fight against Diaz. In that article, Flores Magon claims to represent the Liberal Party of Mexico.
[50] *Ibid.,* 6.
[51] Albro, *Always a Rebel,* 104.

capitalism, and that the workers understand the benefits of communal cooperation and production.[52]

Ricardo Flores Magon and his brothers were able to use their own independent newspaper as a voice for Mexican opposition to the Diaz regime. *Regeneracion*, along with other increasingly radical newspapers soon became a target of the *Porfiriato*. By the summer of 1901, the Flores Magon brothers were arrested for allegedly insulting the Diaz regime and imprisoned in the Belen prison in Mexico city for one year. During their imprisonment, their mother, Margarita Magon, died.[53] Their imprisonment in one of Mexico's most notorious jails, their prohibition from printing any further protests against the Diaz regime and eventual exile into Texas did little to soften the Flores Magon brothers' opposition to the Diaz regime.

Following their initial imprisonment, the Flores Magon brothers continued their political opposition against the Diaz regime, heedless of further government crackdowns. In 1902, one year after their release, the Flores Magon brothers were once again taken before a military tribunal in Mexico, this time for "insults against the army."[54] Despite the new charge, the *El Tiempo* newspaper of Las Cruces, New Mexico, took great pleasure in annoucing that the Mexican Supreme Court had ruled in favor of the Flores Magon brothers and released them without further charges.[55] It is clear from

---

[52] *Ibid.*, 103.
[53] Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands,* 7.
[54] *El Tiempo* (Las Cruces, NM.), November 15, 1902.
[55] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Por Ultimas noticias, sabemos y con gran placer, que los señores Lic. Jesus Flores Magon, Ricardo y Enrique del mismo apellido, redactors de ilustre colega "*El Hijo del Ahuizote" *Y quienes se encontraban acusados ante los Tribunales Militares por injurias al ejèrcito, la Suprema Cporte de Justicia decidió en su favor, quedando estos señores en completa libertad. Honra á la Suprema Corte de Justicia."*

the reaction of *El Tiempo* that other Spanish language newspapers were paying close attention to the plight of the Flores Magon brothers and their ongoing opposition to the Diaz regime.

Despite avoiding conviction in November of 1902, by the Summer of 1903, the Flores Magon brothers and others involved in the publication of the satirical paper *Hijo de Ahuizote*, were once again arrested by the Mexican government.[56] This incident in May of 1903 was brought on by the publication of a letter critical to the regime which caused a scandal within the government and led a prosecutor in Mexico City taking offense and throwing the Flores Magon brothers, along with others involved in printing the paper, in "the filthy, stinking dungeon of that general prison."[57] The editorial staff of *El Tiempo* condemned the arrest of these "great liberals" and hoped that "like other times, the distinguished accused come out triumphant from the claws of their foolish enemies."[58]

Whether the opponents of reform in Mexico were "foolish" or not, the editorial staff of the Flores Magon's *El Hijo de Ahuizote* definitely did have revolutionary plans in the making. By 1904, the Flores Magon brothers had relocated to the United States, choosing exile to escape the legal troubles that they faced. [59] Upon arriving in South

---

[56] *El Tiempo* (Las Cruces, NM.), May 2, 1903. The name of the self published paper *Hijo del Ahuizote* the Flores Magon brothers were arrested for circulating was translated into "Son of the Pain in the Neck." Apparently, the Flores Magon brothers and their fellow activists did not appreciate subtlety.
[57] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Al Procurador de Justicia del Distrito Federal puso de mal humor ciertas frases de la ya comentada carta, y armo troya, calmando su ira con acusaciones debiles y tener el placer de ver a estos grandes liberales en los asquerosos y hediondos calabozos de aquella carcel general.*"
[58] *Ibid.* Translated from "*Esperamos que como otras veces, slagan triunfantes los distinguidos acusados, de las garras de sus necios enemigos."* The *El Tiempo* newspaper was an anti-Diaz paper published in Las Cruces, New Mexico. They had previously supported the Flores Magon brothers in their criticism of the Diaz regime.
[59] Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 22.

Texas, the Flores Magon brothers were destitute and eager to change their lagging fortunes. These agitators would not stay inactive long. Even with the threat of Mexican agents in Texas, the Flores Magons maintained a fairly public presence in the United States. In August of 1904, Ricardo was named as one of the keynote speakers for the San Antonio celebrations of Mexican Independence Day.[60] By November of that year, Ricardo and other Mexican Liberal exiles began the publication of the San Antonio Edition of *Regeneracion*.[61]

Nonetheless, the Diaz regime continued to have incredible influence and reach in Texas. The same counter-revolutionary apparatus that had allowed the Diaz regime to reach and assassinate revolutionaries such as Ignacio Martinez in South Texas made publication of Liberal newspapers such as *Regeneracion* difficult in Texas. In 1905, the Flores Magon brothers decided that Texas was simply too hostile to their ideology and that the influence of the Diaz regime was too strong to allow any radical opposition paper to be successful. Following an attempted assassination attempt on Ricardo Flores Magon, the brothers relocated the offices of *Regeneracion* to St. Louis, Missouri.[62]

Now that the offices and leadership of the Liberal exiles had relocated to Missouri, the Flores Magon brothers formed the *Junta Organizadora del Partido Liberal Mexicano* (PLM), a revolutionary organization with the explicit purpose of having Diaz

---

[60] *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 27, 1904. One of the other speakers was Judge Edward Dwyer, a judge of the 37th District Court and descendant of a former mayor of San Antonio.
[61] Albro, *Always a Rebel,* 24.
[62] *Ibid.*, 27. James Sandos attributes this move to St. Louis not only due to the distance from more of Diaz's potential assassins, but also because it allowed members of Flores Magon's Liberal exiles to be in close proximity to labor union activity in that City. See Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 9.

ousted from power in Mexico by any means necessary.[63] Even with the brothers' departure from the border region, the Mexican government would not allow so powerful a voice to remain unchecked. Mexican agents, with the help of the United States government and private detective agencies, continually harassed the editors and writers of *Regeneracion* in Missouri. Detective agencies such as the Pinkertons aided in the surveillance of the junta and the United States Postal Service intercepted mail sent to the newspaper and curtailed the distribution of *Regeneracion*.[64] The Mexican government was able to exert sufficient diplomatic pressure on the United States to extradite the Flores Magon brothers, forcing them and other leaders of the junta to go into hiding in New York and Europe.[65]

Despite their goal to unseat the Diaz regime, the editors of *Regeneracion* sought to distance themselves from violent revolution. On September 11, 1906, The *Tucson Citizen* published a telegram sent by the editorial staff of *Regeneracion* to President Theodore Roosevelt claiming that their goal was not the violent overthrow of the Diaz regime, but instead was "only contrary to the terrible tyranny of the Dictator. We work for the Mexican people's liberty."[66] Unfortunately for the Flores Magon brothers and other members of the editorial staff, their telegram fell on deaf ears as far as President Roosevelt was concerned. Indeed, the writers of the *Tucson Citizen* believed that it was the duty of the United States government to shut down use of the mail by these Mexican

[63] Albro, *Always a Rebel*, 30.
[64] *Ibid.,* 33.
[65] *The Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Ariz.), September 11, 1906.
[66] *Ibid.*

radicals. As the Tucson paper reported, "activity in putting down a junta aimed at Diaz would be a testimonial of American sympathy with the Mexican president."[67]

On August 23, 1907, Ricardo Flores Magon and other leaders of the Junta were detained in Los Angeles, California, for aiding Mexican rebels in their fight against Diaz.[68] Ricardo Flores Magon was named as the leader of the insurrectionary activity by the *Tucson Citizen*. Arizona authorities had previously captured Mexican revolutionaries with letters from Ricardo in their possession.[69] It is interesting to note that the leadership of the Junta was not brought to justice by the government of the United States, but rather by Thomas Furlong, the head of a private detective agency.[70] Those arrested were not accused of conspiring to foment rebellion in Mexico, but rather that they had violated neutrality laws in the United States.[71] The *Dallas Morning News* stated that the final determination on what would be done with Ricardo Flores Magon and the other leaders of the Junta would be left up to the Mexican Ambassador Enrico Creel, but the *Tucson Citizen* reported the same day that Creel wanted nothing to do with the revolutionary leaders.[72] Instead of being sent back to Mexico, Ricardo Flores Magon was extradited back to Missouri for charges of libel against W.C. Green, owner of a mine in Cananea, Sonora.[73]

---

[67] *Ibid.*
[68] *Tucson Citizen* (Tucson, Ari.), August 24, 1907. Along with Flores Magon, Librado Rivera and Modesto Dias were also arrested.
[69] *Ibid.*
[70] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 24, 1907.
[71] *Ibid.*
[72] See both *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 24, 1907 and *Tucson Citizen* (Tuscon, Ari), August 24, 1907.
[73] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 30, 1907.

The Flores Magon brothers and their fellow conspirators in the Junta were not successful in overthrowing the Diaz regime. But their words inspired a successful stoppage of labor in the Cananea mines. Since Ricardo, the avowed anarchist, was in jail in the United States at the time, one of his trusted lieutenants, Praxedis Guerrero, led the uprising against the mining industry in Cananea.[74] Guerrero continued to be influential in Ricardo Flores Magon's organization. When Ricardo Flores Magon's manifesto calling for an uprising in Mexico was found, Praxedis Guerrero was one of the signatories of the document.[75] In that manifesto, Flores Magon, Guerrero and other members of the former Liberal Junta called for the people to rise against the Diaz regime. "One man has controlled the entire destiny of the nation for thirty years," the Magonista manifesto proclaimed.[76] Not content to lay blame for Mexico's plight solely at the feet of the *Porfiriato*, Flores Magon also claimed that "our national soil has been given up to foreign adventurers."[77]

Examination of the Garza and Flores Magon uprisings and their impact not only on Mexican society, but also on the way that Mexicans and Tejanos viewed Mexico during the late nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth century, shows that these newspapers were incredibly vital in identity formation. Certainly, Mexican radicalism played a large role in presenting the sweeping changes that were occurring in Mexico at the time. These newspapers presented to the expatriate community in the United States the complex issues that were facing Mexico. These papers and editors

---

[74] Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 12.
[75] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), July 4, 1908.
[76] Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands,* 12.
[77] *Ibid.*

made it clear that the Liberal Mexico that had been the dream of men like Benito Juarez was largely a thing of the past. Ignacio Martinez, Catarino Garza and Ricardo Flores Magon each presented differing ideologies and solutions to the situation in Mexico.

With each passing attempt at revolution, Tejanos and Mexicano exiles in Texas undoubtedly became more disenchanted with the changes taking place in Mexico. So much of what many of these Tejanos and Mexicanos had believed to be part of that identity had been abandoned by Mexico's officials and also ignored by the revolutionaries. While early opponents of the Diaz regime, such as Ignacio Martinez, embraced Mexican nationalism as part of their revolution, the increasingly radical uprisings of Catarino Garza and the Flores Magon Brothers were driving Tejanos in search of an alternative.

Mexicanos and Tejanos differed greatly there was a great difference of opinion on how post revolutionary Mexico should be governed, but there was little doubt amongst these figures that for any lasting change to be made, Diaz had to go and his American backing was profoundly destabilizing to Mexico. It is likely due to the incredibly varied responses to the *Porfiriato* that led many Mexicanos in the United States to believe that the opposition in some ways was just as bad as the dictatorship. The banditry of Garza and his revolutionaries and the inflammatory tactics used by him in the press doubtlessly alienated many Tejanos and Mexicanos who would likely have supported him. Likewise, the openly anarchistic writings and anti-clericism of Ricardo Flores Magon also alienated many Tejano and Mexicano traditionalists in the United States.

During the Plan de San Diego uprisings in South Texas, the Spanish language print media was once again involved in explaining ideological complexities to Tejanos in South Texas. While mainstream newspapers such as *La Prensa* of San Antonio denounced the attacks and even went so far as to accuse the Tejano and Mexicano rebels of being German agents, other newspapers found common cause with the rebels' stated goals of reunifying the American southwest and Mexico.[78] Not only did the Spanish language press of Texas blame German agents for presumably agitating unrest against the United States in an effort to keep America out of the First World War, they also indicated that socialist orators were also somehow responsible.[79] Unlike some of the other editors and newspapers active in South Texas at the time, *La Prensa* was a much more politically moderate paper. While eager to cover news of Mexico, *La Prensa* also gave much more coverage to local and state politics in Texas, encouraging Tejanos to become politically active.

It is worth noting that even as late as September of 1915, little of the local Spanish language press was focused on covering the war in Europe. The September 9, 1915 edition of San Antonio's *La Prensa* contained only one photograph on the front page. That was the only news that day of the growing conflict in Europe. The first page of *La Prensa* was mostly concerned with the escalating revolution in Mexico and the

---

[78] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 22, 1915. Translated from headline "*Hay alemanes entre los alzados de los condados de Hidalgo y Cameron, Texas: Se dice que aquellos son los que han iniciado el movimiento sedicioso en esta entidad.*" For anti-Anglo sentiment in newspapers likely to be seen by residents of south Texas, see Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands*, 94. Sandos cites a handbill circulated by the revolutionaries to residents of border towns such as Matamoros, Mexico which attempted to rally Mexican residents to the rebel against the American occupation.

[79] *Regidor* (San Antonio, Tex.), September 1, 1915. Translated from "*El domingo anterior, fueron aprehendidos, por las autoridades des locales, los oradores socialistas que cada ocho dias venian predicando, frente al mercado Colon, doctrinas disolventes.*"

involvement of the United States military to suppress the rebellion in South Texas started by the Plan de San Diego.[80]

While the South Texas press was concerned with the War in Mexico and the Plan de San Diego uprising and its suppression, Anglo newspapers in Texas devoted many stories to the war in Europe. On the same day that *La Prensa* announced that the Federal government was becoming involved in South Texas, the *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* ran with the headline "Air Raiders Kill Twenty."[81] On that day, a picture was published on the front page which showed American troops beginning the process of enforcing martial law in South Texas, but the reader of the *Star-Telegram* needed to go to page four to read of the ongoing rebellion in South Texas.[82] The previous day, the *Star-Telegram* devoted a front page column to U.S. troops arriving on the border, but again, the majority of the page was concerned with the Russian Czar Nicholas relieving his first cousin Grand Duke Nicholas of command.[83]

It speaks volumes to the focus of papers such as San Antonio's *La Prensa* when an event as monumental in the First World War as the Battle of the Somme does not even bear mention on the headlines. The Battle of The Somme, which began on July 1, 1916, was not covered on its first day by *La Prensa.* Instead, the paper was much more concerned with the proposition made by the Wilson administration to remove American troops from Mexico only when the Carranza administration of Mexico guaranteed that

[80] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), September 9, 1915.
[81] *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (Fort Worth, Tex.), September 9, 1915.
[82] *Ibid.* Article found on page four, "San Benito Citizen is Fired Upon."
[83] *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (Fort Worth, Tex.), September 8, 1915. The Grand Duke was transferred to the Caucasus Front.

Mexican forces would protect the border.[84] Meanwhile, the *Dallas Morning News* told of the new offensive in France that drove the German lines back five miles.[85]

Throughout the early years of the war in Europe, the reporting of the Spanish language press was consistent. While most coverage focused on the war in Mexico, Tejano newspapers in South Texas allocated some columns to the ongoing conflict. *La Prensa,* perhaps because it was distributed in a larger city than the communities in South Texas, contained more information on the war in Europe, while smaller papers such as Laredo's *Evolucion* and *Democrata Frontizero* were more focused on the local border communities throughout the early years of the war before the American declaration of war in 1917. However, once the United States declared war against the German Empire on April 4, 1917, the focus of the papers in South Texas also began to change.

San Antonio's *La Prensa* maintained its position throughout the years of the First World War as the most "mainstream" of the South Texas papers. As the war continued, and America's involvement grew, *La Prensa*'s coverage of the war took a much more U.S.-centered perspective. *La Prensa* does not seem to have spoken out against the war in any meaningful way. One month after the formal American declaration of war against Germany, *La Prensa* reported that there would be certain conditions to its continued reporting of the war. On May 5, 1917, *La Prensa* reported that the U.S. House of Representatives had voted in favor of allowing the President of the United States to have certain discretion in prohibiting the release of information that was likely to effect

---

[84] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 2, 1916. Translated from "*Las tropas Americanas saldran de Mexico y se dejara franco el camino para el final arreglo de las diferencias cuando Carranza demuestre que puede proteger debidamente la frontera, pero nunca antes.*"
[85] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), July 2, 1916.

national defense.[86] While this imposed a certain amount of censorship on the all newspapers in the United States, doubtless this imposition may have taken a much greater toll on the South Texas newspapers that were involved in the criticism of foreign governments, such as Mexico, that the United States certainly did not wish to aggravate during time of war.

By April of 1917, the headlines of *La Prensa*, which had once been dominated by news of the ongoing rebellion in Mexico, were now almost completely overtaken by news of the war in Europe and how that multi-national conflict could impact the Tejano population of South Texas. Where previously the events in Mexico were of primary importance to many Tejanos, following the American declaration of war, South Texas was eager for news of German spies crossing the border or German u-boats in the Gulf of Mexico.[87] Even smaller papers like the Laredo based *Evolucion* began running headlines about the American entrance into the European war.[88]

During the two years that the United States was involved in the First World War, newspapers such as *La Prensa* maintained support for the Allied cause, but by no means was America's action universally supported by all of the Spanish language press in the United States. When the United States formally entered the First World War, *Regeneracion*, published by the radical Flores Magon brothers in California, objected to American intervention. As the brothers were devoted anarchists, this is unsurprising. The editorial staff of *Regeneracion* found the idea of fighting for liberty overseas to be ironic

[86] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), May 5, 1917. Translated from "*La Nueva seccion aprobada por la Camara deja a la discrecion del presidente la prohibicion de informaciones relacionadas con la defensa nacional."*
[87] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 7, 1917.
[88] *Evolucion* (Laredo, Tex.), April 7, 1917.

and farcical. Indeed, the editors contended that fighting for liberty was merely a ruse to introduce more tyranny into the United States.[89] This war for liberty would, in the opinion of *Regeneracion*, allow "tyrants to speak on your behalf; to be invoked by the executioner as he hits the head of his victim; crushes the law to your advantage, and as a guarantee of your benefits, prisons and barracks will be built."[90] Some of the concerns of *Regeneracion* appeared prescient. The United States, in fighting for liberty abroad, did curtail the civil liberties of Americans at home. The freedoms of the press were curtailed and the ability to criticize the government was outlawed. But despite the pointed objections that *Regeneracion* and the Flores Magon brothers had towards the American intervention in the war, they were distinctly in the minority as far as the Spanish language press in the United States was concerned.

Despite the objections of more radical newspapers like *Regeneracion*, other papers, such as *La Prensa* continued with their support for the American and Allied cause throughout the course of the war. This, of course, led to elation by these papers when the war finally concluded with an Allied victory in November of 1918. On November 12, 1918, *La Prensa* ran the headline "With delirious joy yesterday was the triumph of democracy and justice celebrated. Germany has expired--the fight is over."[91] While the end of the war was indeed cause for celebration, this headline reflects the extent to which the editorial staff of *La Prensa*, one of the largest Tejano newspapers,

---

[89] *Regeneracion* (Los Angeles, Cal.), April 21, 1917. Translated from "*Libertad: ¿que mala causa no se ha cobijado con tu manto para seducir al pueblo? El Tirano oprime en tu nombre; invocandote, el verdugo troncha la cabeza a su victima; la ley aplasta en tu provecho, y como garantia de tus beneficios, se edifica el cuartel y se construye el presidio.*"
[90] *Ibid.*
[91] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), November 12, 1918. Translated from "*Con regocijo delirante fue celebrando ayer el triunfo de la democratica y de la justicia. Alemania fue vencida- Termino la lucha.*"

had subscribed wholly to the American ideals of the war. The language of the headline itself was loaded with Wilsonian idealism. The idea that the war had been fought for the abstract ideals of justice and democracy was perhaps somewhat disingenuous, but nonetheless, that seems to have been a genuine sentiment that the American government and agencies such as the Committee of Public Information wanted to instill in the American people.

When examining the role of Spanish language newspapers in the United States and the part they played in the transformation of Tejano and Mexicano identity within the United States, it is important to realize that this transformation has every bit as much to do with how the papers presented the situation in Mexico as it did in how the papers viewed the United States. What is certain is that during the war years, the Tejano press began a subtle, but noticeable shift away from focusing on Mexican internal affairs and examining how the plight of the United States would effect the Tejano population in their new nation. The press was indeed a very powerful tool for the agents of Americanization. While the advocates of this new idea were certainly a minority when Ignacio Martinez began his rebellion against the Diaz regime, by the time the fighting ended on the Western Front, many of the readers of these papers had simply accepted, if not embraced their new identity as Americans.

5. ¡COMO PUEDE DIOS OIRNOS EN ESTAS CIRCUNSTANCIAS!: THE TEJANO COMMUNITY, IDENTITY, AND THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

Following the Armistice in November of 1918, Private José de la Luz Sáenz visited a small church in Rivenich, Germany to pray.[1] Saenz recalled that the church was small and humble, perhaps similar to most of the churches that Saenz himself was familiar with in South Texas. Saenz recalled that the church was always open and he reflected on how busy the church must have been during the years of the war. This reflection prompted Saenz to declare, "How can God possibly hear us under these circumstances!"

Doubtless, this is a sentiment echoed by many Tejanos throughout the years. The Tejano community has had a close relationship with the Roman Catholic Church practically since the beginning of its existence. Catholic missionaries traveled north into the frontier of New Spain to proselytize and convert the native population of Texas. Closely related to Spanish culture, the Catholic Church remained a very powerful force in the lives of Tejanos. This chapter will argue that the role played by the Roman Catholic Church helped prepare the Tejano community for the First World War and its role in helping to solidify an increasingly "American" Tejano identity. This chapter argues that the Tejano community, faced with political instability and spectacular

[1] Jose de La Luz Saenz, *The World War I Diary of Jose de la Luz Saenz*, Emilio Zamora, ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014), 320. This work is a translated edition of Saenz's World War I diary. The entry is dated December 9, 1918. Translation of the title to this chapter is "How can God possibly hear us under these circumstances!"

destruction in Mexico, increasing racial tension in the United States, and world war in Europe turned to the Church as a source of solace and community identity. The Church, as did the schools and other social institutions, conditioned Tejanos and Mexicanos in the United States to view the United States as their new home and asked them to embrace the American system as part of their new Identity. During the years of American involvement in the First World War, Catholicism not only provided spiritual solace of the kind sought by Private Saenz, but also spurred civic participation in an effort to aid the Allied war effort. This chapter argues that this involvement of the church persuaded many Tejanos to consider themselves Americans first and above any prior self-conceptualization of Mexican.

While the Church as a theological agency was no doubt important to the members of the Tejano community, this chapter focuses on its efforts as an organization that enabled all new civic engagement that was vital to mobilizing support for American intervention in the European conflict. Also, to best understand the Church's influence, many of the primary sources will derive from the laity, not from members of the clergy.[2]

The previous chapter dealt with aspects of the political instability caused by the Mexican Revolution that defined that nation's first two decades of the twentieth century. This chapter also contends that some of the effects that the Mexican Revolution had in relation to the Catholic Church. As this chapter demonstrates, the fighting in Mexico displaced several of its monastic and religious orders to the United States. This chapter

[2] Unfortunately for many researchers into Catholic history during the early years of the twentieth century, many of the church records were destroyed by the Archbishops of San Antonio. Brother Edward Loch, the Archivist at the San Antonio Archdiocese Chancery, informed me of this while doing research. It was under his guidance that much of this chapter was researched.

argues that the fighting in Mexico, coupled with this new revolutionary anti-clericism in Mexico, drove many Tejanos and Mexicano exiles to embrace an American identity.[3]

The Catholicism of Mexico exists, even today, in a precarious position within the Roman Catholic Church. Historian George J. Sanchez calls the particular form of Catholicism practiced in Mexico "folk Catholicism."[4] This folk Catholicism was the result of the fusion of Catholicism and native practices that were necessary in order to attempt to convert Indians and Mestizos on the Spanish frontier.[5] It is that very folk Catholicism that differentiated Tejano and Mexicano Catholics from other immigrant groups. Frequently, the Catholic Church in the United States met these Mexican Catholic practices with hostility and did their best to bring immigrant Mexicanos into compliance with mainstream Catholicism.[6] In many areas of the United States, the Catholic Church and the clergy assigned to the local parishes simply did not understand these religious practices and sought to change them. Nonetheless, a surprisingly small number of Mexicanos and Tejanos converted to any form of Protestantism during the early years of the twentieth century, despite major efforts from American Protestant churches.[7]

---

[3] Roberto R. Trevino, "Facing Jim Crow: Catholic Sisters and the "Mexican Problem" in Texas," *The Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 34, No. 2 (Summer, 2003), 141. Trevino notes that the study of the Mexican American Catholic experience in Texas is still a very new field of study, commonly overlooked by religious historians and Mexican American historians.

[4] George J. Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 154

[5] Lawrence J. Mosqueda, "Twentieth Century Arizona, Hispanics, and the Catholic Church," *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 9, No. ½ (1990), 89.

[6] Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American,* 157.

[7] Mosqueda, "Twentieth Century Arizona, Hispanics, and the Catholic Church," 92.

Historian Lawrence Mosqueda attributes this relatively low number of conversions due to a belief that to be Mexican was to be Catholic.[8]

One of the major causes for conversion amongst American Protestant churches was Americanization. Protestant churches, many of whom were involved in charity organizations for Mexican immigrants throughout the Southwest, believed that the plight of these recent immigrants might be improved by conversion and acculturation into the U.S.[9] Rather than lose any of its flock to the Anglo Protestant churches, the Catholic Church also intensified its efforts to Americanize their parishioners.[10] The Church wanted to make "good" Catholics out of these Mexican immigrants.[11] While this led to tension between the church and its parishioners, it allowed Mexicanos and Tejanos to carve out a place for themselves within their parishes. While many Mexicano parishioners made threats of becoming Protestant, few of them would ever part with such an important part of their identity.[12] Historian Anthony Mora argues that the Catholic part of the Mexican identity was transcendent over any other issue, be it political affiliation or even national citizenship.[13]

The Church was involved in many aspects of daily life for many Tejanos and Mexicanos living in the United States. While this chapter will explore the role played by the Catholic Church in civic organizations, many Tejanos and Mexicanos also relied on

---

[8] *Ibid.*, 92. Mosqueda claims that this cultural Catholicism was a deeply held part of the Mexicano identity.
[9] Sanchez, *Becoming Mexican American*, 135.
[10] Anthony Mora, "Resistance and Accomodation in a Border Parish," *Western Historical Quarterly* Vol. 36, No. 3 (Autumn, 2006), 301.
[11] Trevino, "Facing Jim Crow," 142.
[12] Mora, "Resistance and Accomodation in a Border Parish," 309.
[13] *Ibid.*

the Church for other daily necessities. One of the most important of these necessities was in the education of immigrant children. While there were a variety of public schools that had a vested interest in Americanizing their students, many Catholic schools preserved the Mexican heritage and Spanish language of their students.[14] Clergy members tasked with instructing Tejano students in South Texas were often not Tejanos, but were taught Spanish in courses taught by the Diocese for the purpose of instructing Catholic children.[15] Given the opportunity, many Tejano families preferred to send their children to Catholic schools, due in large part to their instruction of Catholic doctrine.[16]

In reading through the diary of José de la Luz Sáenz, it is clear that he, as a representative Tejano, had a traditional view of religion. His Catholic faith was an important part of his identity. This was not at all uncommon among his peers. In his work on Tejanos and the Catholic church during the early American period, historian Timothy Matovina strongly links Tejano identity with the Catholic Chuch. Examining the nineteenth century era of the Tejano identity, Matovina asserts that this identity grew from a sense of cultural and geographic isolation.[17] This early period in Tejano history reveals the Church as a crucial social and cultural bulwark. One of the important aspects of this early cultural identity with the Church is the importance of loyalty to the Spanish

---

[14] Carlos Blanton, *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 25.
[15] *Ibid.* Blanton notes that Protestant parochial schools in South Texas did often hire local Tejano or Mexcano teachers to teach students English.
[16] Guadalupe San Miguel, Jr. "Status of the Historiography of Chicano Education: A Preliminary Analysis," *History of Education Quarterly*, Vol. 26, No. 4 (Winter, 1986), 528.
[17] Timothy M. Matovina, *Tejano Religion and Ethnicity: San Antonio, 1821-1860* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), 6.

and Mexican states.[18] This theme of loyalty to the state remained consistent through the beginning of the American occupation of the Texas borderlands. While Mexico eventually lost Texas to the United States, these cultural and religious practices remained vital to the Tejano residents across Texas.[19]

Cultural practices that were encouraged by the Church also allowed it to have a direct influence on the identity of its parishioners. Matovina argues that one of the functions of the American Catholic Church was not only providing a place of refuge for immigrant populations upon their arrival in the United States, but also to act as agents of Americanization.[20] Matovina uses the example of Italian parishes to show how these ethnic parishes allowed immigrants to retain a part of their earlier national, cultural and ethnic identities while gradually shifting that identity towards a more mainstream American identity. While this was no doubt a great comfort to many immigrant groups that arrived in the United States in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the Church still had to contend with the mainstream national anti-Catholic sentiment that ethnic and non-English speaking churches espoused.[21]

Coupled with an already anti-Catholic and anti-Immigrant atmosphere, Tejanos and Mexicanos faced resistance in their efforts to establish what Matovina refers to as a Nationalist parish in Texas and elsewhere in the American Southwest. While pre-existing parishes like San Fernando in San Antonio continued to be significant to the

---

[18] *Ibid.,* 10.
[19] Ellen McCracken, "Reterritorialized Spirituality: Material Religious Culture in the Border Space of San Fernando Cathedral," *Arizona journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* Vol. 4 (2000), 194.
[20] Timothy Matovina, "The National Parish and Americanization," *U.S. Catholic Historian* Vol. 17, No.1 (Winter, 1999), 46.
[21] *Ibid.*

Tejano community, many other parts of the Texas diocese were committed to resisting the spread of Mexican nationalist parishes.[22] Parishes that did not encourage the persistence of the Tejano and Mexicano culture generally failed to retain the loyalty of the Spanish speaking parishioners. As Matovina argues, however, the main purpose of these parishes was not simply assimilation.[23] But the ability to form common bonds, such as those provided by a common faith, facilitated assimilation.

Understanding then that the Church's role in Americanization was mostly passive and that the Church resisted forming new parishes for those Mexicanos driven from Mexico during the years of the Revolution, it is easy to understand how many view the Catholic Church in Texas as being assimilationist in its attitudes towards Tejanos and Mexicano exiles. Indeed, the perception amongst many Tejanos was that the Church was taking an active stance in trying to remove any trace of Mexican identity from them. Following the end of the Mexican American War in 1848, the clergy in south Texas were not recruited from among the people of the region. It seems that the Church wanted outside religious orders to fill positions in primarily Tejano parishes and towns, such as San Antonio.[24] This is a story made famous by the novelist Willa Cather in her New Mexico-based novel *Death Comes for the Archbishop*.[25]

Despite the lack of official aid in cementing a uniquely Tejano church in south Texas, the Catholic community in south Texas nonetheless continued to coalesce into a

---

[22] *Ibid.,* 50.
[23] *Ibid.,* 56.
[24] David A. Badillo, "Between Alienation and Ethnicity: The Evolution of Mexican-American Catholicism in San Antonio, 1910-1940," *Journal of American Ethnic History* Vol. 16, No. 4 (Summer, 1997), 63.
[25] Willa Cather, *Death Comes for the Archbishop* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927). The novel describes the encounters of a recent archbishop to New Mexico following the United States victory in the Mexican American War.

determined and functional entity committed to aiding recent immigrants and preserving Tejano and Mexicano culture in the face of Anglo social and religious encroachment. Parishes like the San Fernando Cathedral in San Antonio and other traditionally Tejano parishes continued on with localized religious practices and festivals. The laity of the parishes were also involved with the creation of mutual aid societies, or *Mutualistas*, which aided immigrants and the poor within the Tejano Catholic community.[26] *Mutualistas*, such as the church allied Liga de Proteccion Mexicana not only provided the traditional relief of a mutual aid society by giving insurance and death benefits, but by also defending the Church itself from attacks by exiled Mexican Liberals.[27]

With the onset of the Mexican Revolution in 1910, long simmering tensions between the Catholic Church in Mexico and Mexican revolutionaries began to boil over. During the lengthy rule of the dictator Porfirio Diaz, the Church was allowed to assert a larger role for itself within Mexican society. When various Mexican groups began their revolt against the *Porfiriato*, one of their first targets was traditionally the Catholic Church. Many of the Mexican revolutionary factions that rose up against Diaz after 1910 viewed the privileges given to the Church as a betrayal of Mexico's Liberal tradition dating back to the wars for independence in the 1810's.[28] Revolutionary figures such as Ricardo Flores Magon began their careers in Mexican politics by criticizing the newly emergent role played by the Church during the years of the *Porfiriato.*

---

[26] Emilio Zamora, *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993), 72.
[27] *Ibid.,* 80.
[28] James A. Sandos, *Rebellion in the Borderlands: Anarchism and the Plan of San Diego, 1904-1923* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992), 4.

While the Mexican Revolution was underway, government officials who were wedded to the Constitutionalist faction such as the governor of Nuevo Leon,Mexican official Antonio I. Villarreal, passed legislation seeking to limit the power of the church. While this was very much in keeping with the Mexican Liberal ideology, the venom with which these Constitutionalists attacked the Church is still somewhat surprising. "Throughout our national life, the Mexican [Catholic] clergy has been a pernicious factor of disorganization and discord, often forgetting as secondary, their spiritual mission," claimed Villarreal in an edict intended to curtail Catholic religious practices "for public health motives."[29] It was obvious that the Constitutionalist faction considered the church a threat to the morality of Mexico.[30] Mexican Liberals believed the Catholic Church was an organization as much political as religious in nature and frequently hoped that with these crackdowns against the church would ensure that the spiritual corruption of the Mexican children by the Catholic clergy would end.[31]

To some contemporary observers of the Constitutionalist Revolution in Mexico, their attack against the Church was simply part of a larger concerted effort to rid Mexico of any vestiges of their Spanish colonial roots. One New York newspaper, *Las*

---

[29] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 30, 1914. Translated from "*Por motivos de salud publica y atendiendo al dictado de ineludibles deberes de moralidad y de justicia, este gobiero se ha propuesto someter y castigar, dentro los limites del Estado de Nuevo Leon, al Clero Catolica Romano."* The published notice goes on to say *"Durante toda nuestra vida nacional, el Clero de Mexico ha sido un pernicioso factor de desorgnizacion y de discordia, pues olvidando como secundaria su mission Espiritual."*

[30] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 30, 1914. Translated from "*La Corrupcion clerical ha llegado a ser una amenaza para la moralidad en Mexico."*

[31] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 30, 1914. Translated from "*Colegios Catolicos se deforma la verdad , se defmora el alma candida y pura de la ninez."* The Article continues "*Es una suprema necesidad nacional y una obligacion ineludible de la revolucion Constitutionalista, tomar una accion energica y efectiva, para cortar de raiz, de una vez para siempre, los arraigados abusos del cler catolica, y acabar con el grave peligo que representa esta institucion, mas politica que religiosa, para la tranquilidad y el progreso futuros de la patria.*"

Novedades, did not consider the revolutionaries to be constitutionalists or republicans, but rather simple anarchists.[32] Whatever the source of the hatred towards the Church, *Las Novedades* noted that the Mexican Constitutionalists were thorough with their expulsion of Spanish priests. These Mexican revolutionaries were not simply content with expelling members of the Spanish clergy, but were also alleged to have murdered a number of them.[33] By the end of November of 1914, the paper alarmingly noted, there was supposedly only one Catholic priest left in the entire state of Veracruz. That priest was only protected by the fact that United States forces were occupying the port at the time.[34] Apparently, the repression of the Catholic clergy was such that it even Protestants were speaking out against it in other New York newspapers.[35]

For its part, the Church in the United States waged a public relations war against these Mexican revolutionaries. The actions of constitutionalist leaders such as Francisco Villa and Venustanio Carranza had not escaped the attention of American Church officials. Cardinal James Gibbons, the Archbishop of Baltimore, declared in March of 1915 that these constitutionalists would never be able to form a government because

---

[32] *Las Novedades*, (New York, NY.), November 26, 1914. Translated from "*No es constitutionalista, sino arnaquista la revolucion triunfantem que ha declarado Guerra sin cuartel al capital y a la Iglesia Catolica. Y Como muchas de las principales negociaciones de la Republica Mejicana son de Espanoles, de ahi que la persecucion contra el capital haya hecho sus principales victimas a los iberos.*" *Las Novedades* was published in New York City by Spanish immigrants in the United States. *Las Novedades* provided a more liberal interpretation to Spanish identity and life within the Spanish empire. For more on This paper, see Ana Maria Varela-Lago, "Conquerors, Immigrants, Exiles: The Spanish Diaspora in the United States, 1848-1948" (Ph.D. diss., University of California at San Diego, 2008).
[33] *Ibid.* Translated from "*El clero Espanol ha sido Expulsado de toda la Republica Mejicana, y se sabe que algunos han sido asesinados.*"
[34] *Ibid.* Translated from "*En el Estado de Veracruz no queda mas que un solo sacerdote espanol ejerciendo su ministerio, y eso porque reside en este puerto, que esta ocupado por los Americanos.*"
[35] *Ibid.* Translated from *"Los atentados contra el clero Catolica han sido tan atroces que hasta un protestante ha clamado contra ellos en el numero del periodico 'Catholic News", de New York, Correspondiente al 24 del mes pasado.*"

their previous actions had shown that they were incapable of leading Mexico.[36] San Antonio's *La Prensa* ran an article two days after the Cardinal's speech denouncing Villa and Carranza, agreeing with his assertions that these two men were too radical and immoral to create any form of government in Mexico.[37] That the Church was able to secure the support of American Spanish language newspapers speaks to the widening divide in papers and in people who had once opposed the Diaz regime for its tyranny and now came to oppose the constitutionalist cause for its violence and its intolerance towards the Catholic Church.

La Prensa and other Texas Spanish language papers continued their outraged coverage at the crackdown against the Mexican clergy. These allegations of atrocities against the clergy doubtless galvanized many, including apparently the editorial staff of *La Prensa*, against the revolutionaries and radicals in Mexico. Tejanos who read *La Prensa* were then confronted with a new dilemma. The revolutionaries had destroyed the old order in Mexico under Diaz. How then could Tejanos who in many respects had continued to identify themselves first as Mexicanos continue to do so when they were confronted with the changing and often frightening nature of Mexican politics toward their own sacred institutions? Those Tejanos and Mexicanos were being asked to accept the revolution's anti-church rhetoric as part of the new status quo. In this context, it is

---

[36] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), March 25, 1915. Translated from "*Villa y Carranza-dijo el Cardinal Gibbons-no podran nunca consituir un gobierno en Mexico por que han demonstrado con sus hechos que son incapeses para ello y que nunca han tenido tal intencion.*"

[37] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), March 27, 1915. Translated from "*Todos estan acordes en opinar que los hombres que dirigen la actual revolucion son incapaces, por su radicalismo manifiesto y su immoralidad suma, de constituir un gobierno. Los Gobiernos no se constituyen con elements de disolucion ni se cimentan a base de anarquia*."

clear why many of Tejanos would have rejected Mexican Nationalism as a source of identity following the persecution against the Church.

By 1917, the Diaz regime had been successfully toppled by the various revolutionary factions. The new regime of Carranza had succeeded in taking control of the Mexican government. Carranza, however, was no friend of the Church and by December of 1917, members of the Mexican national assembly were urging the government to begin collecting taxes from the Church, something that was unheard of during the years of the *Porfiriato.*[38] Earlier that year, the Mexican government had defended itself from formal accusations by Vatican officials that claimed that members of the Catholic clergy were being forcibly expelled from Mexico.[39] The Roman Catholic Church filed formal complaints with the governments of Great Britain and the United States over the treatment of its clergy in Mexico.[40]

Historian John Mason Hart intriguingly links the attacks made against the Church during the negotiations for the Constitution of 1917 as a continuation of a much older conflict in Mexican Politics. Mexican Liberalism had been traditionally against the active role that the Church had in Mexican politics, and this was largely due to the fact that *Partido Liberal Mexicano* members largely consisted of urban capitalists and

---

[38] *Evolucion* (Laredo, Tex.), December 12, 1917. Translated from article headline "*Se discute en la Camara de Diputados en Mexico sobre asuntos religiosos: Se pretende imponer retas por el uso de los templos religiosos.*"
[39] *Evolucion* (Laredo, Tex.), September 14, 1917. Translated from "*Refiriendose a la nota del Vaticano a los Gibiernos de Estados Unidos e Inglaterra, protestando contra la expulsion de los miembros del clere catolico en Mexico, el Gobierno ha declarado que nunca ha decretado la expulsion de la clero de Mexico.*"
[40] *Ibid.*

members of the *pequena burguesia*, or the bourgeoisie.[41] Indeed, the rural classes of Mexico had much less conflict with the Church due to age-old alliances between rural campesinos and the clergy. With the ousting of the Diaz regime and the success of the Mexican Revolution, many of the previous protections that the church had enjoyed were removed during the negotiations for the Constitution of 1917. Under the terms of that document, the church lost any formal, recognized status that it previously held as an institution that could exert real influence on public affairs.

Despite denials by the Mexican Government, anti-clericism and anti-Catholicism were indeed alive and well in Mexico during the first years of American intervention in the First World War. A Catholic newspaper published in Texas, the *Southern Messenger*, ran stories of Mexican repression of Catholicism and about the exiled communities of Religious orders forced to take refuge throughout the state.[42] What is particularly interesting about the articles in the *Southern Messenger*, by this point practically the official newspaper of the San Antonio Archdiocese, was that while it published articles denouncing Mexican governmental interference with the Church, it also ran articles proclaiming full loyalty to the United States by the American Catholic Church.[43]

By 1910, approximately 95 percent of the Mexican people considered themselves Catholic.[44] With that percentage of devotion to the Church as a theological, social, and cultural institution, attacks made against the Church would certainly have been

---

[41] John Mason Hart, *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: University of Calfornia Press, 1987), 329.
[42] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), June 14, 1917. The editions of *Southern Messenger* examined for this dissertation were viewed at the Catholic Archives at San Antonio. Here after, this collection will be referred to as CASA.
[43] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 5, 1917, CASA.
[44] Badillo, "Between Alienation an Ethnicity", 65.

interpreted by some in harsh and likely personal terms. Tejanos and Mexicanos living in Texas now faced a real identity conflict. For centuries, Mexican identity was defined, at least in part, by participation in the Roman Catholic Church. Now, with the adoption of the Constitution of 1917, Mexico's revolutionary government was doing its best to undo that. This drastic change allowed the more integrationist and assimilationist aspects of the U.S. Catholic Church to further prod the long process of Americanization through the Church. Mutual aid societies and other social organizations such as the Knights of Columbus continued to recruit Tejano and Mexicano members throughout the early years of the twentieth century. The ideas that the Church in Mexico had tried hard to instill in its members, such as community activism and loyalty to their nation, needed a new center of identity in the minds and hearts of the Tejano community. With the American involvement in the First World War, the American Catholics and their Church would do its best to focus those qualities on making Tejanos into Americans.

The Roman Catholic Church in the United States had a bias to overcome in the lead up to American involvement in the First World War. For years the Catholic Church had been perceived as a foreign agency, which divided the loyalties of American parishioners. With the American declaration of war on Germany in April of 1917, the Church leadership openly declared its support not only for the war effort, but also for the President of the United States, Woodrow Wilson, and his wartime aims.[45] Leadership of civic organizations such as the American Federation of Catholic Societies even declared that the American Expeditionary Forces that were being sent to fight in Europe would

[45] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 5, 1917, CASA. See also *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 28, 1917.

consist of approximately 35 percent Catholic soldiers.[46] American Catholics went so far as to create an American Catholic War Council to help the War Department in its conduct of the war.[47] During the First World War, the Catholic Church and other American churches joined together to disregard previous ecclesiastical rivalries.[48] The *Dallas Morning News* stated that this was done with the urging of the United States government in order to provide for a unified front for the war effort, though the U.S Catholic Church likely needed little prodding.

Among the many calls made by the Catholic Church during the war, one of the most intriguing is that the Church believed that there should be no divided national loyalty.[49] Again, the implication here is that the Church advocated assimilation and Americanization during these years of the war. Not only could a divided loyalty between a member of a nationalist or ethnic church member damage the perceptions of that particular ethnicity, but it could also damage the perceptions of the Church as a whole. The Church was eager to spread ideals of national loyalty during the early months of American involvement, asking that its parishioners pray patriotic prayers and ask for protection, specifically for those Catholics living in the German occupied areas of Belgium and France.[50] Always eager to form relief organizations, Catholic Churches in South Texas began calling for and accepting donations to help refugees in Europe who were driven from their homes by the war. It is necessary to note that this same charitable

---

[46] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), August 28, 1917.
[47] *Ibid.*
[48] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), October 13, 1918.
[49] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), October 25, 1917, CASA.
[50] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 19, 1917, CASA. Another entry in the same paper listed Loyalty to the United States as being the first duty of any Catholic living there, regardless of nationality.

streak was also present in its efforts to aid refugees from the Mexican conflict, particularly those members of the clergy driven out by the Carranza regime.[51]

The Catholic Church in Texas, especially as reported by *The Southern Messenger*, was deeply committed to Wilsonian idealism. One of the ideals which the Church seemed to champion, at least in the early period of American intervention, were the rights of smaller nations to determine their own destiny.[52] Out of all the possible causes to support, this was the one championed not only by *The Southern Messenger* and the Church in general because of the impact it would have toward European Catholics. While it championed of the causes of these smaller nations of Europe, the *Southern Messenger* even ventured into more controversial territory by taking on the question of Irish home rule within the British Empire.[53] The editorial staff of *The Southern Messenger* seemed absolutely certain that the Irish would accept home rule as it was championed by John Redmond and was equally assertive that the belief in home rule was in no way disloyal to the British Empire or to the Allied cause.[54]

While the Catholic Church in Texas, and by extension, *The Southern Messenger* were both concerned with issues overseas, they also looked inward. The Church took great pains to see that all Catholic enlistees and draftees to the United States Armed Forces were mentioned in the paper from those parishes within its circulation. Surprisingly, this also extended to many Tejano enlistees from the rural communities

[51] Badillo, "Between Alienation and Ethnicity," 67.
[52] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 26, 1917, CASA.
[53] *Ibid.*
[54] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.) May 24, 1917, CASA.

outside of San Antonio, such as Kerrville.[55] Throughout the war, Kerrville churches published the names of Tejano soldiers who had enlisted or had been called in the draft from amongst the local parishes. Perhaps this was done to show that there was broad Tejano support for the American cause during the war, or to show that the church itself was encouraging the enlistment and possible Americanization of the local Tejano communities. This was important as critics claimed that Tejanos in parts of South Texas developed a reputation for evading the draft by crossing into Mexico.[56] Indeed, *The Southern Messenger* was eager enough to show Tejano participation in the war that they published a speech given by Captain J.A. Navarro, commander of Company A of the 1st Texas Infantry in which Captain Navarro credited "the traditions of loyalty and patriotism inheirited from his distinguished ancestors" for his willingness to serve and fight for the United States during the war.[57]

The Church did its best to combat supposed German propaganda that stated that the United States Army was forcing men of Mexican descent into the army and sending them to Europe.[58] While this was in fact true in many cases, the Church needed rural Tejanos to keep from running away from their fields of Texas back to Mexico to avoid the war.[59] The ongoing experiences with violence by Texan authorities contributed to this flight-first response. Despite assurances from the Church, this continued to be a

[55] The *Southern Messenger* published these stories rather frequently.
[56] José A. Ramírez, *To the Line of Fire: Mexican Americans and World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 50. On page 33, Ramirez explains that there was a bounty offered to Texas law men for bringing in "slackers" and forcing them to register for the draft. Following the events of the Plan de San Diego uprising, Tejanos in South Texas had much to fear from their local lawmen.
[57] *The Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 22, 1918, CASA.
[58] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), May 31, 1917, CASA.
[59] Badillo, "Between Alienation and Ethnicity," 69.

major issue for the Tejano and Mexicano communities of South Texas during the war.[60] The newspapers also reported that young seminarians and priests were enlisting in the army to become chaplains, so that they could continue to minister to the men of South Texas who were enlisting to fight overseas.

The Knights of Columbus, a Catholic fraternal order, was active in helping to build small chapels and recreational centers around the training camps in Texas for Catholic soldiers to find solace and pray before their departure for Europe.[61] One such building was built outside the camp grounds at Camp Bowie near Dallas in October of 1917.[62] In August of 1917, the Fort Worth Knights of Columbus had pledged $30,000 for its completion. This building was also used as a social center near Camp Bowie.[63] This center served as a place for social and religious interaction for Catholic soldiers training at Camp Bowie. Indeed, during his time in the army, Jose de la Luz Saenz recalled a very heavy presence of Knights of Columbus as he and his men boarded ships to leave for Europe.[64] This aid by the Knights of Columbus was not uncontroversial, however. On October 11, 1917, the *Southern Messenger* reported that there were efforts by many Protestant groups to limit the involvement of organizations such as the Knights from giving aid to the troops.[65]

The Catholic Church made dogmatic allowances for the soldiers who were being sent overseas to fight. For example, soldiers who were being ordered to France were

---

[60] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 5, 1917, CASA.
[61] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), July 19, 1917, CASA.
[62] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), October 28, 1917, CASA.
[63] *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* (Fort Worth, Tex.), August 12, 1917, CASA.
[64] Saenz, *The World War I Diary of Jose de la Luz Saenz,* 347-348.
[65] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), October 11, 1917, CASA.

expected to retain their good behavior and their worship whenever available, but the Church was willing to allow them to consume meat on Fridays so that they might keep up their strength for the fights to come.[66] But the Church bent its rules only so far. The Catholic Church also made announcements that it would consider any absence from duty due to a "certain disease" to be traitorous.[67] Obviously, men who were incapacitated due to the prevalence of venereal diseases would have much to answer to not only from their commanders, but from their Church as well. The Church, societal and governmental organizations placed a heavy emphasis on morality during the American intervention in the First World War. As one reporter for the *Dallas Morning News* stated, it was important for the soldiers to be moral and upstanding men as well as excellent fighters.[68]

The Catholic Church was also influential in getting women involved in support of the war effort. Although a majority of the Catholic women's groups in San Antonio were run by elite Anglo Texans, social class often allowed upper class Tejanas and Mexicanas to join their ranks.[69] The women were mobilized by the Church and church groups for any number of reasons. For instance, Mrs. Delfina Torres was heavily involved in gathering supplies for war drives and for Catholic Charities, while other women within the community participated in making bandages for the war effort.[70]

---

[66] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), August 29, 1918, CASA.
[67] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), March 7, 1918, CASA.
[68] *Dallas Morning News* (Dallas, Tex.), October 28, 1917.
[69] For this dissertation, records of womens groups from the early twentieth century were examined at the San Antonio Archdiocese Archives. The Women's groups in question were made up of predominately Anglo women. In the parish records examined for this dissertation, fewer than one in ten of the organizing committees contained Tejanas. However, in several parishes, even the majority Tejano parish of San Fernando, several Tejanas were named on the lists.
[70] *Southern Messenger* (San Antonio, Tex.), April 26, 1917 and November 7, 1918, CASA.

By 1918, the Church leadership in the San Antonio Archdioces began to notice the prevalence of more second generation Tejanos in the parishes they administered. Nonetheless, there was still an enormous amount of racial tension between Tejano and Anglo parishioners. Many of the Anglo Catholics at the time considered Tejano Catholics ignorant of the modern teachings of the Church and considered Mexican Catholicism too ingrained with indigenous adaptations to be regarded as fully acceptabe within the mainstream Catholic Churches.[71] Already, Tejanos were being forced by the church leadership to be ministered to not by Mexican priests, but by Spanish priests. And during the administration of Archbishop Arthur Drossaerts, Tejanos were forced to leave their traditional, historic parishes for newer, segregated Tejano parishes that ministered only to Tejanos. This is not to say that the Church believed that Tejanos were a lost cause when it came to Americanization. Archbishop Drossaerts believed that education, be it parochial or public, was the key to Tejano assimilation.[72] This was a belief that the Archbishop shared with future Tejano reformers and civil rights activists like José de la Luz Sáenz before they formed organizations like LULAC in the 1920's.

Reflecting on his time in combat, José de la Luz Sáenz asked how God could hear the prayers of humanity during times of war and upheaval. Perhaps Saenz's unspoken implication is how could the Church could support other secular institutions that promoted militarism and war alongside peace and forgiveness. One thing is certain: Sáenz and other Tejanos like him viewed the church as a guiding fixture in their way of life. Sáenz and other Tejanos had viewed the Church as a key part of their Mexican

[71] Badillo, "Between Alienation and Ethnicity," 71.
[72] *Ibid.*

identity. What then becomes of that identity when the nation of Mexico, another key component of that way of life, seemingly as a whole rejected it so violently? The Tejano community sought comfort and aid in the Catholic Church during the early years of the twentieth century, just as it had for the previous century and a half of Mexican occupation of Texas. But these Tejanos were working within a system that was ultimately not supportive of conserving traditional ideals of identity within the Tejano community.

Instead, the Catholic Church in South Texas was ultimately an agent of Americanization. Yes, Tejanos could and did maintain important cultural and social practices, often with the direct support of the church, but little effort was expended by that church to localize and protect Tejano faith as it had done with other ethnic groups across the United States. Faced with a rejection of both official and cultural status of Catholicism in Mexico, Tejano Catholics living in the United States along with exiled Mexicanos came to rely increasingly on the U.S. Catholic Church. As shown, this church was eager to become involved in America's war effort and in doing so, encouraged participation and indeed loyalty from the ethnic members of its parishes. The Church in Texas acted as a check against both propaganda and negative perceptions of American wartime policy. Despite the very small changes made by the church during the war years, its implications went well beyond that.

Catholicism continues to be a vital part of the Mexican American community. Its role in the creation of the Mexican American identity cannot be overlooked. Whether it be parochial schools that taught English and American customs to Tejano children or the

social organizations that interacted with the church that encouraged accommodation and acculturation, the Catholic Church was vital in the creation and maintenance of the Mexican American identity, and the withering and rejection of the older, Mexicanist identity.

6. CONCLUSION - LO PRIMERO QUE SE OLVIDA: THE POST WAR TEJANO IDENTITY

When the fighting ended on the Western Front of the First World War on November 11, 1918, some may have assumed that life would return to the way it had been. A newspaper reported that the men who were taken in the draft and had not yet completed training would be released from service and that no more men would be called up in the draft.[1] Soon, the men in Europe that had fought for the Allies to attain their great triumph would return home. To the Tejanos who had left South Texas just a few months before, that knowledge was no doubt both reassuring and daunting at the same time. These men had fought for their country in its time of need. What worried many of them, as it did Private José de la Luz Sáenz, was to what kind of home they would be returning? Writing many years after the conclusion of the First World War, Sáenz acknowledged that he feared that many would forget the sacrifices made by the men who fought in that conflict.[2]

Nonetheless, Sáenz survived the war. In the years following the First World War, Sáenz returned to his previous profession of teaching. In 1921, following his discharge from federal service, Sáenz began teaching in New Braunfels, Texas, and continued to

---

[1] *La Prensa* (San Antonio, Tex.), November 12, 1918. Translated from "*No Seran Lllamados mas hombres al ejercito. Los que estan recibiendo instruccion y no la han completado seran devueltos a la vida civil."*

[2] José de la Luz Sáenz, *Los Mexico-Americanos en la Gran Guerra y su contingente en pro de la Democracia, la Humanidad y la Justicia* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1933), 7. Translated from "*Es una verdad historica, que el sacrificio de los hombres que caen en el combate, es lo primero que se olvida y que jamas se acaba de pagar.*"

teach around the state of Texas for the next 20 years.[3] Throughout his life, Sáenz remained proud of his military service and maintained a membership in Veterans of Foreign Wars.[4] In the 1930's, he published his memoirs of the First World War, in order to show Tejano participation in America's military and show that Tejanos were loyal citizens of the United States and should be treated equally.

This dissertation argues that a uniquely American identity has existed in the Tejano community for some time. Traces of that Tejano identity can be traced back to the days of the Texas Revolution and men like Juan Seguin and Jose Antonio Navarro. This identity persisted through the beginning of the American occupation of Texas in the 1840's and was present when Tejanos like Santos Benavides and Antonio Bustillo enlisted to fight for the southern Confederacy. While men like Benavides served a cause that was ultimately against the American government, he fought for the version of the United States with which he was familiar. The continued involvement of the Benavides and Navarro families in Texas politics throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries speaks volumes to the investment that these men had in an identity based in the United States. To these men, Texas was their home and they tied their identity to it, as well as to the United States.

The beginning of the twentieth century brought new challenges to the Tejano community. War, revolution and persecution all directly influenced Tejanos and Mexicano immigrants in Texas during the first two decades of the twentieth century.

---

[3] Teaching Service Experience Document, José de la Luz Sáenz Papers, Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin. Hereafter referred to as the Sáenz Papers.
[4] Veterans of Foreign Wars Membership Card, Sáenz papers.

Mexican American historians claim that those Tejanos living in this period still held a uniquely Mexican understanding of their identity. However, this dissertation has contended that many Tejanos living in the United States, such as Sáenz, already understood Texas to be their home and wished to do everything possible to demonstrate that to their Anglo neighbors.

If the Mexicanist identity was prevalent among certain groups of Mexicanos and Tejanos, that identity was challenged directly by the events of the Mexican Revolution. Mexican federalism and liberalism have been the dominant political ideologies of Tejanos since before the Texas Revolution. The evolution of those liberal ideals first into the tyranny of the *Porfiriato* and then the radicalism of constitutionalism and anarcho-communism was undoubtedly a very real challenge to the identities of Tejanos living in the United States. This dissertation asserts that this challenge was ultimately enough to encourage those Tejanos and Mexicanos who had not yet adopted a U.S. centered identity to do so.

If the political upheaval in Mexico and the divisive factionalism of the Mexican Revolution were not enough to drive Tejanos away from a Mexicanist identity in the early years of the twentieth century, the attacks on Catholicism by constitutionalist forces certainly was. Tejanos unfamiliar with internal Mexican politics would not have associated the Church with being a tool of repression for the Diaz regime. Indeed, as this dissertation shows, aspects of the Mexican Revolution not associated with the urban bourgeoisie did not have a negative opinion of the Church. To the rural classes of Mexico, the Church represented an older alliance of protection.

While the Diaz regime did undoubtedly use the Church as an agent of counterrevolution, Tejanos would not have made that connection in their opinions of the Church. To Tejanos in the United States, the Church was an organization that saw to their most basic needs. The *Mutualistas* provided aid and assistance to immigrants and parochial schools saw to the spiritual and secular education of Tejano children across South Texas. Therefore, the venom and spite with which Mexican constitutionalists attacked the Church, especially after the victory of Venustiano Carranza, was an attack on the Tejano community. This is not a case where religion was only an ancillary part of the communal identity. Rather, as this dissertation shows, to be Tejano was to be Catholic. Faced with the expulsion of clergy from Mexico and evidence of atrocities against the clergy, those still holding hope of returning to Mexico with their old identity intact came to the realization that that was now impossible.

The only question then is when did a majority of Tejanos abandon that old Mexicanist identity, and what was the catalyst? This dissertation argues that the First World War and the experiences of Tejanos like the men Sáenz served with exposed them not only to an Americanized Tejano identity, but also showed an idealistic notion of what it meant to be a fully integrated citizen of the United States.

The role of the print media in establishing this new Tejano identity cannot be overstated. Not only was the print media responsible for presenting the Tejano community news from Mexico, it also showed the remarkable shift in what it meant to be Mexican. The Spanish language print media in the United States was one of the last tangible links many Tejanos had to Mexico. Through the Spanish print media, Tejanos

learned that the Mexico that many of them still conceptualized in their minds was changing faster than they could understand. The newspapers of revolutionaries like Ignacio Martinez and Catarino Garza presented Tejanos with a deeply flawed Mexico led by a dictator, while Justo Cardenas presented the *Pax Porfiriana* as the height of liberal Mexican ideology. While editors like Garza, Martinez and the radical Flores Magon brothers prompted Tejanos and Mexicano exiles to rebellion, other newspapers, such as *La Prensa* presented more mainstream reporting.

La Prensa, unlike some of the other Spanish language newspapers of the time, presented stories from both sides of the border. When the United States joined the Allied war effort in Europe, *La Prensa* changed the focus of its reporting. No longer would Tejanos find news of the ongoing troubles in Mexico on the front page of *La Prensa*, but instead they were presented with news from overseas and the war in Europe. *La Prensa* brought the First World War to the Spanish speaking people of Texas. When U.S. soldiers began departing for Europe, *La Prensa* allowed Tejano families to get a glimpse of what was going on so far away from South Texas.

In presenting the war and its Americanized outlook to the Tejano community, newspapers like *La Prensa* also provided an alternative to the fading Mexican identity some in South Texas had held onto for so long. The presence of Tejanos like Sáenz, J. T. Canales, and Clemente Idar showed that there was already an undercurrent within the Tejano community that was invested in the idea of an Americanized Tejano identity. Given the system attacks and revolutionary undermining of the older Mexicanist

identity, it is clear to see why Tejanos began to shift away from it and towards something new.

Upon their return to the United States, Tejano veterans of the First World War encouraged political activism and participation in elections in Texas. Recognizing that many in the United States still viewed Tejanos as second class citizens, Tejano veterans began advocating for social change. Resuming civilian life was not easy for ethnic soldiers of any variety, and in South Texas, Tejano veterans were reminded very quickly of their status as second class citizens in Texas. Sáenz later recalled that he and his compatriots were forbidden from using restrooms and were denied the ability to dine at certain restaurants.[5]

Out of their frustration with their continued classification as lesser citizens, Tejano veterans began organizing. Political activism soon became one of the greatest causes for these men. Tejano veterans founded organizations the Order of the Sons of America (OSA) in 1921.[6] This organization was devoted to achieving civil rights in the United States for citizens of "Mexican or Spanish extraction."[7] The Order of the Sons of America limited its membership to citizens of the United States, reinforcing the concept of a uniquely Mexican American identity.[8] The organization was popular enough to inspire members to found offshoots like the Order of the Sons of Texas (OST) in 1923

---

[5] José de la Luz Sáenz, "Racial Discrimination," in *Are We Good Neighbors Yet?* Ed. Alonso S. Perales (San Antonio: Artes Graficasm, 1948), 33.
[6] José A. Ramírez, *To the Line of Fire: Mexican Texans and World War I* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009), 123.
[7] Cynthia E. Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009), 75.
[8] *Ibid.*

and the Order of the Knights of America (OKA) in 1927.[9] The OSA, OST and OKA were all involved in fighting discrimination against Tejanos in South Texas. Among the grievances of these groups was that men who had gone overseas to fight in Europe returned to find only more discrimination and antipathy from their Anglo American neighbors.

The beginnings of these various civil rights organizations in the 1920's signals to many historians the beginning of the Mexican American civil rights movement. By the end of that decade, the Tejano civil rights organizations such as the OSA, OST, OKA and other organizations such as the League of Latin American Citizens united in a conference at Corpus Christi, Texas, for the League of United Latin American Citizens, or LULAC.[10] This group pledged to fight discrimination, but also sought to become better citizens of the United States in the process while still honoring their racial heritage.[11]

With the foundation of LULAC in the late 1920's, the notion that Tejanos could be Americans had entered the cultural mainstream. Among other things, LULAC argued that Americanism was not dependant on ethnicity. This dissertation argues that previous interpretations of the Mexican American political generation as contended by historians has lacked an accurate understanding of the origins of Tejano American nationalism. Instead, the rise of the Mexican American generation of the 1930's was simply the

---

[9] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire,* 123. See also Orozco, *No Mexicans, Women or Dogs Allowed,* 77. Orozco indicates that one of the primary differences in these organizations was that the Order of the Knights of America allowed non-citizens to become members.

[10] Ramirez, *To the Line of Fire,* 125.

[11] *Ibid.*

culmination of earlier generations carefully cultivating this identity. The 1910's became the decade when ideals of returning to Mexico and older perceptions of Mexican identity became impossible or undesirable for Tejanos and Mexicanos living in Texas. It was through the combined efforts of Tejano politicians, veterans, newspaper editors and communities that the Tejano identity was created. This dissertation rejects the notion that an Americanized Tejano identity was a twentieth century phenomenon. Rather, it was simply the fulfillment of the efforts of nearly a century of Tejanos in their struggle to find their own place in American society.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Primary sources

Manuscripts

Bustillo Family Papers. Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

Southern Messenger Papers. Catholic Archives of San Antonio. San Antonio, Texas.

Ford, John S. Papers. Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas.

Leyendecker, John Z. Papers. Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.

Order of Sons of America Papers. Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas

Sáenz, José De La Luz Papers. Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas

Sanchez, George I. Papers. Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.

Santiago, Rabia Papers. Daughters of the Republic of Texas Library at the Alamo, San Antonio, Texas.

Texas Knights of Columbus Papers. Catholic Archives of Texas. Austin, Texas.

Published Memiors and Collected Documents

Houston, Sam. *The Personal Correspondence of Sam Houston*, ed. Madge Thornall Roberts. Denton: University of North Texas Press, 2001.

Kamphoefner, Walter D., and Wolfgang Johannes Helbich, eds. *Germans in the Civil War: The Letters They Wrote Home*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006.

Olmsted, Frederick Law. *A Journey Through Texas: Or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier.* New York: Edward Dix, 1857; reprint, Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2004.

Saenz, Jose De la Luz. *The World War I Diary of José de la Luz Sáenz*. Emilio Zamora, ed. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2014.

Seguin, Juan N. *A Revolution Remembered: The Memoirs and Selected Correspondence of Juan N. Seguin*, ed. Jesus de La Teja. Austin: State House Press, 1991.

Periodicals

Brownsville Herald. Brownsville, Texas.

Corpus Christi Caller. Corpus Christi, Texas.

Dallas Morning News. Dallas, Texas.

El Correo de Laredo. Laredo, Texas.

El Democratica Fronterizo. Laredo, Texas.

El Imparcial de Texas. San Antonio, Texas.

El Latino-Ametricano. El Paso, Texas.

El Observador Frontizero. El Paso, Texas.

El Tiempo. Las Cruces, New Mexico.

Evolucion. Laredo, Texas.

Fort Worth Star-Telegram. Fort Worth, Texas.

Justicia. El Paso, Texas.

La Presnsa. San Antonio, Texas.

Laredo Morning Times. Laredo, Texas.

Las Dos Americas. El Paso, Texas.

Las Novedades. New York City, New York.

Lone Star. El Paso, Texas.

Los Angeles Herald. Los Angeles, California.

New York Times. New York City, New York.

Regeneracion. Los Angeles, California.

Regidor. San Antonio, Texas

San Antonio Express. San Antonio, Texas.

Southern Messenger. San Antonio, Texas.

Tex-Mex Reflector. Kingsville, Texas.

The Tucson Citizen. Tucson, Arizona.

Government Publications

Records of the Texas Adjutant General's Department. Texas State Archives. Austin, Texas.

Texas Adjutant General. *The Biennial Report of the Adjutant General of Texas from January 1, 1917 to December 31, 1918.* Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1919.

Texas Legislature. *Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the State Senate and the House in the Investigation of the State Ranger Force.* Austin, 1919.

Texas War Records Collection, 1916-1919. Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Austin, Texas.

United States War Department. *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*. 128 Parts in 70 Volumes. Washington: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1880-1901.

War Service Card Records. Texas Military Forces Museum. Austin, Texas.

Secondary Sources

Books

Albro, Ward. *Always a Rebel: Ricardo Flores Magón and the Mexican Revolution*. Fort Worth: Texas Christian University Press, 1992.

Alonzo, Armando. *Tejano Legacy: Rancheros and Settlers in South Texas, 1734-1900*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1998.

Anders, Evan. *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism.* London: Verso Press, 1983; 2006.

Ball, Gregory W. *They Called Them Soldier Boys: A Texas Infantry Regiment in World War I.* Denton: University of North Texas, 2013.

Blanton, Carlos Kevin *The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004.

Buenger, Walter L. *Secession and the Union in Texas*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1984

Campbell, Randolph B. *Gone to Texas: A History of the Lone Star State*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

-----. *Sam Houston and the American Southwest.* New York: Longman Company, 2002

Cather, Willa. *Death Comes for the Archbishop.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927.

Chávez, Ernesto. *¡Mi Raza Primero! (My People First!): Nationalism, Identity and Insurgency in the Chicano Movement in Los Angeles, 1966-1978*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002.

Costeloe, Michael P. *The Central Republic in Mexico, 1835-1846: Hombres de Bien in the Age of Santa Anna*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.

Dawson, Joseph Martin. *Jose Antonio Navarro: Co-Creator of Texas*. Waco: Baylor University Press, 1969.

De Leon, Arnoldo. *The Tejano Community, 1836-1900*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982.

Deutsch, Sarah. *No Separate Refuge: Culture, Class, and Gender on an Anglo-Hispanic Frontier in the American Southwest, 1880-1940*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1987.

Ford, Nancy Gentile. *Americans All!: Foreign-born Soldiers in World War I.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2001.

Garcia, Ignacio. *Chicanismo: The Forging of a Militant Ethos among Mexican Americans*. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1997.

-----. *White but not Equal: Mexican Americans, Jury Selection and the Supreme Court* . Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2008.

Garcia, Mario T. *Mexican Americans: Leadership, Ideology and Identity, 1930-1960* . New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989.

Garza-Falcon, Leticia M. *Gente Decente: A Borderlands Response to the Rhetoric of Dominance*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998.

Goldfinch, Charles W. *Juan N. Cortina, 1824-1892: A Reappraisal.* Brownsville: Bishop's Print Shop, 1950.

Gómez-Quiñones, Juan and Irene Vásquez. *Making Aztlán: Ideology and Culture of the Chicana and Chicano Movement, 1966-1977*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2014.

Griswold del Castillo, Richard. *The Los Angeles Barrio, 1850-1890: A Social History.* Berkeley: University of California Press, 1979.

Gutiérrez, Edward A. *Doughboys on the Great War: How American Soldiers Viewed Their Military Experience.* Lawrence: University of Kansas, 2014.

Haley, James L. *Sam Houston*. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2002.

Harris, Charles H., III, and Louis R. Sadler. *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004.

Hart, John Mason. *Revolutionary Mexico: The Coming and Process of the Mexican Revolution.* Berkeley: University of Calfornia Press, 1987.

Hinojosa, Gilberto Miguel. *A Borderlands Town in Transition: Laredo, 1755-1870.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1983.

Ignatiev, Noel. *How the Irish Became White.* New York: Routledge Press, 1995.

James, Marquis. *The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill, 1929; Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988.

Johnson, Benjamin Heber. *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and its Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003.

Josephy, Jr., Alvin M. *The Civil War in the American West.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1991.

Keene, Jennifer D. *Doughboys, The Great War and the Remaking of America.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001.

Keith, Jeanette. *Rich Man's War, Poor Man's Fight: Race, Class, and Power in the Rural South during the First World War*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004.

Kennedy, David M. *Over Here: The First World War and American Society.* Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980.

Lack, Paul D. *The Texas Revolutionary Experience: A Political and Social History, 1835-1836*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1992.

Lonn, Ella. *Foreigners in the Confederacy*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1940.

Manela, Ezra. *The Wilsonian Moment: Self-Determination and the International Origins of Anticolonial Nationalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Montejano, David. *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

Orozco, Cynthia E. *No Mexicans, Women, or Dogs Allowed: The Rise of the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2009.

Ramirez, Jose A. *To The Line of Fire: Mexican Texans and World War I*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2009.

Resendez, Andres. *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004.

Rintala, Marvin. *The Constitution of Silence: Essays in Generational Themes*. Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1979.

Rosales, F. Arturo. *¡Pobre Raza!: violence, justice, and mobilization among México Lindo immigrants, 1900-1936*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999.

-----. *Testimonio: A Documentary History of the Mexican American Struggle for Civil Rights*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 2000.

Rosenbaum, Robert J. *Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest: "The Sacred Right of Self-Preservation."* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981.

Sahlins, Peter. *Boundaries: The Making of France and Spain in the Pyrenees*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989.

Sanchez, George. *Becoming Mexican American: Ethnicity, Culture and Identity in Chicano Los Angeles, 1900-1945*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993.

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

Schmidt, Henry C. *The Roots of Lo Mexicano: Self and Society in Mexican Thought, 1900-1934*. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1978.

Stewart, Kenneth L. and Arnoldo De Leon. *Not Room Enough: Mexicans, Anglos, and Socioeconomic Change in Texas, 1850-1900.* Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1993.

Thompson, Jerry. *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2007.

-----. *Mexican Texans in the Union Army.* El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1986.

-----. *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray*. Austin: State House Press, 2000.

Utley, Robert M. *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers.* New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.

Williams, Chad L. *Torchbearers of Democracy: African American Soldiers in the World War I Era.* Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010.

Woodman, Lyman L. *Cortina: Rogue of the Rio Grande*. San Antonio: Naylor Company, 1950.

Wright, Marcus J. *Texas In the War: 1861-1865,* ed. Harold B. Simpson. Hillsboro, TX: Hill Junior College Press, 1965.

Wooster, Ralph A. *Lone Star Regiments in Gray*. Austin: Eakin Press, 2002.

Young, Elliot. *Catarino Garza's Revolution on the Texas-Mexico Border*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2004.

Zamora, Emilio. *The World of the Mexican Worker in Texas.* College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1993.

Articles and Other Published Material

Badillo, David A. "Between Alienation and Ethnicity: The Evolution of Mexican-American Catholicism in San Antonio, 1910-1940." *Journal of American Ethnic History* 16, No. 4 (Summer, 1997): 62-83.

Britten, Thomas A. "Tejanos at War: A History of Mexican Texans in American Wars," in *Texans and War: New Interpretations of the State's Military History*, eds. Alexander Mendoza and Charles David Grear. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012: 38-68.

Cantrell, Gregg. "Sam Houston and the Know-Nothings: A Reappraisal," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly*, 96 (Jan., 1993): 326-343.

Christian, Carole E. "Joining the American Mainstream: Texas's Mexican Americans During World War I, " *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 92 (Apr., 1989): 565-567.

Foley, Neil. "Becoming Hispanic: Mexican Americans and the Faustian Pact with Whiteness," in *Reflexiones 1997: New Directions in Mexican American Studies,* ed. Neil Foley. Austin: University of Texas-Center for American Studies, 1997: 53-70.

Johnson, Benjamin Heber. "The Cosmic Race in Texas: Racial Fusion, White Supremacy and Civil Rights Politics." In *Journal of American History* 98, No. 2 (September, 2011): 404-419.

Lack, Paul D. "Occupied Texas: Bexar and Goliad, 1835-1836," in *Mexican Americans in Texas History,* Emilio Zamora, et al., eds. Austin: Texas State Historical Association Press, 2000: 35-50.

Matovina, Timothy. "The National Parish and Americanization." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 17, No.1 (Winter, 1999): 45-58.

McCaffrey, James M. "Surveillance on the Border: American Intelligence and the Tejano Community during World War I," in *Texans and War: New Interpretations of the State's Military History*, eds. Alexander Mendoza and Charles David Grear. College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2012: 227-247.

McCracken, Ellen. "Reterritorialized Spirituality: Material Religious Culture in the Border Space of San Fernando Cathedral." *Arizona journal of Hispanic Cultural Studies* 4 (2000): 193-210.

Mendoza, Alexander. "'For Our Own Best Interests': Nineteenth-Century Laredo Tejanos, Military Service and the Development of American Nationalism," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 115 (October, 2011): 125-152.

Mora, Anthony. "Resistance and Accomodation in a Border Parish." *The Western Historical Quarterly* 36, No. 3 (Autumn, 2006): 301-326.

Mosqueda, Lawrence J. "Twentieth Century Arizona, Hispanics, and the Catholic Church." *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, No. ½ (1990): 87-103.

San Miguel, Guadalupe, Jr. “Status of the Historiography of Chicano Education: A Preliminary Analysis.” *History of Education Quarterly*, 26, No. 4 (Winter, 1986): 523-536.

Thompson, Jerry D. “Mutiny and Desertion on the Rio Grande: The Strange Saga of Captain Adrian J. Vidal.” *Military History of Texas and the Southwest* 12 (Oct., 1975): 159-170.

Trevino, Roberto R. “Facing Jim Crow: Catholic Sisters and the "Mexican Problem" in Texas.” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 34, No. 2 (Summer, 2003): 139-164.

Theses and Dissertations

Calderon, Roberto Ramon. “Mexican Politics in the American era, 1846-1900: Laredo, Texas.” Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1993.

Morales III, Ralph Edward. “ The Tejano-Anglo Alliance: Tejanos, Ethnicity, and Politics in Texas, 1832-1865.” M.A. Thesis, Texas A&M University, 2008.

Orozco, Cynthia E. “The Origins of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) and the Mexican American Civil Rights Movement in Texas with an Analysis of Women’s Political Participation in a Gendered Context, 1910-1929.” Ph.D. Dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles, 1992.

Riley, John Denny. “Santos Benavides: His Influence on the Lower Rio Grande, 1823-1881.” Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Christian University, 1976.

Rocha, Rodolfo. " The Influence of the Mexican Revolution on the Mexico-Texas Border, 1910-1916." Ph.D. dissertation, Texas Tech University, 1981.

Tijerina, Andrew Anthony. "Tejanos and Texas: The Native Mexicans of Texas, 1820-1850." Ph.D. dissertation, The University of Texas at Austin, 1977.

Varela-Lago, Ana Maria. "Conquerors, Immigrants, Exiles: The Spanish Diaspora in the United States, 1848-1948." Ph.D. dissertation, University of California at San Diego, 2008.