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American Indian Culture and Research Journal

Title

Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northern Mexico. By Martin Salinas.

Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/04k467hd>

Journal

American Indian Culture and Research Journal , 15(3)

ISSN

0161-6463

Author

Nunley, Mary Christopher

Publication Date

1991-06-01

DOI

10.17953

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For the main topic of the book, the modern Michigan fishing rights controversy, Doherty has conducted wide-ranging research. However, he does not indicate that, with roots in northwestern Michigan, he was a potential witness for the Grand Traverse Ottawa and Chippewa in the final allocation stage of proceedings. He talked with Indian fishermen and the sportsmen in the bars and even briefly operated his own fishing business. He also discussed the fishing rights controversy with lawyers, read transcripts of testimony, newspapers, congressional reports, and unpublished academic research.

Helen Hornbeck Tanner
The Newberry Library, Chicago

Indians of the Rio Grande Delta: Their Role in the History of Southern Texas and Northern Mexico. By Martin Salinas. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1990. 207 pages. \$25.00 cloth. \$8.95 paper.

This volume is a valuable research tool for scholars interested in the history, or even prehistory, of southern Texas and northern Mexico. Using primary archival documents left by the Spanish, Martin Salinas assumed the painstaking effort of searching out the recorded shreds of Indian existence in the lower Rio Grande valley and, where possible, establishing the ethnic identities of different groups and their linkages. He thus has provided the only documentary synthesis for one of the least known areas of North America.

The Rio Grande delta is that area of the Gulf Coastal Plain bounded by the Nueces River of southern Texas and the Rio San Fernando of northern Tamaulipas, Mexico. Salinas describes this as an area in which a distinct physiography resulted in perennial supplies of water and where natural food sources existed in greater abundance than in surrounding zones. Thus it was populated by a large concentration of Indian groups when the Spanish arrived in 1519.

The word *probably* should be inserted into each of the preceding assumptions. Statements about the past environment of the area and its inhabitants can be predicated only on educated conjecture based on fragmentary documentation. Salinas's inferences

are quite likely correct, but high concentrations of population during the early period of contact were just as likely to have been the result of Indians fleeing ahead of the Spanish. These remarks notwithstanding, the consideration of the relevance of environmental pressures and opportunities and their impact on population and migration in this region is a strength throughout the volume.

With their arrival in 1519, the Spanish began a long history of contact with aboriginal peoples, yet there is little evidence that they attempted to identify distinct Indian groups or to determine whether they were native or transient to the area. Prior to Salinas's work, such concerns had been ignored for the most part. This volume, part of the Texas Archaeology and Ethnohistory Series, is a long-awaited contribution. Series editor Thomas R. Hester provides the foreword. Both he and volume editor Thomas N. Campbell are respected scholars of the region.

In undertaking this ambitious project, Salinas worked with documents that covered the 367-year period between 1519 and 1886. He divided this time into four periods of analysis that correspond to growth in Spanish exploitation and the resultant and simultaneous decrease in aboriginal numbers. As Spanish domination increased over time, the absolute amount of documentation available for analysis also increased, but so did the disruption and fragmentation of aboriginal groups, which created even more complex matrices of classification.

Most names recorded for Indian groups in the Spanish documents were labels of description thrust upon them by outsiders; seldom were groups identified by their native names. Where native names did appear, there were no obvious connections between the native and non-native designations. Salinas's efforts to sort out various ethnic groups required a thoughtful methodology and laborious cross-indexing. Researchers faced with similar tasks will find the author's brief description of his techniques helpful.

The information on native groups that was contained in the Spanish documents was scant; it was provided by writers whose primary agenda was to report on the status of exploration and missionization, not on the lifeways of groups who were alternately considered exploitable and expendable. Salinas has done a commendable job of linking fractional descriptions with numerous variously labeled peoples who had undergone major dis-

placements and reassociations due to colonization. Toward this end, he offers a theory that the disorder in ethnic identities results from the hunting and gathering subsistence strategy, which was dependent on dispersal into numerous foraging groups. Each of these groups presumably had its own distinct name; the Spanish ultimately simplified the problem of keeping track of these numerous Indian names by applying new labels to sets of groups located in particular geographic areas. This particular theory is somewhat obvious and facile. An important consideration is that this emphasis on names and ethnic and/or geographic boundaries is generated by Western thought and research models based on distinctions and comparisons of discrete units and areas. Ethnic labels may not have been an important part of the Indian world. Hunter-gatherer sociopolitical organizations are notoriously diffuse, ephemeral, and fluid. There is no reason to believe that the cognitive classifications that structure reality for modern social scientists had anything to do with the way the Indians of the Rio Grande delta organized themselves three or four hundred years ago. No one would defend the Spanish against charges of ethnocentrism, but it is possible that their lack of allusion to specific groups by name simply reflected the situation as it existed.

This volume does not offer a detailed historical record, nor did the author intend it to do so. The historical sketch provided focuses on the movement of the Spanish frontier into Nuevo Leon, where problems with aboriginal groups resulted in extensive formal colonization of Tamaulipas farther to the east. The author emphasizes that knowledge of these two developments is necessary to an interpretation of the Spanish documents; I argue, however, that it would have been preferable for him to go a step further and place these events in an even broader historical context, for this narrow focus assumes considerable prior knowledge on the part of the reader and potentially narrows the audience.

The cultural information offered in the volume should not be devalued because it is neither ethnography nor ethnology. Salinas never claims that it is. He is being realistic when he concludes, in the chapter entitled "Culture," that this information is "limited in scope and hence essentially impressionistic" (p. 135). Still the gathering and referencing of ethnographic data in one volume is invaluable. The ultimate worth of the book will lie

in its contribution to future, more specific research. One scholar's conjecture may be the guide to another's discovery.

Structurally, the work is divided into eleven chapters of quite varied length, from three to fifty pages. The preponderance of information offered is descriptive rather than interpretive. For example, factors that are associated with the decline of Indian population, which is discussed in the chapter, "Historical Demography," are simply enumerated, with no elaboration. There are introductory remarks for all chapters, usually quite brief. Some, but not all, chapters offer conclusions. I found myself having to make several forays through the volume to determine just where the book was going. Sometimes I had to backtrack to see how the previous chapters were related. This somewhat uneven organization is imposed primarily by the varied types and amounts of information offered, but it does make the larger picture more difficult to comprehend.

This essentially is a reference work. The author identifies over seventy different ethnic groups, places them geographically, and provides general cultural and behavioral data, where possible. These important features doubtless will stimulate further work. In the last chapter, Salinas appraises the status of historical reconstruction in southern Texas and northeastern Mexico, the limitations imposed by the absence of documentation, and the extinction of ethnic groups and languages. He concludes that any further correlation of native names with Spanish names will depend, quite simply, on the discovery of new documents. I hope that, when this happens, Salinas will be around to make another body of data usable and, therefore, significant.

Mary Christopher Nunley
University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

The Ancient Child. N. Scott Momaday. New York: Doubleday, 1989. 314 pages. \$18.95 cloth.

The Ancient Child, N. Scott Momaday's second novel, was published two decades after *House Made of Dawn* won the Pulitzer prize for fiction. As might be expected, the new novel bears a strong family resemblance to the corpus of Momaday's work and