

Indian Cultures and Their Effect on the Spanish Missions of Texas

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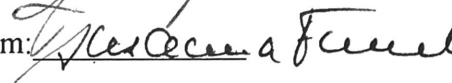
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INDIAN CULTURES AND THEIR EFFECT ON THE SPANISH MISSIONS OF TEXAS.

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Abstract

It has been documented that Spanish missions in east Texas did poorly compared to the missions in the San Antonio area. What has not been documented is the cause of this difference. This paper uses a comparative study method to discuss the differences between the two areas of Texas and to discover the causes of the apparent failure of the missions in east Texas. To do this, the geographical differences between the two areas in Texas are discussed. Also, the Spanish soldiers and missionaries, along with their French antagonists are shown to have played a role in east Texas mission failure. Finally, it is shown how the differences in the cultures of the Indians of the two areas was the main factor in causing the downfall of the missions in east Texas while creating success in the San Antonio area.

Introduction

The era of the Spanish missions in Texas was an important time period not only for the Spanish, but also for the Indians among which the missions were founded. The mission era not only highlighted the accomplishments and failures of Spain in the New World, but also illustrates the striking differences between the Indians of Texas. This is especially evident when comparing the success of missions in east Texas and missions farther west. Geographic differences serve to explain why there are different cultures in Texas, but they do not specify how these differences affect the Indians' acceptance of Spanish missions. Studying the history of the missions in Texas only serves to magnify the difference in the success of the missions between geographic areas. Only by examining the Spanish views on the missions of Texas and the cultures of the Indians who were affected

by the missions can we better understand why there is a discrepancy in mission success between the two areas of Texas. The difference in the success of the missions in Texas can best be explained by examining the specific cultures and understanding how each of these different cultures reacted to the new Spanish presence.

Geography

The area of Texas on which this report focuses can be divided into two parts which will be called east and west Texas. East Texas is the area which is bordered by Louisiana and runs to where the Colorado River meets the Gulf of Mexico. East Texas can also be defined as "...that part of Texas lying east of longitude 96 W" (Pearce 1932) The north and south borders of this region are the same as those for Texas, the Red River and the Gulf of Mexico. West Texas is defined here as a small area extending from the western border of east Texas to around San Antonio or the ninety-eighth meridian. This area is bordered on the north by I-20 today. Its southern border is the same as Texas today, the Gulf of Mexico and Mexico itself. This area is called west Texas here even though it is not considered west Texas today because, to the Spanish, this area was the western boundary.

The borders have not been arbitrarily chosen, but are the product of two main factors. First, the Spanish in early Texas were confined by the same borders. The French to the east kept Spanish settlers out of Louisiana. The Spanish were always concerned about the French as a force threatening their hold on the land. The Spanish understood that the east must be settled in order to lay claim to the land and keep the French out, but they could not extend the border farther east against the French because of a lack of

supplies and men. Similar borders existed to the north and west. Although the Spanish did not need to settle these areas to lay claim to them, they were drawn there in early years by the chance for an extension of the borders of Spain and a chance to find gold.

Unfortunately, the Spanish found, not gold, but the impenetrable Great Plains and hostile Apache Indians, both of which kept them from moving too far in either of these directions. Of course, the Spanish did skirt the Great Plains and the Indians by going around them in Mexico and had been settled in Santa Fe long before Texas.

The second reason for choosing the specific borders for east and west Texas is geographical. Geography and climate create a natural border between east and west Texas. The distinction is easily seen even today as one drives from east to west Texas. East Texas is very wet, receiving from 40-60 inches of rain a year (Webb 1990:) and has many trees. This area was once even more forested than it is now, and was also ideal for farming. West Texas is, for the most part, dry and grassy, receiving only 20-40 inches of rain per year (Webb 1990:). Farming is best done near rivers and even then usually requires irrigation. These two geographical areas supported very different Indian cultures. Skeels demonstrates the differences that can be seen in different areas of Texas. Moving west of the ninety-eighth meridian, one moves into the Great Plains which, although not occupied by the Spanish, could support large groups of Native Americans, especially once horses were introduced. Because no missions were founded in this area, it will not be considered in this study.

History

Since the Spanish missions are the main concern of this study, it is necessary to summarize their history in Texas. The time period formally covered in this study is between the years 1690 and 1773. This time period spans between the establishment of the first mission in Texas to the abandonment of the last mission in east Texas. The beginning of Spanish travels in Texas did not start with missionary work; rather, journeys were made into Texas to explore and to increase Spain's wealth. It is generally understood that Cabeza de Vaca was the first Spaniard to bring knowledge of Texas to the Spanish people in Mexico. He was shipwrecked on the coast of Texas and walked back to Mexico, living with the Indians as he traveled. If the stories he told of Texas were slightly fabricated, they only helped in drawing others into Texas searching for riches and information. His mention of the many tribes of Texas was sure to interest the missionaries who were always looking for another opportunity to do God's work in the New World.

The stories of riches were not sufficient, however, to keep the Spanish government interested in Texas for very long. It was not until the Spanish government heard reports of a French settlement in the area that they understood the importance of Texas. The French settlers were LaSalle's party that had landed in Texas accidentally and founded a settlement in either 1684 or 1685. The Spanish government understood that LaSalle's settlement could undermine their claim to the land and decided to send an expedition to investigate the reports. General de León, commander of the presidio in Coahuila was sent by the viceroy of New Spain on an expedition into the area in 1689. Fray Manzanet (also called Massanet in McCaleb) accompanied the expedition. During the trip, they heard from various Indian groups that there had been a French settlement, but that it had been

destroyed. The expedition found LaSalle's settlement on Espiritu Santo Bay known as Matagorda Bay today. They concluded all the inhabitants had been killed, although only three bodies were actually discovered. Even though LaSalle's settlement was no longer a threat, the trip was not wasted. It gave Fray Manzanet a chance to interact with the Indians of that area. In fact, when the expedition got back to Coahuila, Fray Manzanet began to petition the government for a mission in that part of Texas.

The government was also thinking about putting a settlement in the area of east Texas because the threat of France laying claim on the area was still present. It seemed to the Spanish government that a mission was the perfect way to protect Spain's claim on the area. Missions were semi-permanent settlements with willing missionaries doing the work and the mission idea had already been successfully tested in Mexico. A mission also provided a vehicle for Fray Manzanet's goal, which was to save souls.

The Spanish Government put another expedition together consisting again of de León and Fray Manzanet. The main reason the expedition was being sent into Texas was to destroy the ruins of LaSalle's fort and settlement and to discover if any other French were in the area. The expedition was also ordered to establish a mission in east Texas among the Tejas or Hasinai Indians. The expedition left Coahuila on March 28, 1690. Two months later, they crossed the Trinity River in the area of one of the Tejas villages. They decided to found a mission at this location and, on June 1, 1690, the first mission in Texas, Mission San Fransisco de los Tejas, was founded with much celebrating by all. At the time of the mission's founding, the founding of a perpetual argument in Texas mission history also occurred. De León wanted to leave at least twenty-five men to guard the

mission, and, therefore, the Texas border. Fray Manzanet argued that three soldiers would be sufficient for the mission and that more would only terrorize the Indians. The conflict was based on the different goals of the soldiers and the missionaries. The missionaries wanted “to lead them [the Indians] in spiritual paths, which after all was the ultimate goal. De León, however thought that the enterprise should be primarily military” (McCaleb 1962: 34). Fray Manzanet had the final say in the matter and only three soldiers were left at the mission.

After the first mission in Texas had been founded, the Spanish Government was still wary about French intrusions into Texas and so the viceroy, El Conde De Galve, decided to put together another expedition. He began by appointing Don Domingo Terán de los Rios as governor of Texas and Coahuila and ordering an expedition into Texas. The expedition, which left on May 16, 1691, was set up primarily for the “succoring of San Fransisco de los Tejas and the establishing of eight other missions, three of which were to be among the Tejas, four among the Candadachos and one on the Guadalupe” (McCaleb 1962: 35). The expedition’s second goal was “the rooting out of any foreign people whatsoever who chanced to take up their abode in that region” (McCaleb 1962: 35). Finally, Terán was “to explore the other parts of the country gaining information on its inhabitants” (McCaleb 1962: 35) It is generally conceded that founding missions was just a cover for the real reason (rooting out French invaders) for the expedition. This conclusion is well founded because the expedition was a complete failure considering its primary goal. Even though no missions were founded by Terán on his expedition, the

missionaries at San Francisco had been busy during the past year founding a new mission of their own.

The expedition found the San Francisco mission in bad shape with disease killing off most of the Indians. Even under the harsh conditions, the missionaries had founded the mission El Santísimo Nombre de Mariá on September 12, 1690 on the Nueces River. After giving supplies to the missions, Terán and Manzanet traveled north to the Red River examining the country and becoming acquainted with Indians, but finding no new locations for missions. No French intruders were found and so it was believed they were no longer an immediate threat to the area. Terán left the missions in January 1692, leaving behind ten soldiers and Fray Manzanet. Afterwards, the problems for the missions increased. Disease was still prevalent and the added problems of crop failure and hostile Indians kept most of the mission Indians away. Eventually the situation got so bad that the missionaries and soldiers feared that the Indians at the mission would kill them and suggested either establishing a presidio or abandoning the missions. Since the French no longer seemed to be a problem, the government decided that the missions should be abandoned. In October 1693, the missionaries and soldiers left in the middle of the night ending Spain's first try at missions in Texas only three years after it began.

Even the setbacks experienced in east Texas did not discourage one of the missionaries. Father Francisco Hidalgo continually petitioned the Spanish government, and even wrote letters to the French, for over twenty years trying to get the missions in east Texas reestablished. One of his letters to the French set off the voyage of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis who, in 1714, entered Texas to examine trading possibilities

between the French, Indians, and Spanish. Because a Frenchman could so easily enter Texas, the viceroy was forced to take a second look at Spain's nonexistent defenses in the province.

The viceroy decided to organize an expedition led by Captain Domingo Ramón and, strangely enough, St. Denis. The expedition, which left in February 1716, was intended to reestablish the old missions and set up new ones. Ramón's expedition traveled through the San Antonio area and arrived at the old mission site in July where they were greeted by many enthusiastic Indians. On July 2, Ramón set up a presidio named Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Tejas. Three days later, San Francisco de los Tejas was reestablished although after that time it was also called San Francisco de los Neches. Within a week, three more missions had been established. These were Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción on July 7, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe on July 9, and San José de los Nazonis on July 10.

Although the expedition had been greeted enthusiastically, the Indians would not congregate at the missions and gave various reasons for their absence. In October, Ramón decided to found two more missions, Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais and San Miguel de Linares which was founded across the Sabine River in what is today considered Louisiana. Even with the two new missions, the Indians still would not stay with the missionaries. The missionaries also had problems receiving supplies and it was decided that a stopover point was needed between east Texas and Mexico.

In Mexico, Father Olivares was petitioning the government for a mission in the San Antonio area, so the plan for the stopover point had a willing participant and seemed

feasible. Don Martin de Alarcón, governor of Coahuila, was appointed to colonize the area. The plan was, eventually, to settle the area with about thirty families which would give Texas more settlers and hopefully encourage Indian families to stay at the missions. The expedition reached the site on April 25, 1718 and on May 5 founded Mission San Antonio de Valero, better known today as the Alamo. In the next few days, a presidio and a small community named Villa de Bejar were set up. After seeing to the duties of starting a colony, Alarcón made a trip to the east Texas missions. Although he did not make it on the first trip, he finally arrived in east Texas on October 14, 1718. He found that the Indians were still making excuses not to come to the missions. At Mission Concepción, there were some Indians, but Alarcón found something very disturbing; the Indians at the mission had more guns than did the Spanish and these firearms had been given to the Indians by the French. The situation in the east was contrasted by success in the west. When Alarcón returned to San Antonio, he “found so many Indians living in the *pueblo* that he formally organized them into a ‘self governing’ community...” (Ashford 1971: 112).

The problems at the east Texas missions might have been easily remedied had they not received a fatal blow. In 1719, war broke out between France and Spain. This could have meant a continuation of the war in the New World had there been enough soldiers in either of the provinces for a war. As it turns out there were only about fifty soldiers in New Orleans. Even so, Mission San Miguel, which was the closest to the French settlement of Natchitoches was “attacked” by seven French soldiers. The soldiers captured one of the Spanish soldiers who was later released with stories of hundreds of

Frenchmen. Even though his story was exaggerated, the first attack was enough to scare most of the soldiers and missionaries away immediately. Only a few brave missionaries stayed behind, but by winter, even the bravest had abandoned the missions. The skirmish ended the east Texas mission campaign for the second time, this time it also only took three years.

Instead of going back to Mexico, the missionaries stayed in San Antonio and were soon asking for a mission of their own at that location. The viceroy, wanting to reinforce Spain's hold on Texas appointed Joseph Alzor Vitro de Vera the Marquis of San Miguel de Aguayo as governor of Coahuila and Texas on December 19, 1719. Soon after, Father Margil, one of the exiled missionaries, told Aguayo that he was willing to start a mission and would even name it San José de San Miguel de Aguayo after the new governor. Aguayo could not resist and the new mission was founded five miles south of Mission Valero on February 23, 1720.

Since Aguayo's orders were to strengthen Spain's hold on Texas, he put together an expedition to explore the situation in east Texas. He soon heard that St. Denis was rallying Indians against Spain and hurried into east Texas to validate the claim. Aguayo also sent forty soldiers to Espiritu Santo Bay (LaSalle's landing point) to prevent French capture of the point. In east Texas, Aguayo met St. Denis and convinced him that the Spanish forces were stronger than the French and sent St. Denis back to Natchitoches. By August 29, 1721, Aguayo had reestablished all the missions in east Texas.

After securing the eastern border, Aguayo returned to west Texas and started a new presidio called Santa Mariá de Loreto de la Bahía del Espiritu Santo. He also

founded two missions: Mission Espíritu Santo, near la Bahía and Mission San Francisco de Xavier de Najera. Espíritu Santo was deserted in 1726, four years after it was founded when Indians killed Captain Ramón there. It was moved to the Guadalupe River among the Xaramenes, but was still unsuccessful and was moved again to a site near Goliad. According to McCaleb, the Xaramenes were considered enemies of Spain after the mission was moved from their area. Mission San Francisco de Xavier stood dormant until 1731 when Mission Concepción was moved there.

In San Antonio, the French threat had subsided, but a new, more dangerous threat had appeared on the scene. The Apache were raiding the missions and villa, mostly for horses, but occasionally, a Spaniard or mission Indian would be killed. The problems at San Antonio were intensified by disagreements between soldiers and missionaries on how to run the settlement. The conflicts with the Apache continued into the 1730s and 40s with the Apache alternately declaring peace and war. In August 1749 a final peace was agreed upon.

During the time of the Apache raids, three missions were moved from east to west Texas. The move was a result of a report in 1727 on the condition of the missions. By this time, “San Miguel had not an Indian, Nuestra Señor [sic] de los Dolores had only a small party, and they were *gentiles* (unconverted). Guadalupe had a good many natives but they were too *gentiles*...Nuestra Señora de la Concepción, San José, and San Francisco de los Tejas had not an Indian” (McCaleb 1962: 64). The last three missions were subsequently moved because of the apparent failure and because the French threat had subsided. In 1731, the missions were reestablished in the San Antonio area. Mission

Concepción took over the Mission San Francisco de Xavier which was founded in 1722. Missions San José and San Francisco de los Tejas received name changes. The new names were, respectively, San Juan Capistrano and San Francisco de la Espada. Along with the relocation of the missions, the number of soldiers in Texas was reduced.

Although new mission work continued in the following years, the missions that were founded were mainly on the coast and did not prosper. These new missions were usually abandoned soon after their establishment. This was probably due mainly to the fact that the environment on the Texas coastline during this time period (and still today) was very harsh. Also, the Indians in these areas may have not been accepting of the missions. The LaSalle expedition showed that they did not usually accept Europeans.

In 1762, the mission movement in east Texas started to come to a close. In this year, Louisiana was ceded to the Spanish government. With the French threat finally under control, Spain decided to examine the status of the missions in Texas. The Marqués de Rubí traveled through Texas in 1767 for this purpose. At the missions in the San Antonio area, he found the presidios in ruins. The men were not organized and the guns were not operative. The missions themselves, however, were doing very well. Among the missions in this area, Rubí found 809 Indians (Ashford 1971: 163). He described San José as the best mission in Texas. The church was made from stone and was actually being torn down to make room for a better one. There were also huts for the Indians and swimming pools from the irrigation water (Ashford 1971: 165).

In east Texas, the situation was completely different. Rubí found no Indians at Nacogdoches and the same was true for Nuestra Señora de los Dolores. At the presidio,

there were some Indians, but the presidio was in bad shape. Rubí reports that there were not many weapons and that the governor was trading with the French. At the new coastal mission in the area, Nuestra Señora de la Luz, and its presidio (founded around 1757), Rubí found a well organized group of soldiers, but there were no crops. Rubí suggested that this was because the location of the mission was bad. The missionaries at this mission also think it is a bad location and seem miserable there.

Rubí then visited the coastal missions in west Texas, Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga and Nuestra Señora del Rosario, and the presidio in this area, Nuestra Señora de Loreto sometimes called “La Bahía.” He found them in “a prosperous condition” (Ashford 1971: 168) with about ninety Indians each even though the area was plagued by malaria and scurvy.

Rubí finally recommended that the two presidios in east Texas be abandoned. The soldiers were moved out of east Texas in February of 1770. The soldiers were reestablished at a new presidio between San Antonio and La Bahía called Santa Cruz del Cibolo. Because the settlers in east Texas were now without protection, it was decided that they too be moved to west Texas and by 1773, the Spaniards had left east Texas.

Because the missions were never reestablished in east Texas, the last years of Spanish missions do not really apply to this study. After 1773, Rubí’s report still had influence. He had also recommended that the missions of Texas be secularized. Over the next few years, the missions fell into the hands of laymen one at a time. It should be noted that the last Spanish mission operating in Texas was Mission Refugio, which was

established near the present day town of the same name in 1792. Finally, in 1830, Mission Refugio was secularized ending the mission era of Texas.

The previous section is intended to be an overview of both east and west Texas missions. It can be easily seen from the history of Spanish missions that there is a difference in success between east and west Texas. For the most part, the missions in east Texas were not as successful in attracting the Indians as were the missions of west Texas. Although the difference has been recognized by many scholars, the cause of the discrepancy is only speculated. To better understand the difference, it is necessary to understand why the Spanish founded the missions and what problems they had in Texas.

Spanish Interests in Texas

The founding of any mission in Texas was not a decision that came about lightly for the Spanish. Founding a mission required cooperation from many different groups of people. There were basically four groups of people involved in founding most of the missions. Examining these groups and their different motives will give insight into some of the problems faced at the missions.

The Spanish administrators, the first group involved in Texas missions, authorized the founding of a mission. Although this did not always happen, the administrators were the only people that could set aside money and supplies for the missions. Spanish administrators, such as the viceroy, were usually trying to please the king of Spain. To do this, they had to make sure to protect Spain's interests in an area of land larger than Spain itself. This usually meant protecting the borders of the province, especially from the French, as well as exploiting the resources of the area. Since Texas had no resources in

the eyes of the Spanish, the only thing left to do was to protect the borders. One of the easiest ways to do this was to establish missions. The missions usually housed soldiers whose duty was to defend the missions against an attack. The missions also allowed the area to be settled easily, which was another deterrent to French entrance into the area.

Another group of people who were concerned with protecting the borders of Texas was the soldiers. This group included not only regular soldiers, but also the governor of the province, who was usually stationed at one of the presidios. The soldiers had slightly different interests in Texas than did the administrators. While the administrators were concerned with the interests of Spain in the area, the soldiers, far away from their superiors, were more concerned with their own interests. Some of the commanding officers understood the importance of protecting the borders, but with no opposing forces to fight against, the soldiers tended to lose what organization they had and usually turned into glorified settlers.

For example, in 1767, the Marqués de Rubí examined the missions of Texas. He found the most deplorable companies of soldiers at San Antonio. Ashford supposes that "...the Indians appeared civilized [to Rubí] by contrast with the soldiers at the presidio" (Ashford 1971: ?). He goes on to describe the condition of the presidio at which "...one out of every three pistols and rifles was found to be useless..." and "The presidio itself was half in ruins..." (Ashford 1971: ?). Rubí found, in contrast, well kept missions which seemed to be more defensible than the presidios.

Missionaries were the third group of people that were instrumental in the founding of the missions. Their purpose was simple, they wanted to save the souls of the Indians.

Most of these men were very devoted to their cause, and truly wanted the best for the Indians. An example we have seen was Father Fransisco Hidalgo who, after being displaced from his east Texas mission, tirelessly wrote to the Spanish government for over twenty years for the reestablishment of the missions. The priests' devotion sometimes led to bad decisions, for example, they usually did not want protection of the soldiers even though it was, at times, needed.

The last group of people that were included at some of the missions were non-military, non-religious settlers. These were usually Spanish people that were living in the Caribbean Islands and were moved into Texas. These people were included in some of the mission campaigns as a way to attract Indian families. Usually the priests at a mission welcomed these settlers while soldiers did not like the fact that the settlers were not under military command. Because the settlers were tied to neither religious nor military order, they were free to look after their own interests which were usually just to survive. Most of the time, this meant finding a means of support other than the missions.

Antonio Gil Ybarbo is a good example of such a settler. Ybarbo was a prominent figure in east Texas. As a settler near the Mission Nacogdoches, he had amassed a large ranch and was involved in smuggling along the French border. His interests in the area were so strong that he was instrumental in getting a new settlement in east Texas after Rubí's report suggested the abandonment of the area. This settlement eventually became the Nacogdoches of today.

Although the ideas just presented are generalizations, they serve as an outline of the different people and the different ideas associated with the Spanish occupation of

Texas. Obviously, with so many different motives for founding the missions, problems arose. At times the problems were directly related to a difference in opinion, but other times they were almost wholly unrelated. Either way, the problems at the missions definitely affected the Spanish attitude toward the missions and, at times, also affected the number of Indians willing to stay at the missions.

One of the most threatening problems for the success of the missions was the lack of adequate supplies. Because the missions were founded far from any settlement in Mexico, communication and travel between the two was very slow. This was especially true during the time period before the west Texas missions were founded. Adding to the slow speed of requesting supplies was the slow speed of the Spanish government itself. Ashford even went so far as to describe the Spanish administration as “glacier-like” (Ashford 1971: 172). Even if the request found its way into the hands of an administrator (which it eventually would), there was no guarantee that the supplies would be sent. When supplies were sent, they sometimes proved inadequate. Because the missions did not have supplies, they could not attract the Indians effectively, and usually missionaries had to resort to promising the Indians that supplies would come just to keep them in the area. Obviously, the lack of supplies was a great detriment to the success of the missions. This problem, although found at all the missions, was especially bad in east Texas because the transport distance was so great.

One more problem that illustrates a difference between the east and west Texas missions is the problem of the French. The French were a main concern for the settlers on the eastern frontier, while seemingly unimportant to settlers in west Texas. One of the

main concerns for the Spanish in the east was the fear of a French attack. This fear was well founded since the French settlement of Natchitoches was not far from the missions in east Texas. On the other hand, there were about as many French soldiers at Natchitoches as there were in east Texas, so an attack was probably unlikely. More likely to be a problem was the reality of French trade with the Indians. This caused a major problem because the supplies from the French kept the Indians away from the missions, greatly reducing the success of the missions. French trade also allied the Indians with the French and this alliance made the Indians wary of the Spanish. Since French trading only occurred along the border between Texas and Louisiana, it only affected those missions which were established among Indian groups along the border, namely east Texas missions.

Unassociated with the Indians was the Spanish problem of Spanish trade with the French. Trading with the French was against the law for Spaniards but, as can be seen on most frontiers, laws did not hold in east Texas. A need for supplies and an opportunity for profit led many Spaniards, even some Spanish governors, to trade with the French. This apparent breakdown in authority of the Spanish government was also found in west Texas, only it was not as obvious or blatant as was the problem in the east.

Another major problem at the Texas missions, which was mentioned earlier in the paper, was the disagreements between soldiers and missionaries. This problem was prevalent at all the missions in Texas and most likely could also be found at the Mexican missions. The disagreements usually arose because of the difference in priorities between the soldiers and missionaries. The missionaries fears of soldier misconduct were not

misplaced given the prevalence of complaints filed on this issue. Many times the soldiers' misconduct was directed towards the Indians, but at least one incident, showing the magnitude of this problem, involved only Spanish participants. At the San Xavier missions (not discussed in this paper), a new captain, Don Felipe de Rábago, was involved in a scandalous affair with one of his soldiers' wives. The situation got out of hand when the soldier, Juan Joseph Zevallos, was put in prison. Zevallos escaped, but this did not stop Rábago. The situation eventually ended with the deaths of both Zevallos and Father Ganzábal, one of the missionaries protecting Zevallos. Although the murderers were never discovered, it is certain that Rábago was behind the murders. Although this is an extreme example, this type of problem occurred at most of the missions in Texas, therefore, not proving any discrepancy between regions. However, the problem does serve to give more of an idea of life on the Texas frontier.

Another problem that only serves as an example of life on the borders because it was experienced at all missions was the raids by Apache and other hostile Indian tribes. The raids were more frequent at the west Texas missions, which were closer to Apache territory, but were just as intense at all missions and had the effect of scaring away peaceful Indians. Missions were great targets for raids and sometimes could be more dangerous to live at than a small Indian settlement. Since they were permanent settlements, missions were easy to find. Most of the Indian groups were not sedentary and were better able to avoid well planned attacks. Missions also concentrated great amounts of material goods (when they had them), especially horses. This gave the Apache a very good reason to raid the settlements. Indians not at the missions did not usually own

horses and, for this reason, were not as likely to be attacked. Another reason why missions were targeted over small Indian groups was that, for the most part, missions were sure to have a concentrated population, whereas small Indian groups did not contain many people. Because of Apache raids, Indians were sometimes better off living away from the missions. During the period when the raids were at their peak, the Indian population at the missions fluctuated greatly.

This basic overview of the Spanish attitude in Texas serves to clarify the environment on the frontiers as seen by the average Spaniard. It is also useful in illustrating the problems the Spaniards had in Texas and why they may have decided to abandon the missions in east Texas before abandoning west Texas. However, while these problems may illustrate some of the differences between east and west Texas, none of them fully explains why the Indians in east Texas were less likely than their west Texas counterparts to congregate at the missions. To better understand the Indians' point of view, it is necessary to briefly describe some of the Indian groups of Texas.

Indians of East and West Texas

Obviously, not all of the Indian groups in east and west Texas could be discussed here, but there are two groups which are very important for this paper. These are the Hasinai or Tejas who resided in the east and the Tonkawa in the west. The coastal groups of Texas will not be studied here because none of them accepted Spanish missionaries. To understand the differences between Hasinai and Tonkawa cultures, it is only necessary to observe certain aspects of the cultures and not the cultures as a whole. It should be remembered by the reader that this is not usually the best way to study a culture, but it will

suffice for this study. It should also be kept in mind that the groups referred to include many subtribes which have cultural differences which must be overlooked in this study.

One of the most well known Indian groups of Texas are the Hasinai. This group of Indians, also known by the more general term, Caddo, was actually a confederacy of nine separate tribes, which all, for the most part shared the same culture. The Hasinai were also known by the Spanish as the Tejas. This confederacy covered the territory around the middle Trinity and Neches Rivers. The missions directly founded in Hasinai territory were Mission San Francisco de los Tejas, El Santísimo Nombre de Mariá, Mission Concepción, and Mission San José. The two missions founded among the Ais and Adaes were actually in Caddo territory as the Ais and Adaes were not true Hasinai members but this discussion of the Hasinai will be sufficient for the Caddo cultures also.

The Hasinai can be said to have a culture more similar to the Spanish than most other Texas Indians. They had a multi-level government and the society itself was hierarchical. There was a division of labor so defined that the ruling class was completely supported by the other members of society. The confederacy of the tribes was ruled by the Chenesi. This office was not only a ruling office, but also a religious one, so that the Chenesi had control over all aspects of Hasinai life. Under the Chenesi were civil chiefs for each tribe in the confederacy. This office was usually held for life and was also hereditary. The civil chief served the same function as the Chenesi at the tribal level by serving both as political ruler and as priest. To help in the governing of each tribe, the chief appointed a group of agents whose jobs varied from personal servants to what amounted to police officers. The rule of the chief and his agents seems to have been

misplaced given the prevalence of complaints filed on this issue. Many times the soldiers' misconduct was directed towards the Indians, but at least one incident, showing the magnitude of this problem, involved only Spanish participants. At the San Xavier missions (not discussed in this paper), a new captain, Don Felipe de Rábago, was involved in a scandalous affair with one of his soldiers' wives. The situation got out of hand when the soldier, Juan Joseph Zevallos, was put in prison. Zevallos escaped, but this did not stop Rábago. The situation eventually ended with the deaths of both Zevallos and Father Ganzábal, one of the missionaries protecting Zevallos. Although the murderers were never discovered, it is certain that Rábago was behind the murders. Although this is an extreme example, this type of problem occurred at most of the missions in Texas, therefore, not proving any discrepancy between regions. However, the problem does serve to give more of an idea of life on the Texas frontier.

Another problem that only serves as an example of life on the borders because it was experienced at all missions was the raids by Apache and other hostile Indian tribes. The raids were more frequent at the west Texas missions, which were closer to Apache territory, but were just as intense at all missions and had the effect of scaring away peaceful Indians. Missions were great targets for raids and sometimes could be more dangerous to live at than a small Indian settlement. Since they were permanent settlements, missions were easy to find. Most of the Indian groups were not sedentary and were better able to avoid well planned attacks. Missions also concentrated great amounts of material goods (when they had them), especially horses. This gave the Apache a very good reason to raid the settlements. Indians not at the missions did not usually own

suffice for this study. It should also be kept in mind that the groups referred to include many subtribes which have cultural differences which must be overlooked in this study.

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respected and, for the most part, followed. Along with a civil chief, war chiefs were appointed during times of war. Councils were used as an advisory board, but the chief was solely responsible for all decisions. Another important position in Hasinai culture was the “medicine man”. These healers practiced separately from the chiefs and received payment for their services.

The Hasinai subsisted mainly on agriculture, although wild plants and game were also a part of their diet. Because of this, the Hasinai were mainly sedentary, having permanent dwellings and fixed villages. The main crop of the Hasinai was maize, being followed in importance by beans. The Hasinai utilized many of the wild plants in the area, especially the wild potato. They also hunted wild game in the wooded areas surrounding their settlements. Buffalo and bear were also important to the Hasinai, mainly on a ceremonial level. They had to travel long distances to hunt these animals.

The Hasinai’s complex society was reflected in their religion. There was one superior god called Caddi Ayo. This god had created all things and could give punishments, rewards, and gifts as he saw fit. Along with Caddi Ayo, however, there were a multitude of other gods who controlled different aspects of life. These gods were revered at the proper time. A prominent part of Hasinai religion was the sacred fire which was kept in a temple and tended by the Chenesi. The temple was usually situated on a high mound as were the houses of important individuals in the villages.

The Tonkawa were one of the most prominent tribes in west Texas and can be described as a plains culture residing outside of the high plains. The Tonkawa were made up of a number of independent tribes which did not consolidate until the nineteenth

century. This fact makes it hard to generalize the entire Tonkawa culture, because it did not truly exist until the tribes were consolidated. At the time of mission activity in the area, the tribes making up the Tonkawa resided from the Austin area down to the coast and east to the Brazos River. Although the Tonkawa name is not mentioned much in referring to the Spanish missions, it can be inferred that they were able to visit any one of the missions in the San Antonio area.

The Tonkawa tribes mainly subsisted on buffalo until this animal became less frequent in the area. “Unquestionably, the Tonkawas, once they were mounted on horses, would have abandoned central Texas for the richer buffalo plains to the north and west...” (Newcomb 1993: 138). Unfortunately, they never got that chance because the more powerful plains Indians kept them out of this area. The Tonkawa tribes were doomed to stay in the central Texas region where they no longer could tap their traditional food resource. They started hunting other game and even subsisted on fish (unheard of for a traditional plains tribe). Wild plants also became an important part of their diet. The Tonkawa did continue to live in teepees and were nomadic long after the buffalo had disappeared.

Since there is not much known about the Tonkawa tribes, it is hard to describe their social life. It is known that they had a chief who served as a leader and there was a war chief in times of war. Besides these positions, there were shamans who performed cures.

The gaps in the record continue into the religious realm, but Newcomb concludes that not much may be known about their religion because it “may not have been organized

into a concrete, explicit system” (Newcomb 1993: 149). He adds that individuals may have had their own, personal beliefs and practices that revolved around a general cultural belief system. To the Tonkawa, the spirits of the dead were more important in daily life than were their god or gods.

Obviously, there were some differences between these two cultures. Even though gaps are prominent in the records, most scholars agree that the description of the Indian groups closely resembles their way of life.

Conclusions

In this paper I tried to explain why there was a difference in success between east and west Texas missions. To do this I first described the geography and climate of Texas during the Mission era. This description also helped in understanding the geographical barriers in Texas and laid the basis for the distinction between east and west Texas missions. Still, geography is only the first step in discovering a cause for the difference in success between different missions.

It was also necessary to examine the different people involved in the missions. I described what it was like to live in Texas during the mission era for each of the groups of people involved. The Spanish are the obvious place to start, since they initiated the missions in Texas. The Spanish were part of the reason that the missions of east Texas fared poorly compared to the missions in the west. First, the Spanish government was always very eager to abandon the missions in east Texas for any reason. Also, the Spanish who had a direct impact on the missions hindered the east Texas missions. Although on the border between France and Spain, the missions were never defended. Being on the

frontier actually was a detriment to the missions' success. The Spanish missionaries had to compete with the French for the favor of the Indians. The fact that the missions were far away from Mexico and did not receive supplies regularly did not help the missionaries in this respect. The soldiers and settlers did not help much either since many of them spent time trading with the French and neglecting or mistreating the Indians. Still, the Spanish were not totally responsible for the lack of Indians staying at the mission.

The Indians of the two areas have already been shown to be quite different. It is these differences which can best explain the different success rate between the east and west Texas missions. First, the subsistence patterns of the two groups differs greatly. The Hasinai were mainly an agricultural people who depended on their crops for their survival. For this reason, they were also sedentary, having well established villages. The Tonkawa tribes, on the other hand, hunted the buffalo, which were not as populous in Texas as in the Great Plains. Following Plains culture, the Tonkawas were a very mobile people, accustomed to following the animals they hunted. Obviously, the Hasinai preferred to stay in their villages instead of going to the missions. They either had crops to plant or to harvest. Staying at the missions was even harder for those Hasinai whose villages were not close to the missions. For the Hasinai, their own crops were a much more stable food source than the missions. The Tonkawa tribes may have been more willing to visit the missions simply because their main food source was very unpredictable and becoming scarce. They were also used to following a food source and the missions provided a very easily exploited source for food.

The subsistence pattern of the Indians was not the only factor affecting their acceptance of the missions. Another important factor was their social system. The Hasinai had a very complex and structured social system with a strict hierarchy. Since the civil chief had control over the activities of the village, if he did not accept the missions, he could keep the members of his tribe from visiting them. The chief had good reasons for keeping his people in their own village. One of the most important was that he needed the people to plant and harvest the crops. This would have been reason enough for the chief to keep his tribe at the village. The Tonkawa tribes did not have such a strict leadership. The chief did not have as much control over the tribe. For this reason, even if the chief did not accept the missions, some of his tribe members might and they would be free to visit or stay at the missions. Obviously, it was easier for the Tonkawa tribes to visit the missions than it was for their Hasinai counterparts.

The final aspect of Indian culture that could have affected their acceptance of the missions was their religion. The Hasinai had organized and formalized religious beliefs with temples for worship. This made it hard for the missionaries to convert the Hasinai to Catholicism. The Tonkawa tribes had a less formal religion in which each member was free to worship in his or her own way. This would have made acceptance of Catholicism for the individual Tonkawa Indian much easier than it was for the Hasinai.

It should be easy to see that the Indian groups of the two regions had their own reasons for either accepting or rejecting the missions in the long run. Although the French and Spanish played a large part, the main reason for the failure of the missions in east Texas was the Indians that lived in that area.

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