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Santa Barbara

“Bartering Hunger for Nakedness”:

The Frontier Exchange Economy of Spanish Colonial Texas

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements

for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in History

by

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The Frontier Exchange Economy in Spanish Colonial Texas

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For Jake

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ABSTRACT

“Bartering Hunger for Nakedness”: The Frontier Exchange Economy of Spanish Colonial Texas

by

Lee Elizabeth Goodwin

Scholars of Spanish colonial Texas history have typically described the province as an impoverished economic backwater. With limited access to markets, according to this view, Hispanic residents barely scraped out a living. A close reading of a variety of archival documents and archaeological reports, however, reveals that a robust dual economy based on different systems of trade emerged in the province during the eighteenth century. A legal system of trade connected San Antonio with Mexico City, and with regional markets in Saltillo, Nueva Viscaya, and Coahuila. Extralegal trade among Hispanic and indigenous inhabitants in east Texas, and French traders and residents in Louisiana, tapped into the trans-Atlantic economy and the desire for European goods. This dissertation extends Daniel Usner, Jr.’s concept of a frontier exchange economy in the lower Mississippi Valley to the extralegal trade that took place in the Texas-Louisiana borderlands, and deepens understanding of the significance of extralegal trade in the broader Spanish American colonial world. By examining economic transactions within the mission system, trade conducted by governors, and exchanges carried out by people across the social spectrum, this study offers a new understanding of the ways in which institutions and individuals were able to support their livelihoods, while the Spanish Crown underfunded the military and ecclesiastical administration of Texas. The importance of the frontier exchange economy is further underscored by the fact that during the early nineteenth century, local insurrectionists

and royalists alike viewed open, legal trade across the Texas-Louisiana border as strategic to their respective causes. The bloody aftermath of the rebellions in Texas, together with demographic change and Mexico's nationalist policies following independence, disrupted the dual economies and eventually enmeshed the province in new tensions between market and state.

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Introduction
“Bartering Hunger for Nakedness”:
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of Spanish Colonial Texas

On a 1779 visit to the newly-established pueblo of Nacogdoches in east Texas, Athanase de Mézières, lieutenant governor of Natchitoches, wrote that Spanish inhabitants were “scattered among the gentile Indians, carrying what they possess, offering clothing for food, bartering hunger for nakedness.”¹ His characterization of desperate trade for basic necessities masked a far broader range of illicit trade throughout the province, in which people at all levels of society participated. Distance and logistics precluded full economic integration of this frontier province with the interior of New Spain. Instead, Texas inhabitants – both Hispanic and indigenous – maximized their opportunities for material well-being by developing an informal and largely unregulated frontier exchange economy² trading local agricultural, ranching, and hunting products for European-manufactured textiles, fire arms, and other goods imported by French traders from the neighboring colony of Louisiana. The driving force of this frontier economy was what Spanish officials considered to be contraband trade, outside the legal economic exchanges under Crown control.

¹ Atanasio de Mézières to Commandant General Croix, 23 Aug 1779, cited in Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Spanish Colonial History and Administration* (1915; reprint ed. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970), p. 444, fn. 34. The letter is translated in its entirety in *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1768-1780*, trans. and ed. Herbert Eugene Bolton, Vol. 2 (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1914), pp. 260-62. The translations differ slightly.

² Daniel Usner describes the frontier exchange economy in the Lower Mississippi Valley as “the form and content of economic interaction” among indigenous, European, and enslaved African inhabitants. He further specifies it as “the intercultural relations that evolved within a geographical area in a way that emphasizes the initiatives taken by the various participants.” Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 5, 9.

Mézières's letter highlights the congruence of geography, economic policy, and market demand in eighteenth-century Texas. This dissertation explores how these factors conditioned the Spanish colonial economic experience in this frontier borderlands – an evolving political landscape where European empires, powerful indigenous nations, small autonomous tribes, and ambitious traders and settlers converged. My findings demonstrate that despite their limited numbers, the population of colonial-era Texas not only engaged in lively local trade, but also developed a robust dual economy based on different trade systems. Hispanic inhabitants supplemented legal trade and supplies from New Spain's interior and regional markets with extralegal trade across the border with Louisiana, tapping into the trans-Atlantic economy and the desire for European manufactured goods – commerce that went far beyond what Mézières denigrated in his 1779 missive. Access to an increasingly wide array of basic and luxury goods during the eighteenth century allowed settlers on the frontier to shape distinctive social relations, identities, and political ideologies. Ultimately, this long tradition of cross-border exchange of goods and ideas contributed to Texas's brief but pivotal role in the early struggle for Mexico's independence from Spain in the early nineteenth century.

With few exceptions, Spanish officials viewed Texas as the terminus of a land-based transport system throughout its colonial history, but practical realities did not match these basic assumptions of Spanish policies. Geographically, the Spanish settlements in Texas were a long distance not only from where their supplies originated in Mexico City and Saltillo, but also from one another. The distance from Mexico City to San Antonio was approximately 900 miles (1,450 km), and to Los Adaes approximately

1,200 miles (1,930 km); San Antonio and Los Adaes were separated by 300 miles (483 km). Seasonal timing was important to the regional transportation network, as dry seasons meant insufficient water and pasturage for the convoys of pack mules that carried goods, while flooding during rainy seasons made many rivers impossible to cross.³

A different aspect of geography had a far more profound effect on the development of the Texas economy, and that was the geopolitical boundary that separated the Spanish province of Texas from the neighboring French colony of Louisiana, as well as from the hundreds of indigenous groups who lived throughout the area. Spanish policy prohibited direct trade with foreigners, making trade illegal between Los Adaes (the capital of Spanish Texas) and the French settlement of Natchitoches, which were only twelve miles (19 km) apart. Trade with indigenous groups was likewise prohibited in Texas. These restrictions were ignored more often than not. The emergence of dual economies – legal and extralegal – in Texas reflects how the relationship between geography, economic policy, and market demand played out differently between the east Texas settlements and San Antonio.

As trade grew over the years, frontier exchange incorporated Spanish east Texas into French Louisiana's developing trans-Atlantic economy, in which European manufactured goods were shipped to New Orleans, then redistributed through a variety of intermediaries to indigenous villages, where they were exchanged for hides. This economic network stood in sharp contrast to the officially-sanctioned Spanish Texas

³ Jesús F. de la Teja, "The *Camino Real*: Colonial Texas' Lifeline to the World," in A. Joachim McGraw, John W. Clark, Jr., and Elizabeth Robbins, eds., *A Texas Legacy: The Old San Antonio Road and the Caminos Reales, A Tricentennial History, 1691-1991* (Austin: Texas Department of Transportation, 1991), pp. 43-46.

trade in which imports were restricted to New Spain's ports of Veracruz and Acapulco, then transported to Mexico City for redistribution overland via Saltillo to the settlements of Texas. Through their trafficking in illicit goods, a political economy based on extralegal frontier exchange emerged to distinguish east Texas from the rest of the province. Ultimately, contraband trade both fractured and remade the local Spanish community.

My focus in this dissertation is on the Spaniards who lived in Texas during the colonial period, but the argument presupposes the dominant role that certain indigenous groups held in Texas, most notably Caddoans, Apaches, Comanches, and others whom the Spaniards collectively called *Norteños* (Nations of the North). The indigenous population in Texas was substantially larger than the Spanish population throughout the colonial period. Indigenous groups controlled the flow of commodities and trade goods that connected people across cultural, territorial, and political boundaries, a fact that Spanish officials rarely acknowledged. Collectively, indigenous production of agricultural and hunting products, as well as the procurement of horses and mules (typically raided from Spanish settlements), powered trade with French merchants in Louisiana. Hispanic ranchers in Texas tapped into these trade networks, and also helped to supply Louisiana's market demand for cattle.

This dissertation is not an economic analysis, nor is it an exhaustive study of the full scope of the colonial Texas economy. I am concerned primarily with voluntary trade, specifically the economic activities of Spanish bureaucrats, missionaries, mission residents, soldiers, and civilians. Their actions highlight the ways that geography and markets created and influenced distinctive local economies in east Texas and San

Antonio, which were the primary areas of Hispanic settlement. The geographic distribution of the Hispanic population in Texas is a significant factor in my study. I include only superficial discussion of indigenous trade, and of the economic impact of the presidios in Texas. These are worthy topics that merit further attention, but they are beyond the scope of this project. Trade among people of different cultures could involve ambiguity, misunderstandings, and friction among the participants, and insufficient trade was apt to provoke violence. Other historians have shown that coercion and violence were core elements of intercultural exchange across New Spain's northern frontier.⁴ While I acknowledge that a substantial portion of the resources that flowed through the frontier exchange economy in the Texas-Louisiana borderlands included captive people and plundered goods, I am more interested in the ways that trade – whether in casual personal encounters or as a shared ritual of diplomacy – promoted peaceful interaction.

The idea for this topic grew in part from my reading of Daniel Usner's *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy*. This study is an early contribution to the historiography that views the frontier as a dynamic network of multicultural contacts in areas of weak state control. The frontier exchange economy that he describes consisted of small-scale production of goods and direct face-to-face marketing on a regional level. Usner observes that in Louisiana, "[w]hether looking at labor systems or regional markets, the outcome of colonization depended as much upon

⁴ James Brooks, for example, has argued that the region's distinctive political and cultural economy was based on acts of retribution through exchanges of violence, and redistribution through exchanges of living commodities – primarily captive women and children, and livestock. James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

the influence of colonial and native inhabitants as upon the policies designed by official and commercial interests.”⁵ This assessment applies just as well to Texas, I argue, because the lure of trade with Louisiana led Texas residents to continuously defy Crown policies, and particularly its assertion of mercantile privilege. Exchange between Hispanic, French, and indigenous residents influenced settlement patterns, swayed political policy, and shaped the history of this colonial province.

My study enlarges the scale of regional production and distribution of goods that Usner describes, and extends it across the formal but porous imperial boundary between French Louisiana and Spanish Texas. Texas sits just beyond the periphery of Usner’s area of study, but inverting his perspective makes clear that frontier exchange with Louisiana and neighboring indigenous people enabled the survival of Spanish east Texas. The “frontier exchange economy” reflects a broad range of activities that constituted a system of trade that sustained its participants. Spanish policy criminalized these activities as contraband, but east Texas settlers were simply carrying out practices that met their needs and enabled their livelihoods. The Hispanic, indigenous, and French cultural groups who inhabited this area were far more interested in trade with one another than with respecting a geopolitical border that arbitrarily divided their market.

This dissertation draws on a diverse body of historiography for both its substantive and conceptual frameworks. The region occupies a niche at the intersection of United States, Latin American, Native American, and borderlands histories. Historians of colonial Texas have typically viewed the province as

⁵ Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves*, p. 5.

economically isolated and impoverished because they utilized administrative records that focus on Crown policies and were written by officials who often deliberately obscured their own undermining of Crown policy. Those reports and documents reflect a bureaucratic perspective and the biases of their writers; they were rarely intended to show the points of view of those who were governed or of indigenous polities. My effort to unmask officials' and local peoples' behaviors involves interrogating documents for evidence of power inequalities, resistance to authority, contradictory information, or discrepancies between documentary and archaeological information.

While Texas had strong market ties with Louisiana to its east, no such external ties existed with New Mexico, its neighboring province to the west. At first glance, the provinces might appear to share similarities – remote from interior markets, inconsistent supply chains, and large populations of both sedentary and nomadic indigenous inhabitants with shifting strategic alliances. Separated by hundreds of miles of indigenous territories, however, the two provinces had no effective trade connection between their Hispanic inhabitants.⁶ Despite their similarities, economic development in these neighboring provinces on the northern frontier occurred in surprisingly different ways. I argue that the key to these differences was the way in which Bourbon economic reforms were carried out in each of the respective provinces.

These reforms were implemented primarily during the reign of the Bourbon king Carlos III (1759-88), who sought to increase crown revenue from the Spanish American colonies through assessing new taxes and streamlining administrative and military organization. Ross Frank, in his study of economic development in New

⁶ During the pre-contact period, Jumano traders facilitated robust trade networks across this region between the Pueblo and Caddoan peoples.

Mexico, *From Settler to Citizen*,⁷ finds very different outcomes than those I describe for Texas. According to Frank, Bourbon reforms came into play in New Mexico during the “defensive crisis” in the 1750s to 1780s, caused by waves of Comanche, Apache, Ute, and Navajo attacks on Hispanic settlements during a prolonged period of drought and food shortages. Crown officials pursued a variety of strategies during these decades to resolve the crisis, combining military campaigns to achieve peace and fiscal reforms to support trade.

In Frank’s narrative, the Spanish-Comanche alliance of 1786 served as a watershed in New Mexico’s economic development. As a result of this peace, annual Crown gifting of imported and locally produced goods to the formerly hostile indigenous groups offered a major stimulant to restore New Mexico’s economy. The decades following the peace agreement saw economic growth facilitated by Bourbon fiscal reforms, characterized by a shift to a “commercial, money-based economy” that connected New Mexico to broader interregional trade through the export and sales of artisanal goods and products.⁸ Frank argues that New Mexico’s relatively large Hispanic population and strong market ties with Chihuahua attracted the interest of government officials in promoting economic development in the province, and he identifies repeated instances in which reform policies directly addressed economic problems in New Mexico. Crown officials specifically evaluated the “economic impact of

⁷ Ross Frank, *From Settler to Citizen: New Mexican Economic Development and the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

⁸ Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, p. 140.

their fiscal decisions,” Frank concludes, resulting in a “surprising degree of conscious support” for economic development.⁹

Frank broadly speculates that Bourbon reforms across the northern provinces resulted in economic development.¹⁰ My research, however, shows that the effects of Bourbon reforms in Texas stood in sharp contrast to those in New Mexico. The primary reason for this is that by the time Spain established its settlements in Texas, Caddoans and other indigenous groups in east Texas were already allied with the nearby French in Louisiana. The economic ties among these groups remained strong throughout the colonial period, even after Spanish acquisition of Louisiana from France in 1763. Until that time, Texas stood at the border between the Spanish and French empires, making it – in the view of viceregal officials – susceptible to foreign influence or invasion. With the reliance in Texas on the extralegal, yet thriving frontier exchange economy, provincial officials’ suggestions for economic reform were directed toward legitimizing certain aspects of this trade.

Their recommendations were refused at the viceregal level, I conjecture, due to their inability to repress the existing but illicit firearms trade with indigenous groups. Viceregal and Crown policies in Texas were punitive compared to New Mexico, as they were aimed at quashing rather than supporting the frontier exchange economy. Hispanic settlements in Texas sustained the same type of raids by Plains groups as did those in New Mexico, but when peace came to Texas gifts were never available in sufficient quantity to meet Spanish obligations to indigenous allies. Moreover, vecinos in Texas had no part in the production of the goods promised as gifts, as did those in

⁹ Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, p. 90.

¹⁰ Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, p. 68.

New Mexico. Peace may have been a precondition for the growth in trade, but the uneasy peace in Texas failed to act as the economic stimulus that it did in New Mexico.

In the indigenous world, peaceful relations allowed peaceful trade. Raids and violence were threatened or occurred in the face of insufficient trade or shortages, among other factors. Under hostile conditions, gender played a significant part in diplomacy between indigenous groups and Texas officials. Julianna Barr's *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*¹¹ persuasively demonstrates how indigenous women held key roles as intermediaries between adversarial parties, signaling a desire to avoid conflict during periods of violence. During hostile raids, women could be targeted for capture; later to be sold or incorporated into a band according to needs. Because the exchange relations I examine took place voluntarily between individuals, however, my research did not yield similar evidence of gendered roles in material exchange. Voluntary trade was a mixed gender activity, particularly when people met in large groups, but I describe numerous examples of individual exchange across cultures between men. Nonetheless, Barr's work opens new possibilities for thinking about the connection between gender and trade through a nuanced, culturally contexted reading of colonial documents – especially in the context of fictive kinships that enabled peaceful trade.

Andrés Reséndez follows the study of Texas and New Mexico in the nineteenth century, in *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*. In this work, Reséndez outlines the tensions between state and market forces in Texas and New Mexico during the first half of the nineteenth century. While the Hispanic residents of this broad frontier area maintained strong cultural ties with the interior, Reséndez finds “a dramatic

¹¹ Julianna Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007).

reorientation”¹² of the economy away from Mexico toward the United States following the demise of colonial rule. He takes as given that frontier settlements depended on the interior’s supplies and markets during the colonial period because of the Crown’s prohibition of trade with foreigners. My study shows that, to the contrary, from their beginnings east Texas settlements were economically oriented to the east – first in the markets of French Louisiana, and later those of the United States. To a lesser degree, San Antonio residents also participated in French markets; their economic ties with Louisiana increased after France ceded the territory to Spain in 1763. I demonstrate that the origins of the tension between state and market forces that Reséndez finds in the nineteenth century can be located in the early eighteenth.

Despite being circumscribed by law, the frontier exchange economy in Texas reflect far more agency and autonomy at all levels of Hispanic society than scholars generally suppose. A few historians of colonial Texas acknowledge the existence of contraband in passing, but none examine it closely. Herbert Bolton, for example, characterizes contraband trade as French intrusions into Spanish territory, potentially turning indigenous trading partners against Spain and upsetting the regional balance of power. He minimizes Spanish participation as limited to a few corrupt officials, neither acknowledging nor understanding the widespread settler participation in the trade or the significant role of indigenous peoples. Recently, Francis Galán, whose monograph chapter entitled “Smugglers’ Paradise” is the most extensive treatment to date of contraband trade in colonial east Texas, describes the prosecution of several contraband cases. Like Bolton, he focuses on government officials and French traders.

¹² Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), p. 4.

He mentions missionary trade in passing, and makes reference to Adaeseños' procurement of alcohol from Natchitoches; otherwise, his observations are confined to a general picture of Spanish-French-Caddo relations in east Texas. Extending the area of study to San Antonio, archaeologist Casey Hanson analyzed materials excavated from three sites occupied over the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, relating material culture (that could survive in the archeological context) and identity to broader economic and political contexts.¹³ No study has offered insight into the market conditions and regional economic and administrative dynamics that shaped this trade, the mechanisms through which it sustained the province, or – during the late colonial period – the systemic role it played in undermining Crown authority. Nor has anyone placed Texas contraband trade in a broader colonial context of the Atlantic world.

Yet there are numerous parallels between Texas and other Spanish frontier areas with respect to extralegal trade, particularly in the Caribbean basin. As part of the long-term trend away from top-down institutional histories based on uncritical reading of official documentation, several historians have examined contraband in other parts of Spanish America. Some studies focus on the social and political aspects of smuggling in circum-Caribbean markets, for example, where inter-imperial competition over trade intensified with the decline in Spanish trans-Atlantic trade during the seventeenth century. By the eighteenth century, Dutch Curaçao, British Jamaica, and French Saint-Domingue offered Spain's European rivals secure bases of operation in the Caribbean

¹³ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 65-71, 400-408; Francis X. Galán, *Los Adaes: The First Capital of Spanish Texas* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2020), pp. 120-62; Casey Jeffrey Hanson, "The Materiality of *Tejano* Identity," PhD diss. (Austin: University of Texas, 2016), pp. 355-427.

for trade with the chronically under-supplied Spanish American colonies. The goods they provided to ports in New Granada (present-day Colombia) and Venezuela were better quality, greater in quantity, and less expensive than those otherwise available to local residents through legitimate trade, mirroring the situation in east Texas.

Due to the lack of legal trade goods, the scale of contraband trade constituted a significant part of New Granada's local and regional economies. Although all social classes in New Granada participated in contraband trade, this shared experience did not translate into cohesive bonds across groups. Instead, the trade exacerbated tensions between indigenous peoples and colonial settlers, church and state, military officers and soldiers, and rich and poor. Rampant official corruption made a farce of enforcement.¹⁴ Venezuela had a similarly long history of contraband trade, but Bourbon authorities there attempted to resolve it through the creation of a monopoly company to export cacao.¹⁵ They expected a focus on this commodity to provide a stable market for local production, and to integrate peripheral coastal areas into the colonial economy. In return for its market control, the company was to develop infrastructure to facilitate regional commerce, and use its private fleet for regular deliveries of legitimate trade goods and to enforce sanctions against trade with foreigners. Instead, the company used its monopoly power to depress the purchase price of cacao for export and to inflate the sale price of the goods it imported. Unlike neighboring New Granada, Venezuelans united across social and economic classes to

¹⁴ Lance Grahn, *The Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997).

¹⁵ While cacao was a valuable export product for Venezuela, Texas had its equivalent in livestock – particularly horses and mules, but also cattle – which was in high demand in Louisiana. Crown officials, however, did nothing to promote their production and export from Texas.

defend their longstanding yet illicit trade practices against the powers of the monopoly company, and to reinforce their own local ethnic and communal identity. In the process, they achieved both commercial and administrative reforms.¹⁶

As did the border between Spanish Texas and French Louisiana, other imperial borders arbitrarily divided markets. Just off the northern coast of South America, for example, the Dutch island of Curaçao served as a major node in the region's network of inter-imperial trade, part of a commercial rivalry rooted in the sixteenth century Dutch Revolt against Hapsburg Spain. Ignoring Spain's mercantilist policies, the Dutch island developed strong commercial ties with Tierra Firme, the Spanish-claimed area that included Venezuela and parts of New Granada. There, the residents of Spain's neglected colonial margins were eager to trade exports of cacao, tobacco, cowhides, and mules for everything from basic necessities to luxury textiles to enslaved Africans. During the eighteenth century, people of all backgrounds found that extralegal trade created new and evolving economic and cultural identities that were separate and distinct from those of their mother countries. In offering sociocultural exchange as well as economic opportunities to those of different social, ethnic and racial groups, this illicit economy developed in tandem with a process of creolization that spread along contraband trade routes throughout the Caribbean.¹⁷

With its lengthy coastline, its border with the French colony of Louisiana, and its difficulties in accessing legal provisions and supplies, the province of Texas shared

¹⁶ Jesse Cromwell, *The Smugglers' World: Illicit Trade and Atlantic Communities in Eighteenth-Century Venezuela* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018).

¹⁷ Linda Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband: Curaçao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012). Rupert defines "creolization" as the "processes of sociocultural exchange and adaptation that occurred among all the diverse peoples of the early modern world who were thrust together with the rise of European overseas empires;" p. 6.

many characteristics and concerns with its South American counterparts. As in Tierra Firme, the settlements in east Texas were surrounded by comparatively larger groups of autonomous indigenous peoples who provided a lucrative market for European goods. Caddoan peoples, in particular, played off Spanish officials against the nearby French, threatening to evict Spanish settlements from the territory if they interfered with trade. These officials choose to broadly tolerate the French and indigenous trade, treading an ill-defined line between upholding policy goals rather than the letter of Spanish law. As in New Granada and Venezuela, all levels of local Spanish society – from missionaries and governors to soldiers and vecinos – participated in this trade, whether for wholesale profit or diplomatic ends, to obtain luxury items, or to satisfy basic needs.

For much of the twentieth century, scholarly works on Texas were frequently cast in terms of its supposed unique status in U.S. history. This perspective determined the trajectory of Texas historiography, largely keeping it fixed in the discourse of U.S. history, which has viewed the “Spanish borderlands” as an anomaly in the historical narrative. One of the earliest historians to challenge this narrow Anglo-centric discourse was Herbert Bolton, whose *Wider Horizons of American History* argues that the history of the Americas can only be told as a synthesis that transcends the national and cultural boundaries of the western hemisphere. A focus on the spatial geography of the North American continent enabled him to bridge the divide between the narrow, conventional interpretation of “American” history as based on the English colonies along the Atlantic seaboard, and a more comprehensive story rooted in the Americas’ shared European heritage of multiple empires. His approach emphasized the unity of

the history of “greater America.” For Bolton, the political and cultural zones of interaction that were characteristic of borderlands formed a linear process of institutional and social advancement.¹⁸

The most significant work on Texas history in the Boltonian school was by Carlos Castañeda, whose seven-volume study of Texas history – like the work of Bolton – remains seminal because of its strong grounding in archival sources. It was the first, in-depth publication based on the Béxar Archives. As did Bolton, Castañeda located the foundation of Texas history in its Spanish past, and found commonalities between Mexican- and Anglo-Americans in their Christian European heritage. His work interprets many events as steps in an inevitable progression toward “liberty” within the U.S. Castañeda structured his account around the rise and fall of the missions in Texas, an influential narrative arc that few scholars have questioned until recently.¹⁹ Hubert Howe Bancroft initiated this focus on mission shortcomings with his 1884 multi-volume history of the former northern states of Mexico. His brief treatment of Texas describes a decline of the mission populations and the deterioration of their infrastructure beginning in the 1780s. “Nowhere in America,” Bancroft wrote, “had missionary work been so complete a failure.”²⁰ At the time, Bancroft had access to relatively few documents for Texas history. Castañeda, however, expanded Bancroft’s theme as he systematically worked his way through the Béxar Archives, and even pushed the period

¹⁸ Herbert E. Bolton, *Wider Horizons of American History* (New York: Appleton-Century Co., 1939); Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*.

¹⁹ Carlos Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1936-58). Castañeda’s focus on Catholic heritage was due to the Texas Knights of Columbus Historical Commission underwriting his work for the centennial of Texas independence from Mexico. Nevertheless, his scope of study is far broader than the title suggests.

²⁰ Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of the North Mexican States: Volume 1, 1531 to 1800*, Vol. 15, *The Works of Hubert Howe Bancroft* (San Francisco: A. L. Bancroft and Co., 1884), p. 634.

of decline earlier, to the 1760s.²¹ The idea of mission decline and failure has been echoed by other histories of the San Antonio missions until recently.

One of the reasons for the long-static narrative of institutional Texas history is the nature and accessibility of archival sources. The principal collection of documents for the Spanish and Mexican periods of Texas history is the Bexar Archives. The collection was formally created in 1899, when the large group of Spanish documents long held in the Bexar County courthouse was divided among several repositories. The Bexar Archives was created and subsequently housed and curated at the University of Texas in Austin (UT). It comprises local administrative, judicial, and military records. A similar set of records pertaining to the east Texas settlements of Los Adaes and Nacogdoches formed the Nacogdoches Archives, which went to the Texas State Library in Austin. Records such as land grants and deeds, notary books, and wills, that were related to the ongoing functions of the Bexar County clerk remained at that office in San Antonio as the Bexar County Spanish Archives. It would take decades of archivists' and historians' work before any of the collections were sufficiently organized and calendared that researchers could use them. Yet many of the records from the missions themselves were missing from all of this material.

Starting in the late nineteenth century and well into the twentieth, scholars including Bancroft, Bolton, and others combed the national and regional archives of Spain and Mexico to identify and copy records related to Texas, beginning decades of effort – primarily by the University of Texas – to transcribe, photograph or microfilm relevant material. These documents, housed at UT, substantially augmented the

²¹ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, Vol. 4: *The Mission Era: The Passing of the Missions, 1762-1782* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1939).

collections just described. Another phase of such work, concentrated on the missions of San Antonio, began in the 1970s. This project was jointly funded by the Catholic Archdiocese of San Antonio and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, with an initial focus on the archives of the Franciscan apostolic colleges in Querétaro and Zacatecas. The materials copied from there formed the basis of the Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, originally housed at Mission San José in San Antonio, and now housed at Our Lady of the Lakes University in San Antonio. Fray Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M. and Fray Marion Habig, O.F.M., who spearheaded the project, together translated and published several of the more important documents that they identified for the administration of the missions.²² Within the collection they amassed are microfilm copies of annual account books for four of the San Antonio missions, dating from 1745 to 1772. These books are rich in detail, encompassing the missions' budgets and supplies in line-item descriptions. To date, no scholar has published information using these sources.

This dissertation breaks new ground in basing its discussion of the economic role of the San Antonio missions on these account books and other documents located by Leutenegger and Habig. I challenge the narrative of mission decline with information from these sources. In their early years, the San Antonio missions played a significant role in the local community, in large part through the communal labor of their residents. The mission populations began to fall in the 1780s, as residents moved into the larger community and there were no more autonomous indigenous groups willing to enter the missions. Rather than languish, however, the missions maintained

²² The Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library documentary series was an in-house set of publications that produced a limited number of copies of each volume.

their temporal vitality by recruiting labor from the Hispanic community, renting out agricultural lands to some and paying others to work within the mission walls. These measures allowed the missions to successfully fulfill their planned life cycles by eventually turning over the temporalities to secular (non-clerical) management, and becoming parish churches that focused on the spiritual needs of their members.

More recent works have moved from Bolton's view of borderlands interactions as a linear process, to a focus on dialectical process in which different groups interact as culturally grounded, independent agents. That the Spanish population of Texas was fractured along multiple lines of social, political, and economic interests is clear from community studies of San Antonio. Jesús de la Teja's *San Antonio de Béxar*, for example, provides important details about the varied ethnic origins of the community, positing that over time the discrete interests of these groups became blurred through intermarriage and shared concerns. By the end of the eighteenth century, according to de la Teja, San Antonio had overcome its factious origins and developed into a clearly defined community characterized by common cultural, religious, and economic values.²³ In contrast, my research on events in the early nineteenth century indicates that such cohesiveness was at best superficial, as the community quickly splintered among a number of competing familial and economic interests as factions vied for political control of the community and the province.

Identity has become an increasingly important theme in revisionist studies of the broader colonial-era Southwest. For example, James Brooks's ground-breaking

²³Jesús de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995).

Captives and Cousins challenges the concept of identity as a set of timeless characteristics by elucidating its fluid nature. Brooks contends that borderlands are embodied in people, not just place. In *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*, discussed above, Andrés Reséndez argues that Hispanic identity in Texas and New Mexico was conditioned by the colliding forces of the Mexican state and the U.S. market.²⁴

Until recently, the indigenous peoples of Texas have been absent from studies of its colonial period. Instead, the historiography has followed different methodologies: ethnographic studies, based primarily on archaeological information; and ethnohistorical studies, based on events interpreted through Spanish documentary observations of indigenous groups and grounding the study in the subject's cultural framework. Examples of the former approach include such works as those of T. N. Campbell, W. W. Newcomb, Jr., and Mardith Schuetz, who provide overviews of social organization, material culture, and linguistic affiliation for the major indigenous groups of Texas.²⁵ The latter approach includes works by Elizabeth John, Thomas Kavanaugh, F. Todd Smith, and David La Vere.²⁶ John's work in particular is significant for breaking with the Boltonian focus on institutions, emphasizing indigenous hegemonies,

²⁴Brooks, *Captives and Cousins*; Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier*.

²⁵T.N. Campbell, *The Indians of Southern Texas and Northeastern Mexico: Selected Writings of Thomas Nolan Campbell* (Austin: Texas Archaeological Research Laboratory, University of Texas, 1988); W.W. Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas: From Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961); Mardith Keithly Schuetz, "The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1980).

²⁶Elizabeth John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1975); Thomas W. Kavanaugh, *The Comanches: A History 1706-1875* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1996); F. Todd Smith, *The Wichita Indians: Traders of Texas and the Southern Plains, 1540-1845* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000); David La Vere, *The Texas Indians* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2004).

decentering the Spanish perspective in the borderlands, and including the Mississippi valley in her scope of study.

Other contemporary works on indigenous history for the region are topically oriented. Gary Clayton Anderson investigates the consequences of European and indigenous contact through a detailed exploration of the processes of tribal ethnogenesis and cultural reinvention in Texas and eastern New Mexico. Ned Blackhawk highlights the central role that violence played in relations between indigenous people and Euroamericans during colonial expansion in the Great Basin region of North America. Works by Juliana Barr and Pekka Hämäläinen have reinterpreted primary sources and centered indigenous peoples in their narratives by reversing Eurocentric definitions of core and periphery. Barr focuses her study on the contingencies of intercultural relations in Texas, arguing that indigenous concepts of gender-based kinship rather than Spanish concepts of racial hierarchy determined the course of their interactions. Hämäläinen carries the core/periphery inversion even further, extending the definition of empire to the Comanche people and challenging the concept that early modern empires were exclusively based on state societies. This “reversed colonialism” places Comanches as a thriving regional power that dominated the struggling European colonies in the region, extracting labor and material resources through a complex raiding and trading economy that secured Comanche economic, political, and cultural hegemony for more than 150 years.²⁷

²⁷ Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999); Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Conquest of Texas: Ethnic Cleansing in the Promised Land 1820-1875* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Ned Blackhawk, *Violence Over the Land: Indians and Empires in the Early American West* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman*; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008).

In general, while the literature on Texas ignores the period of Mexican independence (1808-1821), the historiography of Mexican independence ignores the frontier and focuses on core institutional structures and associated political and economic issues. Much of this literature has looked at the topic solely from an institutional perspective, focusing on the economic and political concerns of elite groups. Latin American historian Richard Graham, for example, places the independence movements in the context of European economic expansion, concluding that the wars failed to accomplish revolutionary structural change in the Americas, although such change was not necessarily the goal of independence movements. In contrast to Graham, John Lynch locates the roots of the independence movements in American interests: creole elites gained new power through political independence, while the status of other social classes declined. Jay Kinsbruner argues that the independence movements were not just civil wars – a struggle for home rule between creoles and peninsulars – but also revolutions, resulting in a transformation of society in which slaves were freed, indigenous peoples gained new legal status, hierarchical legal racial categories were abolished, and the rights of citizenship were broadly conferred.²⁸

Other studies have shifted the focus away from the formation of independent Spanish American nation-states to examine the impact of local and regional concerns on the independence movement, and to analyze the role of peasants and indigenous

²⁸Richard Graham, *Independence in Latin America: A Comparative Approach* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1994); John Lynch, *The Spanish American Revolutions 1808-1826: Old and New World Origins* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994); Jay Kinsbruner, *Independence in Spanish America: Civil Wars, Revolutions, and Underdevelopment*, 2nd revised ed., (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994).

peoples in both independence and in creating the early republics. Brian Hamnett, for example, studied regional variations and social aspects of the struggle for independence in the provinces of central Mexico, connecting earlier popular uprisings with the independence movement. Together with shifting ideologies and political alignments, local and regional tensions as well as race and class differences prevented the prolonged insurrection in Mexico from becoming a national independence movement embraced by elites, until 1820. Eric Van Young focused on microhistories of local conflict and rural insurrection in central Mexico. Addressing the aspirations of rural Mexicans, he found that local social relationships and fault lines were often played out in the insurrection. Some battles were fought not so much over political ideology, but rather based on internal community divisions.²⁹ Both of these studies offer parallels with the rebellions I examine in Texas.

My work draws on these different fields to support my interpretation of a broad range of archival materials. I have used the narrative writings of missionaries, mission account books, debt cases, wills, census records, judicial investigations of governors, and criminal investigations of contraband and sedition to piece together the range of economic behaviors in the Texas settlements. The cases I discuss are representative of the large body of cases that I read in the archives. The dissertation begins with a description of the indigenous world that French and Spanish settlers encountered in Texas. It then examines Spanish Crown's conception of the legitimate economy for the region, before exploring the unsanctioned frontier exchange economy. Finally, I draw

²⁹Brian Hamnett, *Roots of Insurgency: Mexican Regions, 1750-1824* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001).

parallels between the smuggling of contraband goods and the exchange of seditious ideas. Each of these commodities undermined Crown authority in Texas. The study ends with the devastation wrought in Texas as a consequence of local rebellions in the early 1810s, tied to the movement for independence. Some chapters are in broad outline based on close reading of documentation that is suggestive and not explicitly empirical, but together they indicate important trends and behaviors that have been overlooked by other historians.

Chapter One highlights indigenous trade networks that French and Spanish traders and settlers encountered in the late seventeenth century. Although it is difficult to bridge the gap between the archaeological record and historical writings without the risk of “upstreaming,” or projecting knowledge from any given time period to an earlier one, archaeological evidence combined with the first ethnographic records of Texas groups provide substantial proof of pre-contact indigenous exchange networks, which continued to function after the arrival of Europeans. The remainder of the chapter introduces key indigenous groups in Texas and discusses the areas where they connected through trade. The chapter ends with a discussion of the new peoples, both indigenous and European, who migrated to the area during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

The next two chapters discuss the legal economic structure and activities tied to the interior of New Spain, in which authorities expected the Texas settlements to take part. They present evidence of robust local and regional economies, from petty exchange to large financial transactions. Because of geographical distance and transportation logistics, legal economic behavior was more accessible to the Spanish

inhabitants of the San Antonio area than to those in east Texas. Chapter Two examines the economic functions of the five San Antonio missions and their contributions to the local economy, based on information from mission records and account books. Throughout their life cycle, San Antonio missions brought substantial economic resources to the area. This chapter recontextualizes the San Antonio missions as broader communities beginning in the 1780s, contradicting their typical characterization of decline. Chapter Three describes the organization and mechanisms of civilian economic activity in San Antonio. The itemizations of credit and debt found in wills, promissory bonds, criminal cases, and lawsuits to recover debt provide key information for understanding the development of the local economy, and the mechanisms and networks of trade through which it functioned. This chapter also examines occupations and material wealth in the community.

The next two chapters – Four and Five – develop the theme of the east Texas settlements' distinctive economic trajectory compared with San Antonio. I apply Usner's concept of the frontier exchange economy to the commerce among the various groups who lived in the Texas-Louisiana borderlands. Chapter Four focuses on the economic activities of missionaries and governors as evidenced in archival documents and archaeological materials. Particularly in the case of the east Texas missions, for which there is little available documentation, archaeology is a significant means of recovering material information regarding the economic activities of these institutions. Archaeological artifacts reveal that the east Texas missions became economic actors through trade with Louisiana and with neighboring indigenous groups. The remainder of the chapter explains how the Spanish Crown was able to underfund colonial

administration by permitting local officials a certain level of self-enrichment from their posts. Exploiting the labor of military personnel and the proximity of French traders, governors found a variety of sources for profit in the execution of their duties.

Chapter Five examines the failure of Bourbon reforms that withdrew Spanish presence from east Texas in 1773, a decade after the Seven Years' War ended. The presidio of Los Adaes, its civilian settlements and ranches, and the missions in its jurisdiction, were abandoned, and San Antonio was designated as the new provincial capital. Most of the civilian population of east Texas rejected their compulsory move to the new capital and quickly resettled in east Texas. Their defiance underscored the vitality of the frontier exchange economy. Legal proceedings against individuals for contraband trade disclose a range of practitioners and the goods they carried.

Chapter Six considers a brief series of rebellions against Spanish authority in Texas during the early nineteenth century. Viewing revolutionary ideas as the intangible corollary of contraband material commodities, the chapter elucidates how Texas came to hold strategic significance during the early years of the broader insurrection in New Spain. Printed documents endorsing illicit ideas, imported from Louisiana for distribution in Texas and Nuevo Santander, followed similar routes as the contraband goods that moved through these areas. The prosecution of seditious behavior illuminated the connection between local economic grievances with broader acts of political rebellion. The strength of the frontier exchange economy, combined with the enforcement of rigid economic policies, had a significant role in creating political factions and undermining Crown authority in the Texas province. Tensions between market and state that had remained below the surface during the eighteenth

century became clearly visible with the rebellions, and ultimately shattered the dual economies of Texas. It would remain for new generations and a complete reorientation of governance and markets to build a viable economic system.

By developing and asserting economic agency largely outside of the control of the Spanish crown – especially through the reoccupation of east Texas and participation in foreign markets – vecinos exercised locally independent thought and behavior. During the eighteenth century, this frontier area transformed from a distant hinterland that could barely be provisioned, to an area with a robust, inter-imperial and intercultural economy. The volume of trade between Hispanic, indigenous and French peoples in east Texas may have been relatively small in comparison with other areas – as was that between San Antonio and the interior. Yet for these inhabitants, the availability of a wide range of basic necessities and luxury goods was vital to their survival, their well-being, and their aspirations and identity in Spanish society. Seeking to make the best of what were often harsh conditions, the Hispanic residents and officials of Texas created multiple networks of exchange that served needs from household to Crown.

Chapter One
“And an infinity of others allied to them”:¹
Indigenous Exchange Networks in Early Contact Period Texas

A problem inherent in writing about “Texas” history – of constructing a narrative about a past with relatively recently defined boundaries – is to have that past to make sense on its own terms. The spatial boundaries of contemporary Texas were once defined by sedentary agricultural peoples on its eastern and western fringes, and bridged by nomadic hunting and gathering peoples in its interior. It was across this vast space that ideas, information, technology, and goods were transmitted, creating a broad cultural zone interconnected with neighboring cultural areas. Occupying the edges of Mississippian, Plains, Southwestern and Mesoamerican culture groups, present-day Texas in times past comprised multiple geographies and cultures of its own. Its extraordinary variety of ecological habitats encompasses some two dozen river basins, which served as both incubator and magnet for diverse societies and cultures. Over millenia, the area witnessed the emergence of distinct cultures that exploited such diverse ecological niches as coastal wetlands, temperate forests, short- and mixed-grass plains, canyon lands, mountains, and deserts.²

The indigenous peoples who lived in this area for thousands of years before European contact devised complex strategies of survival. Traveling by foot, peoples who occupied different parts of this region developed both local and long distance relationships that enabled them to secure food and other resources, exchange goods

¹ “... y una infinidad de otros sus Aliados,” Marquis Louis Billouart de Kerlérac, Governor of Louisiana, to Angel de Martos y Navarrete, Governor of Texas, 13 March 1760, Béxar Archives (BA), regarding former Texas Governor Jacinto de Barrios’s illicit trade in firearms with indigenous groups.

² Lynn A. Biesaat, Wayne R. Roberson, and Lisa Clinton Spotts, comps., *Prehistoric Archaeological Sites in Texas: A Statistical Overview*, Office of the State Archaeologist Special Report 28 (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1985), pp. 30-31, 45-47, 71.

and information, and overcome or adapt to the environmental challenges they faced over time, across a wide range of ecological zones. By the eighteenth century, traders and settlers of European heritage brought their own networks to mesh with the indigenous ones they encountered in the area. Yet something larger than European military power, political ambition, or economic gain shaped the subsequent history of this area: the evolution of peoples and cultures deeply rooted in time and place. This past conditioned indigenous interactions with new peoples who migrated into the area – whether other Native Americans or populations of European descent. Pre-existing indigenous networks shaped the ways that European aspirations played out during the eighteenth century in Texas. This chapter will examine general concepts of indigenous trade before turning to the specific peoples who populated the area and whose desire for exchange was the driving force that attracted and enabled people of European descent to settle there.

For Texas history, the seventeenth century marks a curiously murky intellectual boundary between archaeological and documentary history. Until recently, archaeologists labeled the time between the introduction of European goods and diseases into a specific culture area, and the actual settlement of Europeans themselves in that culture area, as the “protohistoric” (or sometimes as the late prehistoric) period. Now, scholars recognize that this terminology flattens and even caricatures the indigenous past, misreading both the past and the present. Since the 1970s, archaeological and historical studies have challenged the notion of “pre-history” because it explicitly centers the late fifteenth-century arrival of Europeans in the Americas as the beginning of dynamic and meaningful change, forcing an ill-conceived

periodization on indigenous histories. Because the discipline of history long focused on the stories of nations and empires, the concept of “pre-history” implicitly devalues alternative trajectories of political, economic, and social development, thereby minimizing the scales of other – particularly indigenous – pasts. It reinforces outdated anthropological notions of “primitive” peoples who lived isolated from one another, within the static confines of their own distinctive culture. “There’s no such thing as ‘pre-history,’” historian Juliana Barr contends. Rather, she argues, we must acknowledge the deep timelines of the Americas to understand the nature and variety of how later histories, including indigenous interactions with Europeans, developed. While no new terms have yet gained general consensus, historians have moved away from such phrases as pre- or proto-historical, opting instead to use pre- and post-contact. Contact is defined as the introduction of European peoples, diseases, or material culture into an indigenous area; disease and goods might enter an area long before Europeans themselves.³

The exchange of material goods and commodities is a fundamental human activity. While geography can present formidable barriers to travel and trade across long distances, it is not insurmountable, even on foot. Recent use of chemical analysis, x-ray florescence, and mathematical modeling, for example, provides ample evidence of long-distance trade that connected peoples across the Americas for thousands of years. Maize from Mexico spread through much of North America. Marine shells from the

³ Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Changing Histories of North America before Europeans,” *OAH Magazine of History* 27, no. 4 (Oct. 2013), pp. 5-7; Juliana Barr, “There’s No Such Thing as ‘Prehistory’: What the Longue Durée of Caddo and Pueblo History Tells Us about Colonial America,” *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 2 (April 2017), pp. 203-40. The debate has deeper roots: see, for example, Eric R. Wolf, “Introduction” in *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

Pacific coast, the Gulf of California, and the Gulf of Mexico appear throughout the Southwest and the Plains. Bison bone and tools from the Plains are present in Pueblo sites along the upper Rio Grande. Pottery from northeast Texas occurs throughout Texas, the Southeast, the Midwest, and the southern Plains. Scarlet macaw mummies, bones, and feathers from Mesoamerica are found in New Mexico. Obsidian from Idaho, Wyoming and New Mexico reached southern Texas. Turquoise from the Cerrillos hills in New Mexico has been located at sites throughout North America and as far south as Teotihuacan. Perishable and non-perishable items made their way across long distances, exchanged either directly or relayed between groups. Texas was at the crossroads of many of these exchanges.⁴

The archaeological record abounds with evidence of interlocking local and long-distance trade routes that effectively spanned the North American continent. Material remains make visible the relationships that created these routes but that are otherwise unrecorded. While there was no continent-wide trade route per se, the dispersal of commodities across vast areas was the result of discrete smaller-scale activities of many peoples using the resources of their respective territories and environments. As these practices developed over thousands of years, long distance trade in both prestige

⁴ William R. Swagerty, "Protohistoric Trade in Western North America: Archaeological and Ethnohistorical Considerations," in David Hurst Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, Vol. 3 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1991), pp. 484-86; Wilson W. Crook III and Timothy K. Pertulla, "Ancestral Puebloan Artifacts from North Central and East Texas Sites: Evidence of Trade Routes Across Texas During the Late Prehistoric Period," *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* 89 (2018), pp. 1-30; and Katherine A. Spielmann, "Colonists, Hunters, and Farmers: Plains-Pueblo Interaction in the Seventeenth Century," in David Hurst Thomas, ed., *Columbian Consequences*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1989). More generally, see Michael D. Glascock, ed., *Geochemical Evidence for Long-Distance Exchange* (Westport, Connecticut: Bergin & Garvey, 2002). In contrast to the usual focus on the economic aspects of long-distance trade, Mary W. Helms, *Ulysses' Sail: An Ethnographic Odyssey of Power, Knowledge, and Geographical Distance* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988) analyzes instead the intangible aspects of long-distance travel, in which the exchange of goods was embedded in elite control of and access to cosmological knowledge, political power, and social prestige.

and utilitarian goods linked peoples together across space, language and culture, even as competition for labor, resources, and commodities might drive them apart. Far from being isolated, the native peoples of Texas were part of an intricate network of material and cultural exchange. As one scholar has noted, “indigenous peoples clearly were more cosmopolitan than most archaeologists seem to think.”⁵

The spatial distribution of goods helps scholars understand the flow of commodities within and between regions and cultures, and to analyze and define trade routes and relationships. One starting point is with the identification of gateway communities, or places of transition between distinct geographic or cultural regions that connected them to broader trade routes outside of their areas. The broader Texas region was triangulated by gateway communities. Caddoan villages, particularly those of the Red River Kadohadacho in parts of present-day Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Louisiana; the Puebloan settlements at Taos, Pecos, and Gran Quivira (San Buenaventura) in present-day New Mexico; and the La Junta Village Complex, located at the confluence of the Conchas River and the Rio Grande on the west Texas border with Mexico, were long-term or permanent settlements and trade centers that served as major manufacturing, processing, collecting or redistributing points for regional and interregional trade in all directions. The Jumanos who lived in the La Junta area were

⁵ Judith Habicht-Mauche, “Pottery, Food, Hides, and Women: Labor, Production, and Exchange Across the Protohistoric Plains-Pueblo Frontier,” in Michelle Hegmon, ed., *The Archaeology of Regional Interaction: Religion, Warfare, and Exchange Across the American Southwest and Beyond*, Proceedings of the 1996 Southwest Symposium (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2000), p. 220; James A. Brown, “Exchange and Interaction Until 1500” in Raymond D. Fogelson, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 2004) Vol. 14, *Southeast*, p. 678. Quotation from Michael Collins, “Archaeology in Central Texas,” in Timothy K. Perttula, ed., *The Prehistory of Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), p. 124. Similarly, in encouraging his readers to “think big,” Stephen Lekson argues that the history of the ancient Southwest can only be understood in a continental context and in comparison with other, contemporaneous societies; Stephen Lekson, *A History of the Ancient Southwest* (Santa Fe: School for Advanced Research Press, 2008), pp. 248-250.

traders and middlemen who traversed the region, linking it from west to east, dispersing goods to and from the gateway communities as well as among the nomadic groups between them.

To date nearly all of the archaeological studies of sedentary groups in Texas are site specific. This fragmentation effectively discourages analysis of cross-cultural interaction among the many pre-contact groups in Texas who inhabited the spaces between their well-studied Puebloan and Caddoan neighbors. Other gaps in the literature derive from the fact that nomadic hunter-gather or foraging societies – who occupied most of the interior of Texas – leave minimal archaeological traces because they had no permanent settlements and few material possessions. For these groups, landscape features or ecological boundaries have been recognized as rendezvous points for seasonal intergroup exchange. Many nomadic groups in Texas, for example, encamped each year at same place on the Colorado River for annual exchange.⁶ Intangible concepts such as the relationships involved between and among trading partners, or the relationship between resources and trade, add methodological weight to an understanding of trade among nomadic peoples.

A focus on social, political, and cultural-ecological relationships among exchange partners reveals that relationships are frequently embedded in some form of trade. In indigenous economies, the transfer of an object from one individual to another might illuminate a social relationship between the individuals, perhaps based on the degree or absence of kinship. The movement of goods between parties in an exchange might fall on a continuum from generalized reciprocity (one-way gifting – although the

⁶ Swagerty, "Protohistoric Trade," pp. 478-82; Daniel A. Hickerson, "Historical Processes, Epidemic Disease, and the Formation of the Hasinai Confederacy," *Ethnohistory* 44, no. 1 (Winter 1997), pp. 42-46.

acceptance of a one-way gift involves obligation), to balanced reciprocity (exchange based on approximate parity of goods), to negative reciprocity (ranging from skillful bargaining for an unequal transaction to the taking of goods by coercion, theft, or violence).⁷

At its most basic level, the purpose of exchange – involving both information and tangible items – was to redress local needs and shortages. Neighboring groups who engaged in exchange compensated for local insufficiency through access to resources from other areas. In the longer term, exchange could mitigate the effects of unsuccessful hunting, foraging, or harvesting activities, and could even buffer populations against unpredictable weather patterns. There were two mechanisms of exchange among native groups. One involved direct transactions between single individuals. Transactions from one person to another can have a chain-like structure: repeated transactions of this sort are referred to as down-the-line exchanges. Direct exchanges were the most likely to associate value with need for an item, and to establish parity between the items exchanged, while bartering was a process that created a subjective valuation among items lacking parity. The other mechanism was indirect or brokered through specialized traders, who spent at least part of their time, seasonally or annually, obtaining goods in one place and transporting them elsewhere

⁷ David La Vere, *The Texas Indians* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2004), pp. 54-56; Marshall Sahlins, "On the Sociology of Primitive Exchange," in *Stone Age Economics* 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2003); Takie Sugiyama Lebra, "An Alternative Approach to Reciprocity," *American Anthropologist*, New Series Vol. 77, No. 3 (Sept. 1975), pp. 550-51; Lawrence E. Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast* (New York: Academic Press, 1983), pp. 86-87. For discussion of the relationship between exchange and warfare, see Robert L. Brooks, "From Stone Slab Architecture to Abandonment: A Revisionist View of the Antelope Creek Phase," in Pertulla, *Prehistory of Texas*, pp. 341-43; and Susan C. Vehik, "Conflict, Trade, and Political Development on the Southern Plains," *American Antiquity* 67, no. 1 (Jan 2002), pp. 41-44. The experiences in Texas of such early European explorers as Cabeza de Vaca and La Salle frequently revealed a range of indigenous behaviors, relationships, and diplomatic tactics that contradicts Sahlins's model.

to exchange for other goods. These traders might travel short or very great distances to carry out their transactions.⁸

Many indigenous economies in North America were organized around the basic principles of reciprocity and redistribution. Reciprocity involved the giving of gifts when both the donor and the recipient understood that the act created some form of obligation. Archaeologist Lawrence Aten wrote that reciprocity provided a way to help maintain social order within and among groups because it “minimizes inequities between individuals, creates bonds between groups, and . . . provides a means for the flow of raw materials, finished goods, and services where needs exist.” Redistribution was based on the accumulation of some form of wealth for either immediate or future dispersal to others. In both cases, the donor’s social status was based on sharing, rather than keeping wealth. Ritualized trade may occasionally have been a pragmatic interaction during chance encounters between groups, in order to avoid riskier forms of confrontation. Such patterns are well documented in eighteenth-century indigenous-European trade in Texas.⁹

⁸ Swagerty, “Protohistoric Trade,” pp. 484-86; Vehik, “Conflict, Trade, and Political Development,” pp. 41-44; Brown, “Exchange and Interaction,” pp. 678-80; Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, pp. 80, 83. Although traders in Mexico had an elaborate system of transporting goods, virtually nothing is known regarding either the volume or methods of moving goods in Texas; see Ross Hassig, *Trade, Tribute and Transportation: The Sixteenth-Century Political Economy of the Valley of Mexico* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985). Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, p. 80, notes that in contrast to “exchange” and “barter,” “trade” was a more commercial transaction introduced by Europeans, in which items were imbued with an abstract value based on some form of currency, even if that currency itself was not directly involved in a given exchange. The issue is further discussed in Swagerty, “Protohistoric Trade,” pp. 473-74. Most scholars treat the terms synonymously.

⁹ Michael P. Morris, *The Bringing of Wonder: Trade and the Indians of the Southeast, 1700-1783* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1999), p. 2; J. Charles Kelley, “Juan Sabeata and Cultural Diffusion in Aboriginal Texas,” *American Anthropologist* 57:5 (Oct. 1955), pp. 981-95; quotation from Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, p. 80. Other theories focus on trade as a mechanism for cultural change, across ecological zones, or in terms of comparative labor and social structures between core and peripheral groups. For discussion and critiques of mutualistic and world systems theories, see Vehik, “Conflict and Trade,” pp. 37-41, and Habicht-Mauche, “Pottery, Foods, Hides, and Women,” pp. 212-17.

While archaeological literature is replete with the word “network” in describing exchange systems, the term has come into use as a rigorous analytical tool only recently. Social network analysis focuses on relationships between and among entities, and can take into account changes over time and through geographic space. The concepts of network theory are flexible enough to describe relationships among different societies, within distinct groups, and between individuals. Despite limited and incomplete archaeological and historical data, network analysis has the potential to reveal the basic relationships that brought people together across time and place.¹⁰ Particularly in the case of trade, it is easy to see how what are known as small-world networks would provide effective connections among different peoples over any given area. With few hubs and links, such networks can be scaled up or down in size yet remain robust. Agents or communities that serve as hubs in such an exchange system can efficiently and widely disseminate goods or information. Itinerant traders and nomadic peoples act as mobile hubs, able to maintain multiple links over varying distances. Even if goods are exchanged among only a few individuals or groups, they can be passed to many others through additional connections. Actual direct contact between any given individuals may be low in frequency, but the network effect

¹⁰ In other areas of the study of cultural interactions, some researchers have deployed network theory in an effort to resolve the recognized shortcomings of older methodologies. Examples include Robert Whallon, William A. Lovis, and Robert K. Hitchcock, *Information and its Role in Hunter-Gatherer Bands* (Los Angeles: UCLA/Cotsen Institute of Archaeology Press, 2011); Irad Malkin, *A Small Greek World: Networks in the Ancient Mediterranean* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011); Carl Knappett, ed., *Network Analysis in Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013); and Barbara J. Mills, et al., “Transformation of Social Networks in the Late Pre-Hispanic US Southwest,” *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, no. 15 (April 9, 2013), pp. 5785-5790. More general studies of network theory include Melanie Mitchell, *Complexity: A Guided Tour* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

amplifies that contact by allowing goods to reach many people in a population or region.¹¹

By the sixteenth century, native peoples in Texas had formed disparate trade networks that depended greatly on population size, available resources, and the surplus production of goods. General subsistence and specialized production in different locations contributed to a complex local and regional economy based in part on regular cycles of exchange among different groups. Geographic proximity mattered to some extent, but was not a decisive factor in the formation of trade relationships. For example, the gateway communities of Caddo, Pueblo and the La Junta groups can be seen as nodes that served as major hubs in the interregional trade network.

The Caddoans were a sedentary people whose ancestors had lived in the woodlands of the Arkansas and Red river valleys. In earlier times they were associated with the Mississippian cultural complex and had strong trading ties with the great settlement at Cahokia; to a lesser extent they were influenced by Southwestern and Mesoamerican cultures. By the seventeenth century, they were long-established sedentary agriculturalists and seasonal hunters who lived in dispersed farmsteads and hamlets. Caddo society was a blend of hereditary elite leaders (*caddí* and *xinesí*) and merit, where status increased with gifting, redistribution of goods and wealth, and skill at hunting and raiding. They engaged in a broad interregional trading network, which

¹¹ Mitchell, *Complexity*, pp. 227-48. Conversely, if a hub community were to fail, the repercussions would also be widespread. An interesting topic for study would be the effects of the demise of the Jumano population as a hub in their traditional transcultural trade in Texas.

they dominated though the surplus of food, pottery and other utilitarian items that they produced.¹²

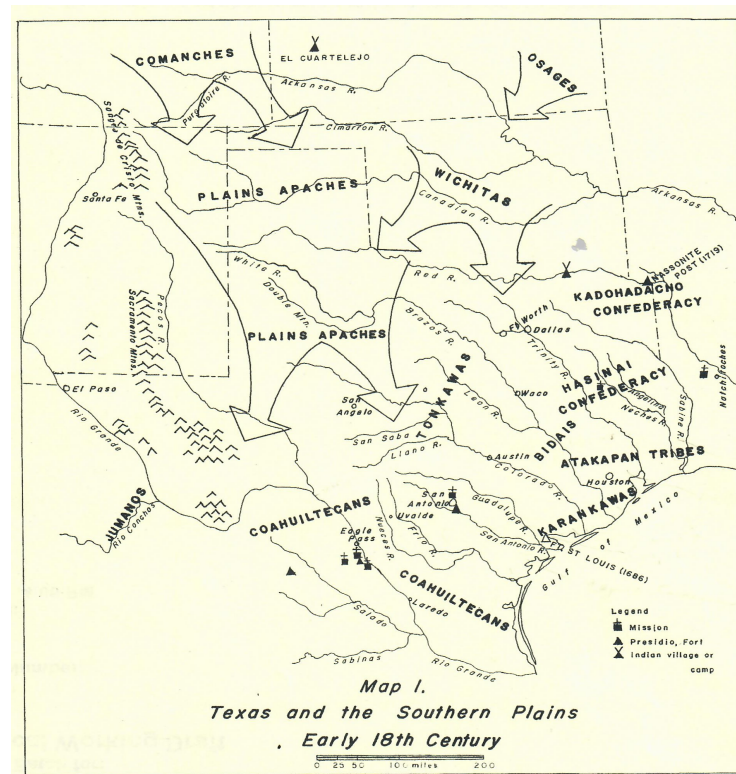


Figure 1: Indigenous settlement areas of the Southern Plains and the Texas-Louisiana borderlands.¹³

¹² Timothy K. Pertulla, *The Caddo Nation: Archaeological and Historical Perspectives* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), pp. 13-18; Elizabeth A. H. John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795*, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 166-70; F. Todd Smith, *The Caddo Indians Tribes at the Convergence of Empires, 1542-1854* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1995), pp. 5-7. See also Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 1, *The Mission Era: The Finding of Texas, 1519-1693* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1936), p. 295 for trade goods that Hasinai had from Comanches, noted by members of La Salle's party en route to the Mississippi from Matagorda Bay; and Timothy K. Pertulla, "How Texas Historians Write about the Pre-A.D. 1685 Caddo Peoples of Texas," *Southwest Historical Quarterly* 65, no. 4 (April 2012), pp. 367-69, 372. Foundational studies of Caddoan culture are George A. Dorsey, *Traditions of the Caddo* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institution, 1905), and John R. Swanton, *Source Material on the History and Ethnology of the Caddo Indians*, Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 132 (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1942). Other Caddo histories include Cecilia Carter, *Caddo Indians: Where We Came From* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1995), and David La Vere, *Caddo Chiefdoms: Caddo Economics and Politics* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1998).

¹³ From Curtis Tunnell and W. W. Newcomb, Jr., *A Lipan Apache Mission: San Lorenzo de la Santa Cruz, 1762-1771*, Texas Memorial Museum Bulletin 1 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1969), p. 142.

Caddoan territory stopped at the edge of the southern Plains. Bordering them to their west were the semi-sedentary Wichitas, a Caddoan-speaking group that had migrated from the woodlands several thousand years earlier. In the seventeenth century, the Wichitas were a farming and hunting people who occupied the eastern part of the southern Plains, from the Smoky Hill River in Kansas to the Brazos River in Texas. They were partners in the interregional trade network extending from Caddoan country across the southern Plains to the eastern Pueblo groups. The Wichita peoples included subgroups known as Taovaya, Guichita, Tawakoni, Iscani and Kichai. These groups migrated southward during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, in response both to hostilities from the Apaches and Osage, and for better access to French traders and their merchandise. They were established along the Arkansas River valley and its tributaries by the time French traders arrived in the area in 1719.¹⁴

Well to the south and west of these Woodlands and Plains peoples were the Jumanos – disparate groups who shared cultural and linguistic traits. The Jumanos exploited multiple ecological zones, ranging from river valleys to desert, and from plains to mountain elevations. Scholarly understanding of the Jumano peoples remains somewhat elusive, as the relations among the different groups are unclear. Some groups of Jumanos took advantage of riverine areas where they practiced horticulture, living in sedentary villages along the Rio Grande and its tributary, the Conchas River, from the area around present-day El Paso to the Big Bend region. Others were nomadic

¹⁴ F. Todd Smith, *The Wichita Indians: Traders of Texas and the Southern Plains, 1540-1845* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000), pp. 3-9, 16-17. Smith's study is the first scholarly monograph to cover all of the Wichita groups. Other studies that include the Wichita are John, *Storms Brewed*; W. W. Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas: From Prehistoric to Modern Times* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961); and Robert E. Bell, Edward B. Jelks, and W. W. Newcomb, *Wichita Indian Archaeology and Ethnology: A Pilot Study* (New York: Garland Publishing, 1974).

hunter-gatherers, ranging into the Southern Plains to the north and east of the Davis and Chisos mountains. They made extensive buffalo hunts and processed the meat and hides for trade. As specialized traders, Jumanos traveled as far east as the Caddo settlements, north and west to the Pueblo peoples, and south into Mexico. They served as reliable links among these polities for centuries before disappearing as a recognizable group in the historical record early in the eighteenth century.¹⁵

These strategically located gateway communities controlled the flow and distribution of imports to both their own people and their allies. They occupied the eastern, northern and southwest boundaries of Texas, and served as major hubs in a long-distance network, exchanging goods that were locally unavailable and redistributing them through smaller scale and local networks. Additional groups, who formed small-scale local networks, were located along the southeastern coastal areas. The coastal Atakapa groups were hunter-gatherers and fishers, while those inland along the lower reaches of the Neches, Sabine and Trinity rivers subsisted through small-scale horticulture and hunting. Farther south along the coast, between Galveston Bay and Corpus Christi Bay, lived the Karankawa culture group, all of whom were coastal hunter-gatherers. Seasonally, they ranged inland about fifty to seventy-five miles. The Karankawa traded pottery, and stone and shell tools with Coahuiltecan to their southwest.¹⁶

¹⁵ Nancy P. Hickerson, "Ethnogenesis in the South Plains: Jumano to Kiowa?," in Jonathan D. Hill, ed., *History, Power, and Identity: Ethnogenesis in the Americas, 1492-1992* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1996), pp. 71-76; La Vere, *The Texas Indians*, pp. 68-71; Newcomb, Jr., *The Indians of Texas*, pp. 228-43. Nancy Parrott Hickerson, *The Jumanos: Hunters and Traders of the Southern Plains* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), although somewhat controversial in its linguistic interpretation, is the most thorough treatment of the Jumanos.

¹⁶ See Hickerson, "Historical Processes," pp. 44-46, and Ray Rivers, Carl Knappett and Tim Evans, "What Makes a Site Important? Centrality, Gateways, and Gravity," in Carl Knappett, ed., *Network Analysis in*

Inland in south central Texas to the Gulf in northeastern Mexico lived a diverse group of peoples known collectively as Coahuiltecan.¹⁷ Although they shared cultural characteristics, they did not constitute a homogeneous ethnic group; the term “Coahuiltecan” is simply an academic construction that groups together the disparate peoples of this area. They comprised perhaps six hundred bands of autonomous, semi-nomadic hunter-gatherers, and are associated with seven major linguistic groups and an unknown number of dialects. Like the coastal groups, Coahuiltecan participated in small-scale local networks, yet they also traded farther away with the Hasinai, an east Texas Caddoan group. Given the collective range of Coahuiltecan, it seems likely that their cumulative down-the-line transactions helped move a significant number of commodities across the Texas interior. Hundreds of small Coahuiltecan bands became largely depopulated or even extinct by the mid-seventeenth century, due to Spanish slave-raiding on both sides of the Rio Grande, epidemic diseases, outmigration, or amalgamation with other groups for safety and survival.¹⁸

Archaeology: New Approaches to Regional Interaction (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015), for discussion of gateway communities. The four Atakapan tribes were the Atacapa, Akokisa (or Orcoquiza), Bidai, and Deadoze; the Karankawans were the Coco, Carancagua, Cujane, Coapite (Guapite) and Copane. F. Todd Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 2-5; Thomas Roy Hester, “Marine Shells from Archaeological Sites in Southwestern Texas,” *Texas Journal of Science* 22 (1970), pp. 87-88; Lawrence Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, pp. 11, 28-39, 45. Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), p. 40, gives the Karankawa population as five to ten thousand at contact, plummeting to five hundred individuals by 1770. Aten also discusses aggregation and the nineteenth century decline of these groups. More generally, see Robert A. Ricklis, *The Karankawa Indians of Texas: An Ecological Study of Cultural Tradition and Change* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996). An excellent study of upper Gulf coast indigenous groups is Dan M. Worrall, *A Prehistory of Houston and Southeast Texas* (Fulshear, TX: Concertina Press, 2021).

¹⁷ This name derives from their collective territory in the areas of present-day Coahuila (northeast Mexico) and central and south Texas, straddling both sides of the Rio Grande.

¹⁸ La Vere, *The Texas Indians*, pp. 64-67; Newcomb, *The Indians of Texas*, pp. 30-33; Smith, *The Caddo Indians*, p. 18; Hickerson, “The Formation of the Hasinai Confederacy,” pp. 44-45; William W. Newcomb, Jr., “Historic Indians of Central Texas,” *Bulletin of the Texas Archeological Society* 64 (1993): pp. 1-63.

Caddoan peoples served as the eastern hub for two major trade networks across Texas. The northern network was facilitated by the Wichita, who carried goods west along the Red and Canadian Rivers and across the southern Plains to Pecos Pueblo. The southern network linked Caddoans through coastal and central Texas, incorporating Atakapas, Karankawas and Coahuiltecan, with a western node at the Tompiro pueblo of Las Humanas. This network was mediated by the Jumanos. Villages were the primary sites for intertribal and interethnic exchanges, but multi-ethnic seasonal encampments served as venues for large-scale trade. For example, Texas tribes recognized the Colorado River as a broad territorial boundary, and many indigenous groups regularly met for trade on its west banks. Both Caddoan and Jumano peoples hunted bison in this area, and foraging Coahuiltecan groups gathered prickly pear fruit in season. Archaeological sites in this central Texas region contain pottery produced locally and also imported from Caddoan areas, indicating lasting patterns of trade in the centuries before European contact.¹⁹

Archaeologists and historians are unclear on the relationship between Jumanos and Coahuiltecan, as there appears to be considerable overlap among some groups in both territory and language.
¹⁹ Swagerty, "Protohistoric Trade," p. 490; *The LaSalle Expedition To Texas: The Journal of Henri Joutel, 1684-87*, William C. Foster, ed. and Johanna S. Warren, trans. (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2014), p. 12 (hereafter cited as *The Journal of Henri Joutel*); Michael B. Collins, "Archaeology in Central Texas" in Pertulla, *Prehistory*, pp. 123-24. The participation of indigenous Texas groups in intra- and inter-regional trade is summarized in numerous studies, including David La Vere, *The Texas Indians*, pp. 53-56, 88-90; Smith, *The Caddo Indians, 1542-1854*, pp. 7, 15-16; Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance*, pp. 3-10; Smith, *The Wichita Indians*, pp. 3, 8-9; Vehik, "Conflict, Trade, and Political Development," pp. 41-44; William R. Swagerty, "Indian Trade in the Trans-Mississippi West to 1870," in Wilcomb E. Washburn, ed., *Handbook of North American Indians Vol. 4, History of Indian-White Relations* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution, 1989), pp. 351-55. Reflecting the extent of their direct network of trade, Caddoan pottery sherds are also found at sites along the upper Gulf coast of Texas, throughout central and north Texas, the Texas panhandle, Oklahoma, in Plains village settlements in south central Kansas, Mississippian settlements in Illinois, and as far north as Iowa and as far west as the Big Bend region of the Rio Grande; see Pertulla, "Archaeological Evidence for Long-Distance Exchange" in Glascock, *Geochemical Evidence*, pp. 90-91, 99-100.

The earliest European observations of indigenous trade in Texas were recorded by Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, an officer with Pánfilo de Narváez's failed 1528 expedition to colonize the Gulf coast of Florida.²⁰ Among other experiences during his eight-year trek from Florida to Mexico City, Cabeza de Vaca spent four years living with a Coahuiltecan group whom he called Charrucos, engaging in trade on their behalf. As an outsider, he could surmount the obstacles imposed by constant warfare among the peoples who lived just inland from the central Texas coast. He recounted that he was allowed to move freely among different coastal and inland peoples, with a range of forty to fifty leagues (104 to 130 miles) along the coast and as far inland as he wished to travel. He carried a variety of shells, shell knives, and beads from the coast to exchange inland for hides, ochre, flint, materials for making arrow shafts, and tassels made of deer hair.²¹ Cabeza de Vaca did not name any of the peoples he traded with, but they seem likely to have included the Akokisa and Karankawan groups along the central Texas coast; the Bidai, who lived inland between the Neches and Trinity rivers; the Coco, who lived inland between the Trinity and Brazos rivers; and Coahuiltecan groups who lived inland between the Brazos and Colorado rivers. Although it is apparent that he did not have direct contact with any Caddoan peoples, the hides and ochre for which he traded most likely originated from them, exchanged through either Bidai or Coahuiltecan intermediaries. His experiences reveal that independent groups of

²⁰ Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, *Chronicle of the Narváez Expedition*, David Frye, trans., Ilan Stavans, ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013). The colonization effort was a spectacular failure, and Cabeza de Vaca was one of only four survivors to reach Mexico City in 1536. The expedition is treated in numerous publications, including Rolena Adorno and Patrick C. Pautz, *Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca: His Account, His Life, and the Expedition of Pánfilo de Narváez*, 3 vols. (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1999); Alex D. Krieger, *We Came Naked and Barefoot: The Journey of Cabeza de Vaca Across North America* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002); and Andrés Reséndez, *A Land So Strange: The Epic Journey of Cabeza de Vaca* (New York: Perseus Books, 2007).

²¹ Cabeza de Vaca, *Chronicle*, pp. 36-38.

hunter-gatherers who produced only a few specialized items for trade were able to tap into broader networks of regional exchange.

It would be well over a century before other Europeans would enter the region. In the interim, the indigenous exchange networks in and beyond Texas that would become familiar to Europeans after 1685 were shaped by the bison and the horse, new fauna that appeared in Texas respectively in the fourteenth and sixteenth centuries. A period of climate change known as the Little Ice Age, which lasted from approximately 1350 to 1850, prompted cooler and drier conditions. During this time, grasses became more abundant in the Southern Plains, creating a hospitable environment for bison at the same time that lower temperatures in the Northern and Central Plains pushed the bison range farther south. By the fifteenth century, bison populations extended through central and southern Texas to the Gulf Coast prairies and into northern Mexico.²²

Bison became the source for a broad new array of staples and trade goods, and all parts of the animal were put to use. Buffalo meat was a major source of protein, while the brains were used for tanning hides. The hides were used to fashion clothing, footwear, shields, tents, bedding, containers, rope; and later, bridles and saddles. Tendons were used to create bowstrings. Bones were used as vessels, hoes, picks, awls and other tools, while hooves were used to make glue to attach fletching to arrow shafts. Droppings were burned for fuel. Simultaneous with the appearance of bison in the Texas plains was the occurrence of a distinctive set of lithic tools associated with

²² Douglas B. Bamforth, "An Empirical Perspective on Little Ice Age Climatic Change on the Great Plains," *Plains Anthropologist* 35, no. 132 (1990), pp. 361-64; Jeffery A. Huebner, "Late Prehistoric Bison Populations of Central and Southern Texas," *Plains Anthropologist* 36, no. 137 (1991), pp. 351-52; Darrell Creel, "Bison Hides in Late Prehistoric Exchange in the Southern Plains," *American Antiquity* 56, no. 1 (1996), pp. 42-45; William C. Foster, *Climate and Culture Change in North America A.D. 900-1600* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), pp. 113-14.

killing and processing the animals, known as the Toyah Interval. It was characterized by arrowheads known as Perdiz points, beveled knives, scrapers, and perforators (or drills). Although archaeologists have debated for decades whether this technology represents the migration of people into the area following bison, or the widespread adoption of a particular set of tools by groups already in place, the issue remains unresolved. The area encompassed by the Toyah Interval is historically recognized as culturally diverse, however, and it represents a significant portion of the “in-between” area of Texas, where nomadic groups bridged major sedentary cultures along its periphery and provided them with new resources.²³ As bison became a predictable surplus resource, they catalyzed new partnerships among Puebloan, Plains, and Caddoan peoples, and expanded the range of interregional trade. These interactions became the foundation of an extensive trading network based on the exchange of bison meat and hides from the Plains; maize, cotton textiles, and turquoise from the Pueblos; and food, pottery, and bows made of osage orange wood (a hardwood native to the area, also known as bois d’arc) from the Caddo. The availability of a new resource in the Plains, then, helped create new connections among these groups.²⁴

²³ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *The Hasinai: Southern Caddoans As Seen by the Earliest Europeans*, ed. Russell M. Magnaghi (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987), pp. 100-101; John Wesley Arnn III, *Land of the Tejas: Native American Identity and Interaction in Texas, A.D. 1300 to 1700* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2012), p. 53; Harry J. Schafer, *Investigations into South Plains Prehistory*, Papers of the Texas Archaeological Salvage Project 20 (1971); Mariah F. Wade, *The Native Americans of the Texas Edwards Plateau* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), pp. 219-22.

²⁴ William B. Carter, *Indian Alliances and the Spanish in the Southwest, 750-1750* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2009), pp. 46, 64; Arnn, *Land of the Tejas*, pp. 53, 60; Brown, “Exchange and Interaction Until 1500,” p. 685; La Vere, *Texas Indians*, pp. 53-54; Carroll L. Riley and Joni L. Manson, “The Sonoran Connection: Road and Trail Networks in the Protohistoric Period,” in Charles D. Trombold, ed., *Ancient Road Networks and Settlement Hierarchies in the New World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 141; Carroll L. Riley, *Sixteenth Century Trade in the Greater Southwest* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), pp. 8, 28. Among the works that discuss pre-contact indigenous trade routes are Swagerty, “Protohistoric Trade,” pp. 482-86, 489; Brown, “Exchange and Interaction Until 1500,” pp. 678, 685; *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 15-17, 46-47, 204-205; Swanton, *Source Material on*

Horses began to appear in Texas most likely in the early seventeenth century. Spanish colonists introduced this new animal into central Mexico a century earlier, and brought them northward as they established new settlements in Nueva Vizcaya. Indigenous people in the latter area quickly acquired skill in handling horses, and their herds grew through raiding and natural increase. By the late 1500s, tribes throughout northern Mexico were mounted, conducting far-ranging raids against Spanish settlements, and trading horses to other groups in the La Junta and lower Pecos River areas. Jumanos brought horses into Texas sometime in the seventeenth century and incorporated them as commodities in their trade networks. They likely obtained horses from New Mexico and Nueva Vizcaya, then traded them to tribes in south, central and east Texas. By the mid-1600s, Jumano traders had become major suppliers of horses across the region. Larger numbers of horses likely came into their trade networks following the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, when Spaniards were forced to abandon New Mexico. Long before Europeans themselves came to trade and settle in their territories, however, Texas tribes had begun to feel their influence.²⁵

the Caddo Indians, p. 192; Parker Nunley, *A Field Guide to Archaeological Sites in Texas* (Austin: Texas Monthly Press, 1989), pp. 118-27; Charles H. McNutt, *Prehistory of the Central Mississippi Valley* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1996), pp. 15-17, 223; La Vere, *Caddo Chieftdoms*, pp. 27-30, 48.

²⁵ Smith, *Caddo Indians*, pp. 15-16; Smith, *Wichita Indians*, pp. 17-18; Pekka Hämäläinen, *The Comanche Empire* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), pp. 24-27; Richard White, *The Roots of Dependency: Subsistence, Environment, and Social Change Among the Choctaws, Pawnees, and Navajos* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), p. 179; Hickerson, "Historical Processes," p. 39. Comanches to the west also obtained horses from Utes and Pueblo Indians: see Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, p. 25; Clark Wissler, "The Diffusion of Horse Culture Among the North American Indians," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences of the United States of America* 1, no. 4 (Apr 15, 1915), p. 254; Jack D. Forbes, "The Appearance of the Mounted Indian in Northern Mexico and the Southwest, to 1680," *Southwestern Journal of Anthropology* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1959), pp. 193-95, 203-8; Robert M. Denhardt, "The Horse in New Spain and the Borderlands," *Agricultural History* 25, no. 4 (Oct. 1951), pp. 147-49; Martha Works, "Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier," *Geographical Review* 82, no. 3 (July 1992), pp. 268-81.

The adoption of horses facilitated bison hunting, and expanded trade capacity as beasts of burden, a means of transportation, and as highly-valued objects of trade. The pattern and timing of the spread of horses into the Southwest and Plains reflected not only the interconnections of primary and secondary trading networks, but also geographic and climatic conditions. The use of horses varied from one tribe to another. At first a symbol of status, the eventual widespread acquisition of horses allowed tribes to expand their range for trade, hunting, raiding, and warfare. Horses became a new commodity that revolutionized the procurement, transportation, and distribution of resources and goods. This major shift in resources marks the transition from foot-based networks to those utilizing large domesticated beasts of burden. For peoples who measured distance in increments of time, the adoption of the horse dramatically changed the experience of travel, warfare, and the transportation and exchange of goods. Acquisition of the horse was fundamentally transformative in the region.

The expanding trade in horses and guns represented an extraordinary incorporation of two foreign technologies²⁶ into indigenous economies, and reflected the capacity of trade networks to procure, utilize, and distribute new commodities. Texas stood at the junction of the horse and gun frontiers during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The two frontiers met along the southern Plains and Texas woodlands, each technology originating asymmetrically from areas colonized by Europeans. The horse frontier moved from the southwest – from Spanish settlements in Nueva Vizcaya – into Texas via the Jumanos, who developed a lucrative trade with the Caddo in the seventeenth century. The gun frontier moved into Texas from the east

²⁶ With respect to the horse, “technology” is used here to indicate the animal, its necessary maintenance and upkeep, and all of the specialized equipment needed to use it.

and north, originating through French and British traders at various points along the Mississippi River.²⁷ Each of these frontiers advanced through indigenous trade networks, well ahead of European trade and settlements.

Without the ability to control the animals, horses would have served no use to the people who acquired them. The equipment for handling horses could not be separated from the animal itself; otherwise, horses would simply have functioned as very large beasts of burden, replacing the dogs that had traditionally served this role. A single horse could do the work of four dogs in half the time, could cover long distances while requiring little water, and lived by grazing rather than – as dogs – consuming meat that hunters had to obtain and feed to them. Early Apacheans used dogs to pull their loaded travois and bison hide pack bags. In 1630, for example, fray Alonso de Benavides described Plains Apaches with five hundred pack dogs hauling bison robes, tanned hides, dried meat, and tools of bone and Alibates flint to the eastern Pueblos, to exchange for maize, textiles, tobacco, and Spanish knives.²⁸

With riding tack such as bridle and reins, horses transformed subsistence and military strategies, simplified and made buffalo hunting more efficient and productive, and enabled bold and far-reaching raiding forays into hostile territories. French traders in 1719 noted that Wichitas in southern Kansas and Tawakonis in Oklahoma were well-mounted and used Spanish tack. The 1739 French Verendrye expedition in the northwest Plains recorded use of Spanish chain bits among northwestern Plains tribes. By 1750, bits were standard trade items between Spaniards and Comanches, and they

²⁷ Works, “Creating Trading Places on the New Mexican Frontier,” discusses the concept of horse and gun frontiers in New Mexico.

²⁸ Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, pp. 25, 29; Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, p. 107; Carter, *Indian Alliances*, pp. 169-70.

were widely used by Apaches, as well. Although Spanish bridle bit parts have been recovered from archaeological sites throughout Texas, indigenous people mostly fashioned horse tack themselves from locally available materials, adapting designs to suit their own purposes and production skills.²⁹

While Plains tribes adapted traditional weaponry to their mounts, the acquisition of firearms also profoundly affected the scope of their activities. Firearms spread more slowly and somewhat later than horses, and were far more limited in quantity and functionality. These items were universally coveted, however, and much of eighteenth-century indigenous-European trade was fueled by an arms race among increasingly warring tribes, completely shifting the region's power dynamics. Because Spain's prohibition against trading firearms to indigenous peoples was unenforceable, Texas saw a vigorous trade in this weaponry during much of the eighteenth century. While some Spaniards in northern New Spain were involved in the arms trade, most guns came from French and British traders – which were generally better quality than Spanish firearms. Itinerant French merchants regularly traded firearms in east Texas starting in 1713, and through posts along the Arkansas and Mississippi rivers later that decade. It has been estimated that French traders throughout North America introduced over two hundred thousand guns to native groups between 1650 and 1750. The availability of firearms was promoted as much by Europeans' own political

²⁹ George H. Odell, "The Use of Metal at a Wichita Contact Settlement," *Southwestern Archaeology* 20, no. 2 (Winter 2001), p. 174; James D. Keyser and Mark Mitchell, "Decorated Bridles: Horse Tack in Plains Biographic Rock Art," *Plains Anthropologist* 46, no. 106 (May 2001), p. 200; Katherine Turner-Pearson, "The Stone Site: A Waco Village Frozen in Time," *Plains Anthropologist* 53, no. 208 (Nov 2008), p. 571.

motivations to arm their indigenous allies against their rivals as by the warriors' desire to arm themselves against their enemies.³⁰

While there is no question that firearms provided a distinct advantage against those who lacked them, they might well have had more symbolic than practical value. Some scholars have expressed doubt about the utility of guns for many of the tribes who obtained them, particularly those in use through trade during the eighteenth century. The poor quality of most trade guns made them unreliable to shoot, inaccurate in aim, and completely useless as a weapon once broken. Broken or not, however, the very fact that they had guns may have conveyed the idea of power and connection to the network that made the weapons accessible. Even under the best of circumstances flintlock guns were time-consuming to load and discharge. Further, whoever used firearms became dependent on European trade for powder and lead shot.³¹ Despite their drawbacks, firearms had a strong association with power and gave their owners and users a psychological advantage both in their own and their enemies' view, at least in the early years of their use. Since firearms gave Europeans a distinct military advantage, these weapons as well as other trade goods could be seen as the material embodiment of dominance such that their acquisition and possession – regardless of their functional status – represented a form of power.

³⁰ La Vere, *Caddo Chiefdoms*, p. 52; Odell, "Use of Metal," p. 178; Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, p. 194.

³¹ Wolf, *Europe and the People without History*, pp. 177, 181, 194; La Vere, *Caddo Chiefdoms*, pp. 52-54; Odell, "Use of Metal," pp. 176-77, 179-83. Replacement of stone tools by metal ones took place differentially over time, determined by cultural values and tool type. Metal knives and axes replaced stone ones because of their efficiency and ability to keep an edge, while stone scrapers endured because of their ease of production and durability. Throughout the eighteenth century, indigenous groups in Texas made simultaneous use of both stone and metal tools, reshaping and retooling metal objects when possible. See Odell, "Use of Metal," pp. 179-80, 182; Turner-Pearson, "Waco Stone Site," pp. 567-68, 570-72.

Early historical observations indicate that, in addition to horses and guns, European goods, including metal utensils and a variety of melons and fruits, circulated in Texas long before French and Spanish colonists settled in the area. Many pre-contact indigenous trade networks remained intact throughout the colonial period, and native peoples incorporated European goods and traders into them. Although French and British traders exploited these connections, the tribes they traded with directly served as conduits for the circulation of goods throughout a much broader trade network than what Europeans could access. The Caddo in particular were able to solidify their position as middlemen in the increasingly lucrative indigenous-European trade. As middlemen, Caddoan groups opened markets far beyond the zones of actual European contact, substantially extending the range not only of European goods but also new practices of intensive hunting and captive-raiding for trade. In the process, they increased their own status by providing other peoples with access to goods. In some cases at least, they passed their own used European goods down the line with their trading partners, while keeping newly-acquired trade items for themselves.³²

Indigenous trade networks, while stable, were not static. The region was on the cusp of profound demographic and economic change, with the incursion of many new culture groups and the introduction of a much broader array of European trade goods, including metal pots and knives, textiles, beads, and vermillion (a red pigment used as

³² See, for example, Juliana Barr, "From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands," *Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005), p. 27; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 157-58; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 247, 243; and Hickerson, "Historical Processes," pp. 44, 47. British traders were working on the middle reaches of the Mississippi River in 1698, "trading with the Chickasaws and smaller nations around the mouth of the Arkansas," according to John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 164. Chickasaws acted as middlemen between British traders and other groups: in 1719, for example, the French trader B nard de la Harpe encountered Chickasaw traders with British merchandise from South Carolina at a Tawakoni village on the Arkansas River; see Smith, *Wichita Indians*, p. 22.

body paint). External pressures from nearly every direction began to affect long-established relationships. Both of the Caddoan trade networks faced disruption during the early 1600s as new peoples migrated into the area. Apachean tribes contested Wichita trade between the Pueblos and east Texas, and the Jumano trade across central and southern Texas. Far-off European colonies – Spaniards to the south, French to the north, and British to the east – created new challenges through large-scale slave-raiding, warfare, and the spread of epidemic disease. From the north, Osage warriors, armed with British guns, attacked the Wichita and Caddoans for captives. From the south, Spanish slave raids into northern Mexico displaced many bands of nomadic hunter-gatherers. These peoples migrated northward, eventually allying with Coahuiltecans and Jumanos. Their presence led to the demise of some indigenous groups, enhanced the position of others, and in some cases resulted in the creation of new groups.³³

At the beginning of the eighteenth century, Caddoans and Jumanos dominated indigenous trade in the region of Texas. By the end of the century, indigenous migration and changing political alliances, as well as European trade and settlement, had changed the economies and the trade relationships of Native groups in Texas. While the Caddo had taken advantage of French trade from Louisiana to both reinforce their position as a gateway community and increase their role as middlemen, the Jumano – greatly weakened by Apache hostilities – had dispersed as a distinct ethnic group. Rather than remain as traders and cultural brokers, they joined with multiethnic aggregate groups or with their Apache rivals, in a process that Gary Clayton Anderson

³³ Smith, *The Caddo Indians*, p. 11; La Vere, *The Texas Indians*, pp. 89-90.

has termed “Apacheanization.” Some partially integrated into the Spanish mission system, while others remained in autonomous groups and became warriors whose economy was based in significant part on raiding.³⁴ Among other factors, economics had the potential to strengthen or completely alter tribal and cultural identity.

The late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century migration of four groups – Apache, French, Spanish, and Comanche – caused a permanent shift in the region’s political economy. In the southern Plains, Comanches, Apaches, and Wichitas acquired horses through trade and by raiding Spanish settlements as well as one another. By the mid-seventeenth century, Apaches and Comanches had begun developing new horse economies, escalating demand not only for the animals, but also for the territory and resources required for their sustenance. Finding that horses were highly adaptable to the Plains environment, they began moving into new areas. This chain of events launched new economies based on pastoralism and large-scale patterns of negative reciprocity in the form of raiding and trading. The intermittent warfare and violence associated with these economies would come to reshape identities and to define the region as a whole for centuries to come.³⁵

Apaches and Comanches, with their large and increasing horse herds, spent much of the eighteenth century battling one another, as well as other groups, over

³⁴ For discussions of Hasinai as gateway communities, see, for example, Hickerson, “Historical Processes,” p. 44-46; Martha McCollough, “Political Decentralization as a Strategy to Maintain Sovereignty: An Example from the Hasinai during the 1700s,” *Plains Anthropologist* 46, no. 177 (Aug 2001), pp. 311, 315-16, 319. For Apacheanization, see Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, pp. 105-27. Some Jumanos living with Apaches during the eighteenth century continued to make their own distinctive arrow points, retaining at least some of their cultural characteristics.

³⁵ R. Brooke Jacobsen and Jeffrey L. Eighmy, “A Mathematical Theory of Horse Adoption on the North American Plains,” *Plains Anthropologist* 25, no. 90 (Nov 1980), pp. 336-38; Pekka Hämäläinen, “The Rise and Fall of Plains Indian Horse Cultures,” *Journal of American History* 90, no. 3 (Dec 2003), pp. 834-37; Hickerson, “Ethnogenesis in the South Plains,” pp. 71-76.

territory, hunting grounds, and access to European goods through French and British traders. In this context, Spanish settlements served as a resource for raiding, yielding horses, food (corn and produce), and captives (usually children, but women were occasionally taken). Pushed by violence out of their traditional territories, members of smaller hunter-gatherer groups found refuge in Spanish missions. The descendants of those who survived the high mortality rates of these institutions eventually underwent the gradual but fraught process of acculturation into the Hispanic community, even while keeping some aspects of their indigenous heritage into the present. The killing or taking captive of large numbers of individuals from all groups contributed to population decline as well as unmitigated violence. Access to horses and firearms grew in importance both for offensive and defensive purposes, resulting in the formation of new trade alliances between some groups and negative reciprocity between others.

As trade with Europeans developed, indigenous peoples throughout North America discovered that the primary resources required for exchange were animal hides, pelts, and human captives (the Louisiana market also absorbed large numbers of horses). Procuring these resources led to intertribal warfare through efforts to expand hunting territory and to raid other tribes – and Spanish settlements – for captives, who met increased demands for both labor and exchange. The post-contact commodification of and traffic in human captives also had deep cultural ramifications, far beyond captivity's pre-contact functions of revenge and genetic and cultural exchange. The growing availability of horses and firearms among indigenous peoples

simultaneously enabled and fueled an escalating cycle of coercion and violence among rival groups.³⁶

Apaches evolved from Athapaskan peoples who migrated from present-day Alaska and Canada to the Plains in multiple phases between 700 and 1500. These proto-Apache migrants settled across the southern Plains and the Southwest, eventually becoming distinct groups. The Plains or eastern Apaches were the Lipan, Jicarilla, and Kiowa-Apache; the mountain or desert groups in the Southwest became the Mescalero, Bedonkohe, Chiricahua and Western Apache. Each of these groups entered areas that had been occupied by previous inhabitants; all of the areas were suited by climate and environment to a hunter-gatherer lifestyle.³⁷

When Spaniards colonized present-day New Mexico in the late sixteenth century, Apacheans had peaceful alliances with the northern pueblos of Taos, Picuris, Pecos, and Jemez (also, Towas, northern Tiwas, and Acoma) – participants in the Plains-Pueblo trade that had developed and flourished with the bison hunt, and that was cemented through kinship ties as well as economic interest. Apaches wintered near Taos and

³⁶ Unfree labor was a significant part of indigenous and Spanish frontier political economies. Indigenous groups increasingly used captive labor to meet the surplus production required for trade. Although illegal under Spanish law, the slave trade flourished in the frontier markets of northern New Spain. Because of the high value that Spaniards placed on captives, demand escalated inter-tribal raiding and warfare; captives were traded for horses, firearms, and other items that indigenous peoples in turn valued greatly. Juan Bautista Chapa, *Texas and Northeastern Mexico, 1630-1690*, William C. Foster, ed. and Ned F. Brierley, trans. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1997), pp. 98-100; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 33, 69, 115, 203, 259; Carter, *Indian Alliances*, pp. 171-77; Christina Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country: The Changing Face of Captivity in Early America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), pp. 55-63. Other studies on or involving indigenous captivity include Alan Galloway, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002); Julianna Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); Paul Kelton, *Epidemics and Enslavement: Biological Catastrophe in the Native Southeast, 1492-1715* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007); Andrés Reséndez, *The Other Slavery: The Uncovered Story of Indian Enslavement in America* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2016).

³⁷ La Vere, *Texas Indians*, pp. 30-31, 84-92; Worcester, "Spread of Horses," pp. 1-5; Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, pp. 106-7; Smith, *Wichita Indians*, pp. 16-17; John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 118.

Pecos to avoid the southern Plains' storms, lack of firewood and seasonal absence of bison. The rest of the year, they hunted buffalo on foot with bows and arrows, living in mobile camps to process the meat and hides. They supplemented their diet by gathering plants and roots. Some of their trade alliances also became military alliances in the form of joint raids against common enemies (particularly, Spaniards and their indigenous allies). To some extent, Puebloans may have played off the Apaches and Spaniards. In 1638, for example, fray Juan de Prada noted that Christianized Puebloans went to the Apaches whenever they were unhappy with the Spaniards.³⁸

During the 1600s, Spanish horse herds in New Mexico attracted Apache raiders and enabled their adoption of horses for transportation, in turn increasing both the range and effectiveness of their raiding activities. The aftermath of the 1680 Pueblo Revolt, during which Spanish settlers were forced to abandon New Mexico, offered new access to horses through trade and plunder. The Apaches' evolving horse culture enabled them to emerge as a powerful new group as they migrated into Texas. Mescalero Apaches began attacking Jumanos in New Mexico and west Texas during the early seventeenth century, resulting in ongoing warfare over access to resources and markets. On the east side of Texas, Lipan Apaches came into conflict with Wichita and Caddoan groups, particularly while hunting buffalo on the plains to the west of their villages. Enmity between the Apache and Hasinai Caddoans was one of several factors compelling the formation of the Hasinai confederacy and their relocation in the protective dense oak-pine forest on the Neches River. In 1691, fray Damián Massanet noted that Apaches made war against the Caddoans on "armored horses," using bison

³⁸ Carter, *Indian Alliances* 138-40; Worcester, "Spread of Horses," pp. 2-8.

hides to make the armor, and that all of the tribes east of the Colorado River were allied against them. Apaches also adopted bridles and saddles with iron stirrups, and used arrows and darts tipped with iron for hunting and for battle.³⁹

As Apaches expanded their territory across the southern Plains during the seventeenth century, they created widespread disruptions among indigenous groups in the area. Pushing into new areas, they displaced some groups either south or west, while also absorbing certain Coahuiltecan and Jumano peoples. They raided throughout Texas and northern Mexico for captives and other plunder to use for trade with both Spaniards and French. Lipan and Mescalero Apaches supplanted the Jumano exchange economy, using customary trade routes and creating new alliances through trade and marriage. As a result of Apache raids, weaker nomadic groups in the central Texas area began to fragment, and to intermarry and form new kinship relations and formalized leadership structures. For example, the 1718 Spanish Alarcón expedition encountered five refugee tribes camping on the Colorado River, who had fled their homes west of the river to seek Spanish or Caddoan protection against Apaches. After the founding of San Antonio in that same year, Lipan bands raided the presidio, the missions, and their supply trains for horses, horse tack, and other spoils, which they traded to the French in Louisiana.⁴⁰

By 1700, Apaches were mounted and had many groups on the defensive. They were well into the process of disrupting some of the long-standing indigenous exchange

³⁹ Francis Haines, "Where Did the Plains Indians Get Their Horses?" *American Anthropologist* New Series 40, no. 1 (Jan-Mar 1938), p. 117; Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, p. 26; Hickerson, "Historical Processes," pp. 39-40; William Edward Dunn, "Apache Relations in Texas, 1718-1750," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 14, no. 3 (Jan 1911), pp. 203, 222. East of the Mississippi, other confederacies, including the Creek and the Choctaw, were similarly formed as a reaction against slave raids; see Galloway, *Indian Slave Trade*, p. 297.

⁴⁰ Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, pp. 40, 54, 64, 94.

networks and turning the trade to their own benefit. They fundamentally transformed the region's political economy, adopted pastoralism, created new methods of production, and through kinship affiliation and violence incorporated other peoples to become the dominant group in the Southwest during the early eighteenth century. Compounding the political instability Apacheans created in the area, buffalo herds had disappeared from the Rio Grande Valley around 1700 due to climate change. By this time, too, epidemic diseases had resulted in a dramatic decline of the human population in the area.

Despite the new Apache dominance, an even more powerful group was in the making as Comanches entered the region to contest Apache territory. Comanches, whose Shoshonean ancestors migrated to the northern Plains in the sixteenth century, came to dominate the southern Plains in the eighteenth. As Comanches intruded into Apache territory, the Lipans began to migrate even farther south. By 1732, they were living in the central Texas area of San Sabá, Chanas (Llano), and Pedernales, where Pelones and Jumanos joined them in their raids on San Antonio. Historian William Dunn speculated that this alliance between former enemies may have been to protect themselves against Comanches, that is, out of their separate weaknesses; Gary Anderson argued these aggregations resulted from Apache strength and dominance over the smaller groups they encountered.⁴¹

The southward-migrating Comanches obtained horses from Pueblo and Ute peoples and began encroaching into Lipan territory in the late seventeenth century, pushing them into central Texas and occupying their former territory in the western

⁴¹ Dunn, "Apache Relations," pp. 202, 204, 209, 228; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, p. 37; Anderson, *Indian Southwest*, pp. 64-65.

portion of the southern Plains. By the early eighteenth century, Comanches – as had Apaches – began a cultural and economic transformation. Horses allowed them to expand their range for hunting, raiding, warfare, and trade. Crucially, trade provided access to firearms. Comanches and their Ute allies attacked Apaches and Wichitas by 1706, initially for captives, then to take over territory to support their horse herds and to gain access to French trade. By the 1720s, Comanches had won some decisive victories against the Apaches. By the 1730s, they developed a dual pastoral and hunting economy, and as their participation grew in the market economy they relied increasingly on captive labor to process hides. This new economy supported a major increase in Comanche population during the eighteenth century.⁴²

According to fray Agustín Morfí, Comanches first visited San Antonio in 1743. They were attracted to the area by ample pasturage in the southern Plains, large herds of feral horses, and Spanish domestic livestock, including tamed horses and cattle. Moreover, the Taovayan (Wichita) villages that mediated trade between Comanches and French merchants had already relocated southward from the Arkansas River to the Red River. Comanche expansion in Texas prompted Lipan Apaches and Spanish officials to broker a peace treaty between themselves in 1749, in an alliance meant to thwart Comanche incursions. In response, the Comanches developed an alliance with Taovayas, Tonkawas, and the Hasinai confederacy to protect their mutual trade and hunting interests. The Spaniards referred to this group collectively as *Norteños*

⁴² Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, pp. 24-29, 38, 346-47. As with Apaches, Comanche population growth resulted in part from absorbing smaller or weaker groups into their orbit.

(Nations of the North). Norteño enmity toward Apaches and their Spanish allies in Texas led to decades of raiding and violence.⁴³

In the meantime, shifting rivalries and alliances among European powers played out in North America. Military and trading alliances were inseparable, and as indigenous groups allied with Europeans chose sides in their rivalries, conflicts were deepened and enacted on a local level. During the early eighteenth century, territory throughout the Mississippi valley and the Gulf coast from Florida to Texas was violently contested by both Europeans and Native Americans. This violence contributed to the indigenous arms race, as both British and French supplied their indigenous allies with guns, powder and bullets to fuel hostilities. Each of the European empires was motivated to claim territory in part to keep others out, and in part for the profit of trade.

The French entered Texas primarily in order to trade with native peoples, part of a broader plan to extend French-indigenous trade from Canada through the heart of the North American continent all the way to the Gulf of Mexico. Since 1608, they had conducted annual summer trade fairs in Quebec, exchanging merchandise that included textiles, beads, needles and metal implements for furs. The Iroquoian Hurons and Algonquian Ottawas and Nipissings involved in this trade soon become intermediaries for other indigenous groups, substantially extending the range not only of European goods but also new practices of intensive hunting and captive-raiding for trade. In these areas, indigenous peoples changed their patterns of subsistence hunting and other economic activities to produce a surplus of furs to exchange for firearms and

⁴³ Fray Juan Agustín Morfí, *History of Texas 1673-1779*, Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, trans. (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1935) Vol. 2, p. 294; Hämäläinen, *Comanche Empire*, pp. 55-58.

manufactured goods. This began a cycle in which hunting territory expanded as local resources were depleted, leading to increased warfare between tribes. This, in turn, displaced entire groups who were unable to defend themselves against the firearms of their aggressors. In numerous respects, the experience of indigenous groups in Texas with European trade would parallel that of tribes in the eastern woodlands and subarctic.⁴⁴

After the mid-seventeenth century, the French sought to replicate elsewhere this pattern of supplying extended indigenous trade networks with European manufactured goods and firearms. Initially, they established trading posts throughout the Great Lakes region; then – reviving an earlier quest for a route to the Pacific – they began explorations south into the interior. In 1673, Father Jacques Marquette and Louis Joliet set out from the mission and fort of Saint-Ignace, on Michigan’s Straits of Mackinac, until they reached the Mississippi River. They traveled down the Mississippi as far as the mouth of the Arkansas River, where they learned from the Quapaw not only that Spaniards could be found farther south, but also that the Mississippi emptied into the Gulf of Mexico. The following year, the governor of New France, Louis, Comte de Frontenac, and trader Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle proposed establishing a series of trading posts from the Great Lakes to the mouth of the Mississippi, and obtained a five-year monopoly to implement their plan. In 1682, La Salle and a group of compatriots journeyed down the Mississippi to the Gulf of Mexico, claiming the river’s entire drainage basin for France. Two years later, La Salle began an ill-fated expedition

⁴⁴ Wolf, *Europe and the People Without History*, pp. 176-81.

to colonize the mouth of the Mississippi River, but landed instead along the Texas coast, where their remaining ships were wrecked.⁴⁵

The diarist on this expedition, Lieutenant Henri Joutel, provides one of the earliest descriptions of the well-established and interconnected indigenous trade routes from south Texas, east to the Mississippi River, and west to northern New Spain. His writings reflect conditions at the time of early contact, and reveal something of the nature of indigenous networks and trade practices. For example, the Ebahamo, a hunter-gatherer group whom La Salle met on the upper reaches of the Navidad River, not only included a Caddoan-speaker – as they were allies of the Caddo – but also traded with Spanish communities in northern New Spain, ten days' travel to the west. This group was typical of the many small groups of hunter-gatherers the French encountered throughout the area: well-traveled polyglots who were accustomed to journey long distances for both trade and sustenance.⁴⁶

Eastward from what was a customary ford on the Colorado River were regularly-used trails; from this point to east Texas was territory that numerous allies of the Caddo occupied, and in which the Caddo themselves hunted and traded. Once the Frenchmen reached the Hasinai villages, it was clear that although they were not in direct contact with Spaniards, they had many Spanish goods ranging from horses to clothing and swords that they had obtained indirectly through their trade networks. Joutel noted that crops grown by the Hasinai in east Texas and the Quapaw and Taensa on the

⁴⁵ Robert S. Weddle, *The Wreck of the Belle, the Ruin of La Salle* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2001), pp. 66-77; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 158, 162-63. Isaac Joslin Cox, "The Louisiana-Texas Frontier," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 10, no. 1 (July 1906), pp. 5-6; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 1, p. 293; *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 23, 32, 37-38; Robert S. Weddle, "The Wreck of Ships and Dreams: A New Look at the Explorer La Salle," in François Lagarde, ed. *The French in Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003), p. 4. France was at war with Spain during this time.

⁴⁶ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 137, 164; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 56-57.

Arkansas River included a variety of melons and European fruit trees, such as peaches and plums. Most probably these foods originated from Spanish communities in Nueva Vizcaya and Coahuila, and had been traded through established indigenous networks. Joutel also observed a range of trade goods, including European clothing, documents, coins and horses that the Hasinai received from the Jumanos in west Texas, and from Casas Grandes and other tribes in northern Mexico. They even had some trade items from New England, obtained through transcontinental trade routes facilitated by travel on the Mississippi River.⁴⁷

The important role of gifts was clear to the French expedition. With each group they encountered during their travels, La Salle distributed items such as tobacco, food, knives, axes, and trinkets. Without this crucial gesture, Joutel noted, “one is not welcome among these people.” Likewise, envoys from various groups who visited the French camps exchanged food and information with the travelers. Such rituals were distinct from the trade for food in which the French often engaged during their journey. In the latter instances, trade roles could be gendered, with the French bartering needles, beads and rings for food directly with women and girls in residential areas: Joutel wrote “I often went to their huts to trade.” The Frenchmen also bartered for food through village leaders. Unaccustomed as he was to barter, Joutel noted “if the Indian felt content with the exchange, I felt the same way.”⁴⁸

While gifts symbolized peaceful intentions, a different form of protocol was expressed through escorts. There is no documentation of La Salle’s first journey to the

⁴⁷ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 204-206, 210, 215, 263-64, 277; Hickerson, “Historical Processes,” p. 43; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 201-3.

⁴⁸ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 168-70, 209, 248.

Hasinai in 1686, but he clearly followed the same route the following year, as he located a cache of supplies he had buried previously for their use along the way. In 1687, however, La Salle usually refused the frequent offers of escorts from local groups, preferring to find his own way along the trail. Perhaps he wished to minimize risk by avoiding contact with native peoples; “small number as we were,” Joutel observed, “we had no hope of passing through their area forcibly.” Nevertheless, he wrote, “these people have a much better sense than we do for finding trails and the places that they have been.” Despite the inconveniences the French suffered in their efforts to find suitable campsites, forage, and game, the role of escorts went well beyond that of practicality and comfort: they were about controlling access to, as well as protecting, tribal territory.⁴⁹

Throughout their travels, the groups whose territory the French traversed were aware of their presence. French movements were clearly monitored, even to the point that some villages set up encampments along their route to await them. Escorts might delay a departure, in order to send word ahead to the next village to allow for adequate preparations for their arrival. Such preparations could include being borne ceremonially into the village, meeting with leaders, and feasting. As an observance of protocol, in one instance the Frenchmen were accompanied by an alternate escort when they insisted on leaving before their appointed escorts were ready; the alternate left as soon as the appointed ones caught up with them. Later in his journey, Joutel would negotiate to hire one or more guides, an altogether different function than the escorts whose role seemed to encompass everything from assuring that guests remained safe

⁴⁹ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*; Juliana Barr, “Geographies of Power: Mapping Indian Borders in the ‘Borderlands’ of the Early Southwest,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 1 (Jan 2011), pp. 24, 42.

within a given territory to precluding any type of unwanted or hostile action on the part of their visitors.⁵⁰

As the French party traveled from the Gulf Coast plain through the post oak belt to the piney woods region of east Texas, the network of Caddoan alliances appeared to be strong. The region was occupied by dozens of small tribes and bands of hunter-gatherers. Many were well traveled, not only foraging throughout their respective territories, but also covering much greater distances for hunting and trading. Based on interviews, Joutel recorded over forty allied groups in the region; he also noted the variety of languages they used. These groups recognized natural features such as woods and rivers as boundaries for hunting, yet they drove game back and forth to one another – doubtless affirming their alliances. The Colorado River was universally recognized as the western boundary of the Caddoan hunting territory. It was also the location of large-scale multi-ethnic trade fairs that drew groups from far to the south and west to trade with them.⁵¹

In the face of constant uncertainty, traveling through unfamiliar lands and interacting with a wide range of ethnic and language groups, the recurring theme in Joutel's writing is the challenge of communication. Language barriers precluded most direct verbal communication. Symbolic communication, while frequently unambiguous, could also lead to misunderstandings. Joutel made repeated references in his diary to the difficulties they experienced in understanding sign language: "This was all in signs, however, and one is often mistaken in the interpretations one makes from these signs,

⁵⁰ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 170, 187, quotes 173 and 194, 242-43, 248-52, 257-63; Barr, "Geographies of Power," pp. 12, 24-25, 37.

⁵¹ *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 168-74, 246-47.

taking things in one way when often they mean another;" "... we carried on diverse conversations without understanding much;" "... I did not feel too secure among these people whom I could not understand at all . . .;" "they told me many other things to which I did not respond as I was unable to understand them." "Unfortunately I did not know their language and could not fathom the reason they were taking this action." "Being able to communicate only by signs, I often found myself quite distraught." Dependent as they were on the goodwill of the tribes through whose territory they passed, his remarks convey the emotional toll of their position as outsiders. It had been La Salle's intention to leave several of his party with the Hasinai to learn their language in order to facilitate future relations; moreover, he promised the groups they encountered along the way that they would return soon for more trade. This was not to happen for almost a generation, however, for the venture ended with the assassination of La Salle by his own men and the destruction of the settlement on Garcitas Creek by a coalition of Karankawa and other groups. La Salle's death seemed only to sharpen Joutel's distress over his inability to understand those around him.⁵²

The collapse of the expedition and loss of almost all of its men resulted in a decades-long delay of French settlement and trade in the region. The French would not again take up the effort to extend trade in the region until after the turn of the eighteenth century. As before, they intended to establish the hub of their new network at the mouth of the Mississippi River, which they reached in fact this time from the Gulf of Mexico in 1699. Here, Pierre Le Moyne, Sieur d'Iberville established the first French

⁵² Quotations, in order, from *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 122, 72, 88, 164, 206, 210, 215, 226; Weddle, "Wreck of Ships & Dreams," pp. 6-15, for the abandonment of the residents of Ft. St. Louis; Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 62-63. For the circumstances that resulted in La Salle's murder, see *The Journal of Henri Joutel*, pp. 191-99, and Weddle, *Wreck of the Belle*, pp. 226-29.

trading post in the region. They developed their trade network slowly over the next two decades, relying on lessons learned the previous century to establish and supply hubs, transport and distribute goods, and engage in exchange.⁵³

They also tried some novel ideas. Previously, when La Salle entered Texas, France was at war with Spain, during Spain's last years of the Hapsburg dynasty. When the childless Charles II died in 1700, he named Philip of Anjou, of the French House of Bourbon, as his successor – allying Spain with France through the House of Bourbon. The intention of Philip's grandfather, Louis XIV, to keep Philip in the line of succession to the French throne, however, resulted in the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-14). France ultimately prevailed against rival claimant Archduke Charles of Austria, who was supported by the Grand Alliance – a coalition of England, The Netherlands, and Austria – but the treaties ending the war barred the thrones of France and Spain from merging in the future. Although this did not change the Spanish prohibition against inter-imperial trade, it was not for lack of French efforts on the ground: once Louisiana was given as a commercial concession, the French colonizers sent various trading expeditions to Veracruz, the main Spanish port on the Gulf coast. They also traveled overland to Spanish settlements in Nuevo León and New Mexico. The French-Spanish alliance in Europe did not extend to the Americas, however, and the Spaniards rebuffed French overtures for trade, at least on the official level.⁵⁴ Like some indigenous groups, the Spanish empire used trade to politically exclude others.

⁵³ John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 159-64.

⁵⁴ Donald E. Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas 1519-1821*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), pp. 86, 101-104; Cox, "Louisiana Texas Frontier," pp. 14-16; Katherine Bridges and Winston De Ville, "Natchitoches and the Trail to the Rio Grande: Two Early Eighteenth-Century Accounts by the Sieur Derbanne," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 8, no. 3 (Summer 1967), p. 251.

The French periodically asserted claims to Texas, particularly along the Gulf coast, based on La Salle's earlier expeditions. For example, in 1715 Gerardo Moro advised the French to claim Matagorda Bay as the southern point of their Louisiana territory, by virtue of La Salle's attempt at colonization. This would not only secure their advantage in trade, but would also allow them to control the entire northern Gulf coast. The French Council of Marines concluded that reinforcing the fort at Ile Dauphine and establishing a post among the Alabamons to counteract British influence were higher priorities. Nevertheless, in an unsuccessful 1719 attempt to re-establish a settlement at Matagorda Bay, French officer Simars de Bellisle's ship went aground at Galveston Bay; he and four other officers were abandoned when they rowed to shore seeking fresh water. After the others died, Bellisle was taken in by the coastal Caux (reflecting their own trade networks, they used horses to hunt and raid). Two years later, two Hasinai came and escorted him to northeast Texas, from where he journeyed to his compatriots in Ft. Natchitoches. In the interim, the Caux made clear to Bellisle they would thwart any attempt at French encroachment on their territory.⁵⁵

Also in 1719, Claude-Charles Dutisné set out from the Kaskaskia Post on the Mississippi (eighty miles downstream from the mouth of the Missouri River in present-day Illinois) to form alliances with various tribes as part of a larger effort to establish trade in New Mexico. Dutisné quickly learned the complex relationships among peace, trade, and enmity. First the Missouri and then Osage peoples obstructed his efforts to trade with their enemy the Taovayas. In turn, the Taovayas blocked his efforts to develop trade with their Apache enemies. Despite these obstacles, Dutisné managed to

⁵⁵ Foster, *Historic Peoples*, pp. 223-26.

trade with each of the groups, exchanging metal tools and firearms for horses, buffalo hides, and deer skins, eventually reaching the Pawnees and Padoucas (Comanches). In response, a Spanish expedition set out from New Mexico under the leadership of Lieutenant Governor Pedro de Villasur, but they were massacred by the Pawnee and the incident only demonstrated Spain's continuing inability to secure the far reaches of its frontier.⁵⁶

The French strategy to develop trade with Spanish settlements became tangential to the far more robust and successful trade with the indigenous peoples of the region. In 1700, Jean Baptiste Le Moyne de Bienville (younger brother of Pierre) led a trading party including Louis Juchereau de St. Denis, to the Natchitoches and Kadohadacho, Caddoan peoples who lived on the Red River. Following indigenous practices, he distributed gifts and participated in the calumet ceremony, which created bonds of fictive kinship and mutual obligation between the parties. At the same time, the French founded settlements at Kaskaskia and Cahokia on the upper Mississippi, and this Illinois country became a primary hub for French and indigenous trade farther north. In the meanwhile, British traders from the Carolinas had reached the middle region of the Mississippi and established trade with Chickasaws and other tribes around mouth of Arkansas River, challenging French claims to the entire length of the Mississippi and diverting their resources away from Texas.⁵⁷

As the French responded to these pressures, they paid insufficient attention to the needs of the Caddo with whom they had promised for years to trade. The Caddo

⁵⁶ Smith, *Wichita Indians*, pp. 23-24; Cox, "Louisiana-Texas Frontier," pp. 15-16. Ironically, among the slain Spaniards was Captain Juan de Archebeque, the intrepid former Frenchman named Jean L'Archevêque, who took part in the assassination of La Salle.

⁵⁷ John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 164, 198.

were facing intense pressures of their own, under frequent attack by mounted Apaches from the west, and Osage and Chickasaw from the north and east, respectively. The Caddo sought firearms for their own protection against these attacks, and the French offered their only access to such weapons. With sporadic visits by traders during this time, they were able to obtain some firearms through networks connected to Illinois tribes with access to French trading posts. In 1702, following devastating crop losses due to flooding, a group of Natchitoches Caddos relocated two hundred fifty miles southeast and settled on the north shore of Lake Pontchartrain near the French Ft. Mississippi, under the command of St. Denis. Presumably, this would have facilitated trade opportunities, but military demands to the east – complicated by British-indigenous alliances – soon led to the abandonment of Ft. Mississippi.⁵⁸

It was not until 1713 that the Caddo would see direct trade with the French. The previous year, the French Crown ceded commercial control of Louisiana to private interests, and in 1713 St. Denis was sent to establish Ft. St. Jean Baptiste des Natchitoches on the Red River. The Natchitoches people who had relocated to Lake Pontchartrain a decade earlier returned to their original homeland, but only after losing many of their group in a battle with local Acolapissas. The Acolapissas sought to force them to remain in the area so they could continue to be part of the French trade network.⁵⁹ This suggests that the Natchitoches had been active in facilitating trade between French and indigenous groups during their sojourn to the south. The French

⁵⁸ Smith, *Caddo Indians*, pp. 37-40; John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 199; H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), p. 5.

⁵⁹ Despite their aggression, the Acolapissa appear to have been in a vulnerable position, as the Chickasaw had nearly annihilated them in 1699 – see Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country*, pp. 59-61. Also, compare the Natchitoches groups' willingness to relocate for trade, with the Hasinai's unwillingness to relocate for Spanish missionization; Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, p. 6.

quickly constructed their fort and two warehouses at Natchitoches, then spent six months traveling along the Mississippi and Red rivers trading firearms, knives, beads and cloth for horses, cattle and buffalo hides.⁶⁰

Although the early years of the Louisiana colony were difficult for many of its French inhabitants, the trade network that it supplied grew rapidly. In 1716, St. Denis formed his own commercial partnership and imported 60,000 *livres* worth of goods to distribute from the post at Natchitoches. Two years later, the capital of Louisiana was moved from Mobile to the newly-established port of New Orleans. In 1719, trader Jean-Baptiste Bénard, Sieur de la Harpe established the Nassonite post on the Red River, two hundred miles beyond Natchitoches. This post served as a hub for trade not only with Kadohadacho tribes, but also with the Wichita tribes (Kichai, Tawakonis, and Taovayas) in the Arkansas River valley. In 1724, the French became allies with and began providing firearms to the Comanches, as part of a general alliance and peace among tribes north of the Arkansas River.⁶¹

To the south, however, the growing French population in Louisiana provoked warfare with the indigenous peoples they displaced. By 1721, well over 7,000 French subjects, together with over 2,000 enslaved Africans had settled in the colony. They raised cash crops such as tobacco and indigo, and engaged in indigenous trade throughout the region in what historian Daniel Usner dubbed the frontier exchange economy. Yet Crown concessions of land to French settlers along the west banks of the Mississippi River during these years dispossessed existing Natchez villages. In 1729 the

⁶⁰ Morfi, *History of Texas*, Vol. I, pp.168-69.

⁶¹ Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, pp. 7-12; Mildred Mott Wedel, "La Harpe's 1719 Post on Red River and Nearby Caddo Settlements," *Bulletin of the Texas Memorial Museum* 30 (Austin: University of Texas, 1978), pp. 2-5, 15; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 219-20.

Natchez attacked the settlers and, allied with African slaves, killed over two hundred people. The French retaliated through an alliance with Choctaws, forcing the surviving Natchez to flee westward. Two years later, these refugees attacked the French settlement at Natchitoches; it took the assistance of 350 Hasinai and Kadohadacho warriors, together with twenty-two French soldiers, to defeat the Natchez. As a result of the Natchez War, Louisiana reverted to a royal colony in 1731, bringing political and economic stability to the French colony. In exchange for permission to trade in their territories, the French began paying annual tribute to various indigenous groups. St. Denis distributed these gifts through the post at Natchitoches, conditioned on the premise that the tribes allied with France would remain at peace with one another. Thus, the power of trade mediated peace, and the relationship between military and trade alliances was pivotal in protecting both indigenous and European-claimed territory. Without its Caddoan trade network and its accompanying military support, the French colony of Louisiana would not have survived its early challenges.⁶²

New exchange networks formed as migration and trade increased. French trading posts became nodes to supply already-existing indigenous trade networks. In north Texas, for example, the Caddo-Wichita-Comanche trade network incorporated the French post at Natchitoches; separately in south Texas, the Attakapa-Tonkawa-Apache network took in the French post at Opelousas. Spanish officials noted in the 1780s that the Coco and Mayeyes were trading firearms and ammunition from Louisiana – now

⁶² Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 5-9; Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, pp. 10-12; John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 221.

long under Spanish control – to the Lipan Apache.⁶³ Given the enmity between Comanche and Apache, the two networks basically drove their respective raids against Spanish settlements and each other in order to obtain horses, captives, and hides to trade for firearms and goods. Each group continuously needed more firearms because of conflict with the other.

From the start, French traders took advantage of navigable streams and coastal water routes. This would give them an insurmountable advantage over later Spanish Texas settlements. In 1721, Bènard de la Harpe led an expedition to establish a trading post on the Texas Gulf coast. After encountering hostilities from Atakapans in Galveston Bay, however, the project was abandoned. During the 1720s, Jean Béranger also explored the Gulf coast for potential trade, mapping the coast line and visiting the Karankawa in the Aransas Bay area. In the early 1740s, a group of Frenchmen became lost after visiting the Cujanes; their would-be rescuers were shipwrecked in 1744 or 1745. In 1745, Spanish officials dispatched Captain Joaquín Orobio y Bazterra to investigate rumors of French settlement on the coast. He learned from the Akokisa that for six years, French traders had come annually either overland to Orcoquiza or along the coast and up the Neches, Trinity, San Jacinto and Brazos rivers to purchase deer and buffalo hides from the Akokisa and Bidai. Despite Spanish efforts to obstruct it, French trade remained profitable. In 1754 when Spanish officials arrested the French trader Joseph Blancpain at Orcoquisac, he stated that he had been trading with the Atakapa for more than twenty-five years – that is, since the late 1720s. Like his compatriots, Blancpain transported his goods by water from his home base in Louisiana.

⁶³ Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, p. 32; La Vere, *Texas Indians*, pp. 88-89.

Shipwrecks, both French and British, occurred along the Texas shores frequently during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, reflecting an increased level of coastal trading activity.⁶⁴

Most Texas tribes were more tangibly affected by British and French trade policy than by the Spaniards who eventually settled in their midst. By the late seventeenth century, British traders provided firearms and trade goods with tribes to the north and east of Texas, some of whom – such as the Osage – were enemies of Texas tribes. The British-inspired slave trade in the southeast also increased warfare as Chickasaws raided west of the Mississippi and into Caddo territory. By the 1680s, the British-armed Chickasaws were well-known as slave-hunters in Texas. Chickasaw hostilities against the Caddoans declined after French traders established direct contact with Caddoan tribes in the 1710s, exchanging firearms and manufactured goods for hides and other animal products. These tribes then dispersed the items throughout their own networks in the region. French traders also gave annual gifts, including firearms, ammunition, axes, and knives to the Wichita in exchange for trade and hunting rights.⁶⁵

Both French and Spanish found that their respective trade networks were shaped and conditioned by indigenous ones. Relations were in flux during this period, and Europeans often found themselves either caught between or as the targets of tribal hostilities. French traders in particular set up separate networks to work with tribes

⁶⁴ Robert S. Weddle and Patricia R. Lemée, "Exploring the Texas Coast: Bellisle, Béranger, and La Harpe, 1719-1721," in Lagarde, *The French in Texas*, pp. 23-26, 29; Aten, *Indians of the Upper Texas Coast*, pp. 56-58; Herbert E. Bolton, "Spanish Activities on the Lower Trinity River, 1746-1771," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (April 1913), pp. 343-44, 376-77; Morfi, *History of Texas*, Vol. 1, pp. 62, 76; Vol. 2 p. 426.

⁶⁵ Foster, *Historic Native Peoples*, pp. 33, 203; Turner-Pearson, "The Stone Site," p. 568; Snyder, *Slavery in Indian Country* 55-63; see also Gallay, *Indian Slave Trade*.

who were at war with one another. As had been the case with the Jumanos, only traders seemed able to negotiate a balance in their diplomatic relations with the widely varied interests they encountered. In contrast to the French settlements established for the purpose of trade, the Spaniards founded settlements in Texas to counteract French influence in the area and to provide a defensive buffer for the mining settlements in New Spain. Unlike the French, the economic life of Spanish Texas was intended to connect with the interior and to remain strictly within the bounds of Spanish sovereignty. How this developed will be examined in the next two chapters.

Chapter Two
“The missionaries will raise their hands to heaven
the day they see themselves free of this burden”:¹
The San Antonio Missions in the Local Economy

This chapter will consider the five Franciscan missions of San Antonio as a unit in examining their role in the local economy. These five missions functioned as producers, consumers, importers, traders, employers, and even bankers within their local and regional markets – activities that were considered temporal (dealing with the material world), rather than spiritual. From their establishment in the early eighteenth century until they surrendered the temporalities in the 1790s, the economic and social organization of the missions had a significant effect on the growth and development of the nearby presidio and *vecino* communities and markets. Far more than their military and civilian institutional counterparts, the San Antonio missions shaped the local economy not only because of their range of temporal activities, but also because they controlled most of the land and indigenous labor, and a considerable amount of capital.

The province of Texas was home to at least twenty-seven missions during the colonial period.² The Spanish Crown established frontier missions to form alliances with local indigenous populations, effect their conversion to the Catholic religion, and persuade them to live as its subjects in order to reinforce its territorial claims – particularly against the French. Native Americans who entered the missions often did

¹ Fr. José Rafael Oliva to the Father Guardian and Discretorio of the Apostolic College in Zacatecas, 31 Dec. 1788, in Fr. José Rafael Oliva, *Management of the Missions in Texas: Fr. José Rafael Oliva's Views Concerning the Problems of the Temporalities in 1788*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, ann. Fr. Marion A. Habig, Documentary Series No. 2 (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library, Our Lady of the Lake University, 1977), p. 48.

² Estimates range up to thirty-five. Discrepancies in the total number are due to the fact that some missions were abandoned and reestablished multiple times, sometimes under the same name and other times with new names; other missions were moved from one location to another and renamed.

so for political alliances, military protection, or to supplement or expand their resource base. Most of the Texas missions were short-lived, either abandoned for lack of residents or relocated to other areas with populations more willing to enter them. Despite fluctuating populations and fortunes, however, five of the Texas missions eventually fulfilled their goals of converting indigenous populations to Catholicism, assimilating them into local communities, and ultimately becoming secularized.³ All five – San Antonio de Valero, San José y San Miguel de Aguayo, Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña, San Juan Capistrano, and San Francisco de la Espada – were situated along the San Antonio River, below the Balcones Escarpment in central Texas.⁴

Spanish Catholic missions were established in frontier areas as temporary institutions with a defined life cycle that was codified by law and based on a series of stages that corresponded to the specific spiritual conditions of their inhabitants. In the first stage – the *conversión* – a mission was established either as a *reducción*, which created a new settlement for one or more nomadic indigenous groups, or a

³ Fray José Francisco López, "Report on the San Antonio Missions in 1792," trans. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., ann. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M., *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 77 (April 1974), pp. 490-91.

⁴ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1936-1958), remains the most thorough treatment of the Texas missions. Herbert E. Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Colonial History and Administration* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), also provides details concerning their administrative context. One of the only studies to treat the Texas missions in a broad historical and geographic context is Robert H. Jackson, *Missions and the Frontiers of Spanish America: A Comparative Study of the Impact of Environmental, Economic, Political, and Socio-Cultural Variations on the Missions in the Río de la Plata Region and on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Scottsdale, AZ: Pentacle Press, 2005). For an overview of the Texas missions, see Appendix 1 in Jacinto Quirarte, *The Art and Architecture of the Texas Missions* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2002), pp. 197-205. Individual missions are treated in such works as Marion A. Habig, O.F.M., *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio's Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968); Curtis D. Tunnell and W. W. Newcomb, Jr., *A Lipan Apache Mission: San Lorenzo de la Santa Cruz, 1762-1771*, Bulletin of the Texas Memorial Museum 14 (Austin: University of Texas, 1969); Robert S. Weddle, *The San Sabá Mission: Spanish Pivot in Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1999); and Tamra Lynn Walter, *Espíritu Santo de Zúñiga: A Frontier Mission in South Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2007). Archaeological gray literature on mission sites throughout Texas includes numerous specialized, narrowly focused field studies, as well as technical and cultural resource management reports.

congregación, in which people from dispersed villages moved into a centralized settlement. As will be discussed in Chapter Four, missionaries did not necessarily have sufficient influence to convince indigenous groups to enter a mission, or to relocate. Sometimes only a few people in a band or village chose to ally with the Spaniards and to convert, not the entire group. The *conversión* phase of both types of communities focused on the basic elements of religious instruction or “indoctrination” (the spiritualities) of non-Christians, while also teaching European methods of agriculture, ranching, and craft production (the temporalities).⁵ Until the mid-eighteenth century, mission communities in Texas were generally segregated from Hispanic civilian or military communities and existed under the juridical and economic authority of the missionary. The second stage was the *doctrina*, a quasi-mission for new Christians; the indigenous community in this stage was considered to be responsible for their own material means of living, but the missionary remained in charge of their spiritual instruction. For the final stage – the *curato* – secularization transformed the mission into a parish church or curate under the jurisdiction of lay authorities, with converted peoples living as a Catholic community subject to taxes, tithes, and the juridical authority of Crown officials.⁶

As with other institutions on the Texas frontier, Crown policy did not define a formal economic role for missions. Yet economic activity—chiefly in the form of administering the temporalities—was a significant function of the mission during its

⁵ This was not part of the evangelization of central Mexico since those skills and practices already existed among Mesoamericans. Outside of that zone, the evangelization in religious doctrine was just one aspect of the missionary complex, which was much broader in cultural scope.

⁶ Diego Miguel Bringas y Encinas, *Friar Bringas Reports to the King: Methods of Indoctrination on the Frontier of New Spain 1796-97*, eds. and trans. Daniel S. Matson and Bernard L. Fontana (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1977), pp. 13-16, 47; David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 102-107, 303n14.

conversión stage. In addition to their responsibility of effecting neophytes' spiritual conversion, missionaries had a complementary duty to administer temporal affairs – that is, to teach the skills, practices, and lifestyle to mission inhabitants considered necessary to be a functioning member of colonial Spanish society. Essential to that was conversion to Christianity. Instruction in the temporalities required missions to be production centers for such undertakings as agriculture, livestock raising and ranching, weaving, and carpentry. They produced what they consumed, sold their surplus in local and regional markets, and supplemented their needs with items purchased in the interior of New Spain. Together with the annual stipend the Crown provided each missionary, the sale of their surplus allowed the missions to purchase goods, supplies, and equipment from the interior; attract more indigenous residents; and to hire some Hispanic *vecinos* (local Spanish residents) to work in their operations. Missions even provided various types of loans, discussed below, to the local Hispanic community.

Since relevant documents have only come to light since the 1970s, Texas missions are seldom studied as economic institutions.⁷ Nonetheless, they played an important economic role in Texas for several reasons. In a broad sense, as economic

⁷ Here, I refer to the individual mission account books from the apostolic colleges in Querétaro and Zacatecas. One exception to this gap is Sarah A. Holmes, Sandra T. Welch, and Laura R. Knudson, "The Role of Accounting Practices in the Disempowerment of the Coahuiltecan Indians," *The Accounting Historians Journal* 32:2 (Dec. 2005), pp. 104-43. In general, mission economic studies have focused on other areas of the Spanish colonies. See, for example, Robert Archibald, *The Economic Aspects of the California Missions* (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1978); Marie Christine Duggan, "Market and Church on the Mexican Frontier: Alta California, 1769-1832" (PhD diss., New School for Social Research, 2000); and Julia J.S. Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions: A Socioeconomic History* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2014). Duggan also has published several detailed articles concerning California mission finance and economics. A few studies include economic activity as part of their broader focus on socio-cultural aspects of area missions: James Schofield Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier: The Guaycuruan Experience* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000); Jackson, *Missions and Frontiers*; Mariah Wade, *Missions, Missionaries, and Native Americans: Long-Term Processes and Daily Practices* (Gainesville, University Press of Florida, 2008); and José Refugio de la Torre Curiel, *Twilight of the Mission Frontier: Shifting Interethnic Alliances and Social Organization in Sonora, 1768-1855* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012).

historian Marie Duggan observed, the Franciscan approach to religious conversion integrated economics and politics in order to “balanc[e] the negative pressure of social control with the positive promise of communal distribution of output and continued nominal ownership of land.”⁸ The missionaries had no hope of accomplishing their goals of changing indigenous peoples’ spiritual beliefs and cultural practices without first providing a way of life that was materially better than what they already had outside the mission. In Texas, this approach was relatively effective for weakened or shattered nomadic groups, such as the many small Coahuiltecan bands recruited to the San Antonio missions from central Texas and the Río Grande area in south Texas. These groups had suffered a reduction of population through warfare, captivity, and disease, and loss of territory through encroachment of Apaches, Comanches, and Spaniards. For many, the missions offered physical protection even as their children and descendants became acculturated to Spanish ways and beliefs.

Spanish missions never attracted such powerful groups as the Caddo in east Texas or the Lipan Apaches in the Edwards Plateau. Missionaries were placed in Caddo territory from the 1690s until the 1770s, and in Apache territory during the 1750s, but the missions they founded in these areas failed in their goals. At various times these groups sought military alliances with the Spaniards against their enemies and welcomed the material gifts they offered, but they had no interest in changing their spiritual beliefs or manner of living. Missions established for coastal Texas tribes were also largely unsuccessful, while friars made no attempts to convert Comanches or any of

⁸ Marie Christine Duggan, *The Chumash and the Presidio of Santa Barbara: Evolution of a Relationship, 1782-1823* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 2004), p. 21.

the so-called Nations of the North (*Norteños*). For these reasons, the focus of this chapter is on the five Franciscan missions in San Antonio.

TEXAS MISSION BACKGROUND

The Order of the Friars Minor, or Franciscans, was the first of the Catholic mendicant orders to arrive in New Spain, in May, 1524. From the earliest years of the Conquest, the Spanish Crown's ambition to seek new territory and resources was closely aligned with an evangelical drive to spread Catholicism, often referred to as the "spiritual conquest,"⁹ a relationship derived from the fifteenth-century *patronato real* in which the Catholic Pope ceded to the Spanish Crown all rights of managing the Church within its overseas territories. During the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the Franciscan order established several apostolic colleges for the propagation of the holy faith (*propaganda fide*) in Mexico, the first at Querétaro in 1683. Although widely recognized as training grounds for missionaries who might convert indigenous populations in the north of New Spain to Catholicism, the colleges also continued the Order's long tradition of evangelizing Catholics to energize, renew, and support their faith.¹⁰

The missionary training institution, the Apostolic College of Santa Cruz at Querétaro (*Colegio Apostolico de la Santa Cruz de Querétaro*) began its missionary work in east Texas with the founding of Mission San Francisco de los Tejas in 1690, and Mission Santísima Nombre de María in 1691. Both were situated among Nabadache

⁹ Robert Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain: 1523-1572*, trans. Lesley Byrd Simpson (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966).

¹⁰ Ricard, *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico*, p. 21; W. Eugene Shiels, *King and Church: The Rise and Fall of the Patronato Real* (Chicago: Loyola University Press, 1961).

Caddoan villages along the Neches River, but were abandoned in 1693 as relations between the Spaniards and Caddoans steadily deteriorated. In the face of intractable logistical and supply problems, the missionaries determined that the Nabedache were interested far more in food and gifts than in conversion, while Crown authorities agreed that the missionary effort could be withdrawn because the area seemed undesirable for Spanish habitation. Furthermore, earlier French attempts to settle the territory had not come to fruition, so Spaniards felt little pressure to establish their own settlements in response.¹¹

Rather than accept this setback, the College of Santa Cruz began a methodical, long-term process to build the infrastructure required to materially support their eventual return to the Texas field. Their experience in the 1690s highlighted the necessity of establishing a series of intermediate settlements to overcome the logistical obstacles that supply convoys faced in crossing long distances to provision the missions. Equally important, these intermediate settlements would provide what Robert Ricard has described as missions of liaison, which allowed the religious to “move from one mission to the next without going outside the jurisdiction of the Order.”¹² In 1699 they founded the first of a series of such liaison missions, San Juan

¹¹ Peter Gerhard, *A Guide to the Historical Geography of New Spain*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 18; Kieran McCarty, “Apostolic Colleges of the Propagation of the Faith: Old and New World Background,” *The Americas* 19 (July 1962), pp. 50, 55-57; Michael B. McCloskey, O.F.M., *The Formative Years of the Missionary College of Santa Cruz of Querétaro 1683-1733* (Washington, DC: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1955), pp. 25-35, 64, 99; Wolfgang Braunfels, *Monasteries of Western Europe: The Architecture of the Orders* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1972), p. 131; D. A. Brading, *Church and State in Bourbon Mexico: The Diocese of Michoacán 1749-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), pp. 18-19; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas: 1519-1936*, Vol. 1, *The Mission Era: The Winning of Texas, 1693-1731* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), pp. 352-76.

¹² McCloskey, *Formative Years*, specifically points to the absence of intermediate missions as part of the failure of the east Texas missions established in the 1690s, pp. 94-95; also, Ricard, *Spiritual Conquest*.

Bautista. Initially located on the Río de Sabinas in Nueva Vizcaya, the mission was aimed at dispersed Coahuiltecan groups. Within six months the mission was relocated to a site a few miles south of the Río Grande, near present-day Guerrero – a strategic placement near several shallow crossings. Following a pattern that was replicated elsewhere, two more missions (San Francisco Solano in 1700 and San Bernardo in 1702), a presidio (1701), and a civilian settlement (1703) were soon clustered around it.¹³ The Franciscans sometimes established several missions in the same area, to more effectively work with different linguistic groups or to minimize conflict between groups by housing them in separate communities.

The Franciscan order created a new apostolic college, *Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe*, in Zacatecas in 1707 to train missionaries for the northern frontier, including Texas. In 1716, missionaries from both the colleges at Querétaro and Zacatecas journeyed to east Texas; this was the first entry in the region for the Zacatecas college. They were part of an expedition led by Domingo Ramón to reassert Spanish claims to east Texas; the French in neighboring Louisiana, seeking new trade relations with the Spaniards, had provoked their return. The Caddoan groups who were the focus of these missionary efforts, for their part, hoped for a military alliance with the Spaniards that would protect their territories from the escalating violence caused by French and British sales of firearms to Native groups to the east and north, and increased slaving raids from such traditional enemies as the Osage. The Querétaro

Although Ricard's study focuses on the sixteenth century, his descriptions remained applicable through the remainder of the colonial mission history.

¹³ Jack D. Eaton, *Guerrero, Coahuila, Mexico: A Guide to the Town and Missions*, Archaeology and History of the San Juan Bautista Mission Area, Coahuila and Texas, Report No. 4 (Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1981), pp. 4-10. The missions, presidio, and civilian settlement are treated in detail in Robert S. Weddle, *San Juan Bautista: Gateway to Spanish Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1968).

college re-established their former Mission San Francisco de los Tejas as Nuestro Padre San Francisco de los Tejas, as well as San José de los Nazonis and Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de los Hainais. The Zacatecas college established three missions: Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, Nuestra Señora de los Ais, and San Miguel de Linares de los Adaes. The Ais and Adaes tribes were small, unaffiliated Caddoan speaking groups; the other tribes were all part of the Hasinai Confederacy of Caddos.¹⁴

In central Texas, the San Antonio mission community began when the Apostolic College of Santa Cruz de Querétaro suppressed Mission San Francisco Solano on the Río Grande, transferred its location, and re-established it in the San Antonio River valley as Mission San Antonio de Valero in 1718. This new location was midway between the missions in east Texas and those remaining on the Río Grande. As the missionaries and their military escorts made the long journey between San Juan Bautista and east Texas, each group had observed the potential for a mission and town at the headwaters of the San Antonio River.¹⁵ The Crown followed the pattern of clustering missions, presidio, and civilian settlements together, with the founding of Presidio San Antonio de Béxar and the civilian settlement of the Villa de Béxar, both in 1718. The villa was reorganized as the Villa de San Fernando in 1731, with immigrants brought from the

¹⁴ William C. Foster, *Spanish Expeditions into Texas, 1689-1768* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1995), pp. 109-21; Donald E. Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2010), pp. 110-14; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 2, *The Winning of Texas, 1693-1731* (Austin: von Boeckmann-Jones Company, 1936), pp. 58-67; F. Todd Smith, *The Caddo Indians: Tribes at the Convergence of Empires, 1542-1854* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1995), pp. 9-14, 39-45. Ultimately, each of these missions was either relocated or suppressed due to a lack of converts.

¹⁵ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 2, pp. 91-95, 128-30.

Canary Islands.¹⁶ Missionaries from the College of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe in Zacatecas established Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo in 1720. In 1731, due to their inability to attract potential converts, the Queretaran College transferred its three east Texas missions to San Antonio, to become known as Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña (formerly La Purísima Concepción de los Hainais), San Juan de Capistrano (formerly San José de los Nazonis), and San Francisco de la Espada (formerly San Francisco de los Tejas).¹⁷ The four Querétaro-founded missions in San Antonio were administered under a single Father President, while the Zacatecas-founded mission of San José had its own Father President. Each of the missions had two missionaries in residence for the daily oversight of spiritual instruction and temporal duties.¹⁸ Following the 1767 expulsion of the Jesuit order from the Spanish colonies, the Querétaro-founded missions turned their four San Antonio missions over to the College of Zacatecas in 1773 and transferred their missionaries to the Pimería Alta.¹⁹ Following this, the Zacatecas college administered the five San Antonio missions as a single group, each with its own separate population and financial account.

The mission system in Texas had its roots in the extension of New Spain's northern frontier from Zacatecas to Saltillo during the late sixteenth century, with the creation of the province of Nueva Galicia in the *altiplano* north of central Mexico. The

¹⁶ Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 6-11.

¹⁷ Quirarte, *Art and Architecture of the Texas Missions*, pp. 43, 65. Detailed information on the specific groups associated with each mission can be found in Mardith Keithly Schuetz, "The Indians of the San Antonio Missions, 1718-1821" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1980), and T. N. Campbell and T. J. Campbell, *Indian Groups Associated with Spanish Missions of the San Antonio Missions National Historical Park*, Center for Archaeological Research Special Report No. 16 (San Antonio: University of Texas at San Antonio, 1985).

¹⁸ In addition, the Zacatecan father president administered their three missions in east Texas, as well as others established later in the coastal plains.

¹⁹ Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 25-26. The Jesuit expulsion in 1767 left the Pimería Alta missions without missionaries, and the Queretaran took over that field.

hunter-gatherer peoples who lived there, known collectively as Chichimecas, a term coined by the Nahuas or Aztecs of central Mexico for outside indigenous northern groups, fiercely resisted Spanish intrusions in their territory, while for their part Spaniards raided these populations for slaves and waged a war of annihilation against them. These so-called Chichimec Wars, from the 1560s to the 1590s, were eventually ended through a Spanish policy of “peace by purchase.” The motivation for peace was the Spanish need to secure the region for silver extraction in northern Mexico as well as the routes that brought supplies north and silver bullion south. The silver from Zacatecas and Guanajuato was not only the economic engine of New Spain, but also a vital source of income to the Spanish Crown. Rather than continue the violent warfare, Viceroy Alonso Manrique de Zúñiga, Marqués de Villamanrique, following the 1584 advice of fray Domingo de Arzola, Bishop of Guadalajara, halted decades of hostilities by establishing a series of missionary and civilian settlements protected by a small defensive force, reducing the presidio garrisons, and distributing food and goods to the local indigenous populations. From the 1590s to the early 1600s, as the missionaries waged their campaign of religious and cultural conversion, the distribution of supplies shifted from military to missionary channels. Missionaries designed this supply of maize, beef, textiles, clothing, metal tools and implements to encourage – or coerce – nomadic groups to settle in towns and, with the example of such other Spanish-allied indigenous groups as Tlaxcaltecas who relocated from Central Mexico to the area, adopt sedentary farming practices.²⁰ The supplies also served to incorporate these

²⁰ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Guide to Materials for the History of the United States in the Principal Archives of Mexico* (Washington, D.C., Carnegie Institution, 1913), p. 471; Philip Wayne Powell, *Soldiers, Indians and Silver: The Northward Advance of New Spain, 1550-1600* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of

remote populations into the Spanish empire's local, regional, and global economic networks.

The missionary approach in San Antonio continued the method originally proposed in 1584 by the Bishop of Guadalajara. Even the supplies of maize, beef, textiles, clothing, metal tools and implements were similar to those provided in the earlier period. While indigenous peoples came to the San Antonio missions from all parts of Texas and northern Coahuila, many of them belonged to remnants of bands that were displaced from their territories or declining in numbers due to warfare or disease. They chose mission life as an alternative means of survival: their populations continued to decline during the 1740s, and remnant groups were unable to defend their territories or to maintain their traditional hunting and gathering practices. For groups that rejected incorporation into a dominant enemy group such as the Apache, allying with Spaniards in a mission setting offered a strategy against a common foe. In return for food, clothing, and military protection, indigenous groups sought ways to incorporate mission resources within their own cultural norms and accommodate missionaries' demands on their time for labor and religious ritual.²¹ What they gave up in autonomy, they gained in subsistence – as had the earlier Chichimecas. The extent to which their spiritual beliefs may have changed is unknown, but their participation in Christian rituals brought them clear material benefits.

California Press, 1952), pp. 181-83; José Francisco Román Gutiérrez, "Indigenous Space and Frontier in Sixteenth-Century Nueva Galicia," in Andrew Roth-Seneff, Robert V. Kemper, and Julie Adkins, eds., *From Tribute to Communal Sovereignty: The Tarascan and Caxcan Territories in Transition* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2015), p. 169; Leslie S. Offutt, *Saltillo 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), pp. 2-3.

²¹ Campbell and Campbell, *Indian Groups*, pp. 14-15, 70-71; Gary Clayton Anderson, *The Indian Southwest 1580-1830: Ethnogenesis and Reinvention* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1999), pp. 79-84.

The missions established in San Antonio brought substantial economic resources to the area. The material successes they achieved resulted from a combination of the mission residents' self-sufficiency in the communal production of food and surpluses, and financial subsidies through a network of secular and apostolic college support. The Crown provided an annual stipend of 450 *pesos* to each missionary, and – more importantly – apostolic colleges, their benefactors, and other supporters gave administrative and financial assistance for the missions' endeavors. These entities represented a mostly elite regional network that also drew upon viceregal and peninsular resources to support the work of missionaries on the fringes of the Spanish empire.

The apostolic colleges were designed to manage missionary programs through training personnel and providing financial oversight. The Franciscan Order in Rome appointed a commissary general of the Indies (the term Spain persisted in using for its overseas territories) to oversee all of its apostolic colleges in the Americas. Each college had its own set of governing documents – a constitution, a ceremonial handbook, and a directory of uses and practices for the guidance of religious ceremonies, daily life, and internal deliberations. The highest authority within the college was the Father Guardian who, together with the *Discretorio* – a council comprised of experienced friars and former guardians – administered the operations of the college and its missions. Commissary prefects elected from each college served under the commissary general, and in turn appointed a Father President to oversee the college's mission fields. The province of Texas was assigned to the Franciscan Order, as a mission field for both the Querétaro and Zacatecas apostolic colleges. Each college

appointed a Father President to reside at and manage its respective missions there: the Father President from Querétaro usually lived at Mission Concepción (he was at Valero during the 1740s and '50s), and the Father President from Zacatecas at Mission San José. Missionaries were to submit their annual reports to the Father President of their respective missions, who compiled and forwarded them to the *Discretorio* for review.²²

Because of their vow of poverty, the Franciscans did not handle business transactions or otherwise directly engage in the civil administration of temporalities. While the Franciscan fathers could manage and administer mission financial affairs, technically they did so as guardians of the indigenous mission residents who were their legal wards. The apostolic colleges, however, required the employment of lay brothers, who acted as either procurator (*procurador*) or syndic (*síndico*) to arrange purchases, conduct transactions, handle cash, and otherwise directly engage in the civil administration of temporalities. The procurator for the Zacatecas college, for example, received requests for supplies from the missions, and arranged for their purchase through appointed syndics. He directed business affairs and other matters, and accompanied the convoy transporting goods to the missions in order to administer each of their accounts. The college of Zacatecas appointed syndics in Zacatecas, Mexico City, San Luís Potosí (where the missionaries' allowances were paid after 1778), Saltillo, and La Bahía, assigning them powers of attorney to operate on the college's behalf in supplying the Texas missions. Goods purchased through the syndic in Saltillo lowered

²² Discretorio, *The Zacatecan Missionaries in Texas 1716-1834: Excerpts from the Libros de los decretos of the Missionary College of Zacatecas 1707-1828*, trans. Benedict Leutenegger, and A Biographical Dictionary by Marion A. Habig (Austin: Texas Historical Survey Committee, 1973), p. 3, 58; David Rex Galindo, *To Sin No More: Franciscans and Conversion in the Hispanic World, 1683-1830* (Stanford: Stanford University Press and the Academy of American Franciscan History, 2017), pp. 46-48, 54-55.

shipping costs, as it was closer to Texas than the other major supply centers. Each syndic named a local benefactor to assist in making purchases and selling mission surpluses. The benefactor was not to profit from this role: the Council asked that he “abstain from any business deals which could violate royal laws and, even more, a good conscience, by avoiding accounts which do not pass through the hands of Fr. President or without the knowledge of the syndic.”²³

In managing temporal affairs, each missionary was expected to meet his mission’s financial obligations. Although historian fray Benedict Leutenegger described missionaries as “unsalaried business managers,” each of the Texas missionaries in fact received an annual stipend of 450 *pesos* from the Crown.²⁴ The Franciscans assigned two missionaries to each mission. Each year, the amount of their stipends, 900 *pesos*, was credited to the mission’s account, and the purchase of annual supplies was offset against it. In other words, the missionary received his salary in kind, and redistributed the goods to the mission community. As noted in the previous chapter, the ability to acquire and redistribute commodities conferred social prestige and political status to the giver, in this case the friars and all they embodied. This practice was a culturally resonant means of enhancing missionaries’ authority over mission residents.

Although unusual, sometimes a missionary donated his stipend to a mission other than his own. For example, in 1792, José Antonio García, the procurator at the

²³ Maria del Carmen Velazquez, *La descentralización administrativa y el pago de los Sínodos a las Misiones Noreñas del Siglo XVIII* (Guadalajara: Librería Font, S.A., 1974), p. 13; Archibald, *Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, pp. 68-69; Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 30, 48, 58-59, 62-63, 66 (quotation), 80.

²⁴ Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 62; Oliva, *Management of the Missions in Texas*, p. 1. Habig’s statement is likely based on the fact that the salaries were converted in kind for goods and supplies for the missions and their residents. Archibald, *Economic Aspects of the California Missions*, p. 71 notes that missionaries in California received an annual stipend of 400 *pesos*, and that supernumerary friars (any missionary beyond the two normally assigned to each mission) were not given a stipend.

Zacatecas college, and José María de Jesús Camarena, missionary at Concepción, added their full 450 *peso* stipends to Mission San José's account. These funds were in addition to the stipend of San José's resident missionary, fray José Manuel Pedrajo. Fray José Mariano Roxo, who was assisting at both San José and Concepción, contributed 120 *pesos 4 reales* to San José. The Zacatecas missionary Council itself paid an additional 450 *pesos* on that mission's account in 1794. These transfers all occurred after San José was secularized and, because of the associated loss of temporalities, was unable to pay its debts.²⁵

Unlike other regular religious orders, such as the Dominicans, Augustinians, and Jesuits, which accumulated significant landed estates, the Franciscan Order deliberately did not acquire landed estates for its own behalf. Instead, it relied on parish fees, private alms, and chantry funds for its income.²⁶ These forms of spiritual capital respected Franciscan rules restricting individual ownership of property, while allowing lay followers to express their piety through monetary payments and donations to the Franciscan Order. In addition to the missionaries' Crown stipends, missions had other sources of income. The most important ones were benefactors; raising and selling livestock and their products; and the sale of surplus from the missions' cultivated fields and workshops. In the 1790s, for example, Mission San José sold wool, cotton, sheep, cowhides, and even a few buffalo hides in order to pay for supplies.²⁷ That the

²⁵ *Memorias* for 1792 and 1794, in *San José Papers: Edited Primary Manuscript Sources for the History of Mission San José y San Miguel de Aguayo from Its Founding in 1720 to the Present* (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1983), Part 2, pp. 18-19, 29-31.

²⁶ Brading, *Church and State*, pp. 68, 222. Although referring to the Franciscan Order itself, this statement does not contradict the fact that the Texas missions controlled large tracts of land on behalf of their indigenous residents, in the form of grants from the provincial governor. The grants, however, were rarely confirmed at the viceregal level.

²⁷ *Cuenta[s] que liquidamos...* for 1794 and 1795, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 20-21.

Zacatecas college was able to rely on various elites and other benefactors reveals a network of support for mission operations in Texas that has been previously unrecognized.

Different members of the broad Franciscan community supported missionary efforts with pious contributions and good deeds (*bien hechos*). Demonstrating the scale of profit in transporting goods and supplies, for example, the Querétaro conductor fray Francisco del Santísima Trinidad accumulated 3,124 *pesos 2 reales* from freight charges for hides, wool, and wine that he transported from Saltillo to Querétaro between 1760 and 1771 (the record does not indicate whether the cargo was from secular or mission sources). In 1772, the Querétaro college Council distributed these alms among their six missions – two on the Río Grande, in Coahuila, and four at San Antonio, in Texas. Each mission received 520 *pesos*. The records indicate that the Querétaro college allowed the conductors to transport goods for other owners, presumably non-mission vecinos, on their return trips, and then distributed the freight charges equally among the missions. Such sources provided an additional 761 *pesos* that were distributed in 1771 and 1772. Despite these benefits, in later years the Zacatecas *Discretorio* curtailed the practice in order to avoid financial entanglements. In 1792, the Council acted to maintain stricter boundaries between the Order's temporal transactions and any secular business that may have been conducted around it. They determined that the conductor of supplies to the missions could transport goods for civilians only if they did not involve taxes or debt; the freight charged them

would continue to be used to offset the expense to the missions.²⁸ This practice benefited the missions as well as the wider community.

Devout members of New Spain's elite class supported the Texas missions through financial gifts to the apostolic college. This support was particularly important during the years immediately following the 1794 creation of four of the missions as *doctrinas*, discussed later in this chapter. For example, in 1795 don Ventura Arteaga, a mine owner in Zacatecas, paid 1,500 *pesos* for 750 masses to the Apostolic College of Zacatecas; the amount was credited directly to Mission San José's account for the purchase of annual supplies. The missions had begun celebrating the requested masses the previous year, indicating long-term planning for the donation. Local San Antonio merchant don Antonio Baca contributed 94 *pesos 2 reales* to San José's account. In 1795 and again in 1797, don Francisco Pereira, a merchant based in Saltillo, paid off the personal accounts of Father Guardian Fr. Francisco Gamarra – who served at Nacogdoches from 1789 to 1795, when he was appointed Father Guardian of the college in Zacatecas – totaling 327 *pesos*. The royal treasurer don Manuel Miguel Rolleula, a peninsular Spaniard based in Saltillo, paid Gamarra's personal account balance of 194 *pesos 3 ½ reales* in 1796, although it is not clear from the record whether he did so from his own assets or in his official capacity using treasury funds.²⁹ The nature of Gammara's debts was not disclosed.

²⁸ Nuestra Señora de Purísima Concepción de Acuña, "*Libro en que se lleva la cuenta, y razon de la importancia de los avios, que a la Mission de la Purissima Concepcion de Acuna, remiten los RR[everendos] PP[adres] G[uardian]es de este Ap[ostoli]co Colegio de la S[antissi]ma Cruz de Queretaro . . .*," Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Center (OSMHRC), Our Lady of the Lake University, San Antonio, Texas, microfilm 15:4581-4583; Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 80; Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 58, 62-63, 66, 80.

²⁹ D. A. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 201-202; Richard L. Garner, *Economic Growth and Change in Bourbon Mexico*

Since their establishment in New Spain, the religious orders had enjoyed the support of a variety of lay groups associated with their institutions. Different types of confraternities, for example, ranged from devotional services to mutual aid societies. Some were designed to support liturgical functions or offer opportunities for prayer and special indulgences, while others covered members' funeral expenses.³⁰ They often played an important role in parish finances, but the Zacatecas college *Discretorio* records reveal that the laity made significant contributions to Franciscan mission efforts, as well.

Generally, confraternities were popular among merchants. Their participation in a confraternity could be mutually beneficial: their knowledge and skills were valuable to the religious institutions, while the funds the confraternity collected for the religious provided interest income from the merchants who borrowed them.³¹ The Order also occasionally admitted laymen to the college's brotherhood or community – an honor bestowed in recognition of service to the college that conferred certain benefits and responsibilities to those admitted. One benefit was the privilege of being buried in a Third Order Franciscan robe. The records of the apostolic college in Zacatecas indicate that appointments of laymen were relatively rare, and therefore a high honor to have the position. At least on one occasion a woman was admitted as a member of the college's community together with her husband, although her name was

(Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993), p. 134; *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 21, 32-37; *Discretorio, Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 88-89, 92-94; Leslie S. Offutt, *Saltillo 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), pp. 25-26, 48, 172. Other Texas missions also benefitted from such donations. For example, an unnamed benefactor gave 500 *pesos* as alms for the missions in 1794; the Zacatecan *Discretorio* divided the sum evenly between the accounts of Mission Espiritu Santo and Mission Rosario; see *Discretorio, Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 89.

³⁰ Brading, *Church and State*, pp. 133-35, 144.

³¹ John E. Kicza, *Colonial Entrepreneurs: Families and Business in Bourbon Mexico City* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1983), pp. 58-59, 180.

not listed in the *Discretorio's* minutes (see don Francisco Cortés in the table below).

Only three of the nine people recorded in the notebooks resided in Texas. One served as governor of the province at the time of his appointment, while the other two supplied provisions to the presidio soldiers at La Bahía. Outon made a pious legacy for the construction of a parish church at La Bahía on January 12, 1792.³²

Year	Position	Person
1768	brotherhood	don Hugo Oconor (governor of the province of Texas)
1781	brotherhood	don Josef Calderón (prebendary of Mexico City Cathedral)
1789	syndic	don José de la Cerna (San Luís Potosí)
1790	brotherhood	don Manuel Toscana
1792	brotherhood, syndic	don Domingo Outon (La Bahía)
1793	brotherhood	don Francisco Cortés and his wife
1802	syndic	don Manuel Antonio de la Concha (La Bahía)
1815	syndic	don Santiago Escandón (for the college in Zacatecas)

Table 1: Lay people admitted to the brotherhood of the apostolic college of Zacatecas.

Demonstrating a different form of support, relatives of fray Joseph Antonio García, an “almoner of the field” (collector of alms) and lay brother appointed as procurator of the Texas and Tarahumara missions in 1786, donated mules for his use in transporting supplies to the missions.³³

It should be noted that, aside from the accumulation of a small amount of funds to construct a new parish church in the villa of Béxar in the early years of the nineteenth century, an active confraternity for this church does not seem to have existed until after Mexico’s independence from Spain. Moreover, the confraternity was based in the parish church, and does not appear to have supported the San Antonio

³² Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 71.

³³ Table information extracted from Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 12-99 passim; information on García pp. 48, 80, 81.

mission churches. One administrator misused the early parish church funds by secretly loaning them to himself, and other funds were stolen during the political upheavals of the early 1810s. Confraternity funds were also a source of rancor when their administration was transferred from one supervisor to the next. Pious legacies in the province of Texas were rare, at least according to available documents. Antonio Lorenzo Hernández left his property to the parish church in 1812; and Concepción de Estrada, María Antonia Ruíz, and Félix Menchaca each left bequests in the 1820s. In the only pre-Independence reference to a confraternity, Tomás Travieso bequeathed 250 pesos to the *Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, del Pueblo* in 1810. Since there was no such devotion in Texas, this confraternity may well have been in Saltillo: Travieso had lived there for an extended period of time, and had his second marriage there. Aside from this, no documents have been identified concerning a confraternity in Texas before 1829. This may reflect a change in record keeping practices, rather than a lack of activity, but if a confraternity did exist earlier it likely did not play a significant role either in the parish church finances or its members' social standing.³⁴

Historian François Chevalier described frontier mission complexes as “small economic and social units comparable to the haciendas,” or landed estates, that characterized large areas of New Spain. Because his study is of secular rather than religious society, he does not actually demonstrate the analogy between mission and hacienda. This concept of mission-as-hacienda stands in contrast to the Boltonian emphasis on the “civilizing functions” of missions, and the missionary as a frontier

³⁴ Antonio Lorenzo Hernández, 13 Oct 1812, Béxar Archives (BA); Concepción de Estrada, María Antonia Ruíz, and Félix Menchaca, 19 May 1829, BA; Béxar County Spanish Archives (BCSA), Wills and Estates: Tomás Travieso, WE110 (1810).

agent working on behalf of both church and state. Such a view usually is focused on cultural transformation, with little regard to economic activity.³⁵ The major study of haciendas is Eric Van Young's examination of their role in the economic transformation of western Mexico, especially the Guadalajara region. Drawing on earlier models, Van Young describes the hacienda as "a nexus of relationships" among "capital, labor, land, markets, technology, and social sanctions."³⁶ While he discusses the structure and mechanisms of the hacienda, he does not apply it to missions. Yet this concept can help frame the economic role of the missions in their broader secular context. Such a model goes beyond the conventional focus on religious and cultural-change aspects of missions by identifying the variables that affected their temporal work and operations, and ultimately their success as economic institutions. In this respect, the San Antonio missions' broad combination of land, labor and capital made them far more stable economically than their secular counterparts' ranches.

³⁵ Chevalier discusses the differences between haciendas owned by individuals, which were divided at the death of the owner in ways mandated by Spanish inheritance law, and those owned by religious institutions, which remained intact since there were not individual heirs that would fragment the estate. This meant the church-owned properties were stable or expanded over time, whereas civilian-owned properties almost always were broken up. The exceptions were if an estate was entailed and destined for a single heir holding the title, or if an estate not entailed had only one heir, male or female. François Chevalier, *Land and Society in Colonial Mexico: The Great Hacienda* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1966), p. 237. Also see Gisela von Wobeser, *La formación de la hacienda en la época colonial: El uso de la tierra y el agua* (México, D.F.: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas, 1983); and Herbert E. Bolton, "The Mission as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish-American Colonies," in *Wider Horizons of American History* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1939), especially pp. 117-18, 123, 138. For a contrasting view, that Jesuit frontier missions in Peru remained heavily dependent on material supplies from the core economy and never became self-sufficient, see David Block, "Links to the Frontier: Jesuit Supply of Its Moxos Missions, 1683-1767," *The Americas* 37, no. 2 (Oct. 1980), pp. 161-78. More detailed studies discussing Jesuit mission dependence on pious funds and royal stipends are Sarreal, *The Guaraní and Their Missions*, and Saeger, *The Chaco Mission Frontier*.

³⁶ Eric Van Young, *Hacienda and Market in Eighteenth Century Mexico: The Rural Economy of the Guadalajara Region, 1675-1820*, second edition (Lanham: Rowan and Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2006), pp. 109-12.

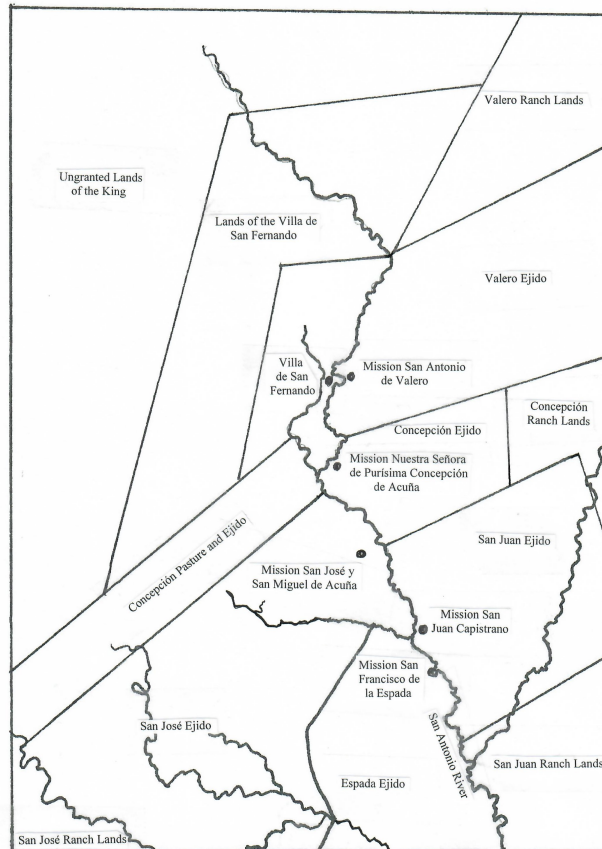


Figure 1: Locations of the San Antonio missions and their lands.

Formal grants gave the missions control of extensive lands in the San Antonio River valley for agriculture and livestock raising, on behalf of their indigenous residents. Upon its founding, each mission was granted four square leagues (27.7 square miles)³⁷ of land, for “pastures, agricultural lands, watering places for cattle, damming sites for the acequias, and other uses and privileges.”³⁸ The grants provided access to the San Antonio River, but because several of the missions were close to one another, their grants extended some distance away from the river (see Figure 1, above).

³⁷ One league equals 2.63 miles.

³⁸ “*los pastos, tierras de labor, abrebaderos para sus ganado, sacas de Aguas, usos, y servidumbres;*” Juan Antonio Peres de Almazán to don Juan de Acuña, Marqués de Casafuerte, 5 March 1731, Texas General Land Office, Spanish Archives (GLOSA), Box 122, fd. 2, vol. 50, pp. 20-22.

During the first few years of settlement, the two missions, the villa and the presidio each moved at least once in order to find the most advantageous sites, as well as to maintain legally-required separation between the indigenous and vecino populations (the villa and presidio will be discussed in the next chapter). Upon their founding in 1718, Mission San Antonio de Valero (with only three Native residents) and the Villa de Béxar (with fewer than thirty Hispanic families) were both situated on the west side of the San Antonio River, with the villa to the north of the mission. During the first year, they shared agricultural lands and began the construction of an irrigation ditch. Yet their initial locations turned out to be temporary. Valero moved to the east side of the river in 1719, which opened its former site and farmlands for the use of the villa without reducing the mission's own resources, suggesting that the proximity of the villa and their initial shared use of an irrigation ditch led to disputes over water. Mission San José was founded in 1720 with 227 residents (by this time, Valero had 290 residents). It, too, was located on the east side of the river, south of Valero, but the Querétaro mission at Valero objected to the Zacatecas mission's location only three leagues away. By 1722, San José moved to a new site on the west side of the river, with the villa's lands bordering the north side of its grant. Finally, following a devastating storm in 1724, Valero relocated to a third site, remaining on the east side of the river but better able to make use of water for both domestic and agricultural purposes. In 1731, the three Querétaro missions in east Texas were moved to the San Antonio River valley and located downstream from Mission Valero, together adding perhaps as many as one thousand inhabitants more to the area.³⁹

³⁹ *San José Papers*, Part 1, pp. 19-26, 28-42; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, p. 42; Castañeda, *Our Catholic*

Over time, the missions developed productive agricultural fields on their grant lands, with extensive irrigation systems to support the cultivation of fruit orchards and crops including vegetables, corn, beans, cane sugar, wheat, cotton, and reeds for thatching roofs.⁴⁰ Yet the early years shaped their approach to and use of their resources. A series of boundary negotiations and site adjustments – meant to provide each institution and its inhabitants with the lands and resources necessary for their operations – did not eliminate the potential for conflict. The Laws of the Indies provided an additional three leagues in each cardinal direction surrounding the mission grant, creating a buffer area to keep cattle away from the missions, the presidio, and the villa. The mission holdings were substantially larger than most of the civilian (vecino) grants, which only came decades after those of the missions. Initially, the missions kept their livestock within the bounds of their original grants, using pasturelands immediately adjacent to the mission compound. As mission herds increased and vecinos expanded their agricultural fields, however, discord followed. Cattle easily entered unfenced agricultural fields and damaged crops. In the 1740s, the missions moved their herds and ranching operations farther away into the buffer areas. During the 1760s, the missions sought to secure clear title to their ranchlands (*ejido* titles

Heritage in Texas, Vol. 2, pp. 94, 130, 241; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 7-8; I. Wayne Cox, *The Spanish Acequias of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Maverick Publishing Company, 2005) pp. 12-20; Fray Isidro Félix de Espinosa, O.F.M., *Crónica de los Colegios de Propaganda Fide de la Nueva España*, new ed., ann. Lino G. Canedo, O.F.M. (Washington, D.C.: Academy of American Franciscan History, 1964), p. 758; Schuetz, "Indians of the San Antonio Missions," p. 128; Juan Antonio Peres de Almazán to don Juan de Acuña, Marqués de Casafuerte, 5 March 1731, GLOSA, Box 122, fd. 2, vol. 50, pp. 12-18; James E. Ivey, "A Reconsideration of the Survey of the Villa de San Fernando de Béxar in 1731," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (Jan. 2008), pp. 257-62.

⁴⁰ Cox, *Spanish Acequias of San Antonio*, p. 22, notes that work on Valero's acequia took precedence over beginning construction of a permanent stone church for the mission.

already established through original grants), but were defeated after years of litigation with the vecinos of San Fernando.⁴¹

The key to the economic and institutional success of the missions was labor – performed almost entirely by the mission inhabitants in the fields, workshops, and buildings. By bringing new populations into the San Antonio River area to live and work in missions, the missionaries created, trained, and developed an extensive labor force, which led to surplus production and the missions' growing economic role in the local Spanish community. During the operation of the San Antonio missions, Franciscan missionaries recruited and relocated hundreds of members of dozens of indigenous groups from the surrounding areas. Many of these peoples already had been displaced either by the large-scale Spanish colonization of Nuevo León and Nuevo Santander, or by the southward migration and raiding patterns of Apache groups.⁴² The mission populations constantly evolved due to high death rates, low birth rates, and attrition. Particularly during the first generation of missionization, the number of indigenous residents fluctuated throughout the year as they continued traditional patterns of seasonal hunting and gathering. Up until the 1760s, the missionaries were able to recruit new residents from remnant groups of displaced Native peoples; after that time, there were few left outside the missions.⁴³

⁴¹ De la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 99-104.

⁴² Campbell and Campbell, *Indian Groups*, pp. 67-72.

⁴³ Campbell and Campbell, *Indian Groups*, pp. 7-11; fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana Memorial to Viceroy Pedro Cebrián y Agustín, 16 May 1745, and fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana to [Viceroy Juan Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas], 10 Mar 1749, in *Letters and Memorials of the Father Presidente Fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana, 1736-1754*, Documents from the Missions of Texas from the Archives of the College of Querétaro, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at Our Lady of the Lake University, 1981), pp. 50, 91; Schuetz, "Indians of the San Antonio Missions," pp. 148-50, 171.

According to the founding documents of the missions, residents were expected to live as Christians, irrigate and cultivate the fields, tend cattle, and perform other work that supported their religious conversion and Hispanicized lifestyle.⁴⁴ Mission residents who participated in these activities developed new and marketable labor skills, enabling them to interact with and ultimately assimilate into the Hispanic economy and community. The early years of the San Antonio missions, from 1718 to the 1740s, were characterized by initial construction of the mission churches, conventos, workshops, and housing; the development of irrigation systems and agricultural fields; and the establishment of ranching operations. The missionaries and indigenous leaders in each mission distributed the products of their work – food, clothing, and supplies – throughout the community. Although the communal production and redistribution of food for individual households was similar to traditional Coahuiltecan practices, their experience in the missions initiated a gradual process of culture change. During the eighteenth century, Coahuiltecan social and economic organization shifted from customary subsistence foraging and hunting to the production of agricultural and ranching surplus for markets. Combined with Spanish, Apache, and Comanche territorial conquests, missionization ultimately resulted in the loss of Coahuiltecan traditional gathering economies.

In contrast to Bolton's image of isolated yet stalwart pioneer missionaries taking on the entire operation of the mission single-handedly, missionaries in fact relied on multiple labor networks for their success. Within the Spanish world, for example, small detachments of soldiers assigned to each mission helped instruct and oversee labor,

⁴⁴ Juan Antonio Peres de Almazán to don Juan de Acuña, Marqués de Casafuerte, 5 March 1731, GLOSA, Box 122, fd. 2, vol. 50, p. 22.

and enforced discipline and authority. Nearby presidios offered broader protection for the mission, particularly in areas where autonomous groups were periodically hostile to Hispanic settlers and indigenous mission residents. In 1744, for example, Texas Governor Tomás Phelipe de Winthuisen reported that even the most skilled warriors in the San Antonio missions “do not dare attack [the Apaches] by themselves but only as auxiliaries of the Spaniards; and if there are not enough [Spanish soldiers], prompted by experience, they would return to the hills.”⁴⁵

The friars structured labor at the missions hierarchically. Regardless of age or gender, nearly all of the mission residents had a role in keeping the many facets of the mission’s work running smoothly. The missionary appointed key men in the mission community to serve as *fiscal*, *obrajero*, *mayordomo*, overseer, head groom, and assistant, although in the early years of operation they hired soldiers or vecinos for these positions (the presence of soldiers in the missions declined by the middle of the century). These people, in turn, supervised others, who were assigned to such jobs as cook, ranch hand, shepherd, sheep shearer, carpenter, blacksmith, carder, comber, spinner, weaver, soap-maker, gardener, field hand, fisher (to provide the missionary with fish in Advent, Lent, and other days of abstinence), and musician (to perform on the violin and guitar in church). The fiscal oversaw work at the mission itself, the foreman supervised the ranch, and the *obrajero* managed the weaving workshops. The head groom was in charge of horses used for the service of the king; other horses were

⁴⁵ “. . . no se atreven por sy solos a acometerles, sino auxiliados de los Españoles, pues si estos les faltaven, se bolvieran al monte, como lo dicta la experiencia.” Winthuisen went on to suggest that the capital of the province be relocated from Los Adaes to San Antonio, in part because the mission residents could join with the civilian settlers and the soldiers from the presidios of Béxar and La Bahía to repel a foreign invasion from Louisiana. Tomás Phelipe de Winthuisen to Viceroy, 19 Aug 1744, BA.

for use specifically to bring in cattle for the weekly slaughter. In recognition of their status, the fiscal, superintendent, and assistant were given cloth from Puebla for their clothing, rather than the cloth woven in the missions – as were the mission community's governor and mayor.⁴⁶

The fiscal served a renewable, annual term. A ledger book functioned not only to document his wide-ranging work, but also as a symbol of his office (*la insignia de Fiscal*). Some of his tasks supported the missionary's ritual and spiritual duties.⁴⁷ Most of the fiscal's work, however, was comprised of temporal responsibilities. After the weekly cattle slaughter, he delivered the meat to the cooks, who cooked it and collected, rendered and stored the fat and tallow. He handed out tobacco after Sunday mass to each adult man and woman. He distributed the weekly ration of maize to women, and each week appointed a woman to make tortillas for the missionary, ensuring that she was supplied with corn. During Lent and on Christmas Eve, he made sure that beans, squash, and sweet potatoes were cooked and distributed to the residents, and that porridge, stews, and sweets were prepared for feast days. In season, he supervised the gardeners who gathered ripened fruit daily, for distribution to mission residents.⁴⁸

The fiscal oversaw much of the work of women, children, and older men. Boys, together with the fiscal, cut and burned wild *quelite* and *cimarrón*; the ashes were then stored for soap making, which was done either by a trained man or the fiscal himself. Boys also washed wool in the *acequia* after shearing. Boys were separated from their

⁴⁶ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission: Instructions for the Missionary of Mission Concepción in San Antonio*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1976), pp. 17, 31-32, 35, 50, 52, 59.

⁴⁷ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 5, 7, 10, 14, 16, 51.

⁴⁸ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 19, 20-21, 23, 33.

families for much of the time, eating and living in the friary; they were allowed only some meals with their families. Through contact with the missionary, they learned the Spanish language, the Christian catechism, and how to assist the missionary with mass. While in Coahuiltecan groups horticulture was traditionally women's work, Spaniards considered field work to be a man's job. For the most part, the missionaries kept women away from the fields, assigning them instead to grind grain and prepare meals. They were not completely exempt from harvest work, however, since women and children were required to pick cotton, and to unload harvested corn from the carts that came in from the fields for storage in the granary. They carded and spun both cotton and wool: women spun the warp thread, while children did the coarser weft thread and assisted the (male) weavers by winding spools and tying broken threads. Women sewed clothing for their families, as well as for single men. They were at liberty to leave the mission in the afternoon when their work was ended, to forage for wild foods. Older men performed a number of different tasks, such as bringing in hay for horses and wood for the kitchen. They worked as carpenters, making carts, cutting planks, keeping plows and yokes repaired, and maintaining tools.⁴⁹

Men worked primarily in ranching and agriculture. They rounded up cattle and did the weekly slaughter. They did the fall round up and branding of cattle, as well as the spring sheep shearing and castration. Prior to planting, they repaired acequias, bridges, dams, and fencing; burned cane stalks remaining in the fields from the previous harvest, and used oxen to plow and prepare the soil for planting corn, cotton, beans,

⁴⁹ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 23-24, 31-33, 35, 37-39, 41-44, 46-47, 49.

chiles, sugar cane, and fruit. They also hoed, weeded, and harvested the crops.⁵⁰ Many excelled in their new trades, and some even became known by their trade. For example, in 1744 Governor Winthuisen reported that the residents at Valero “are expert in many crafts, such as masonry, carpentry, blacksmith’s trade; making wool and cotton blankets, straw beds, and coarse woolen cloth.” He described the residents at Mission Concepción as “experts in the mechanical trades, as is verified by the structures which they and the other [Indians] have constructed,” adding that the residents of the other three missions were similarly “industrious.”⁵¹ Burial records occasionally identified mission inhabitants by their trade: at Mission Valero in 1738, the child of “Miguel *el carpintero*” (the carpenter) was buried; while burials in 1767 include Manuel López, an adult Payaya known as “*el cantor*” (the singer), Estevan Losoya, a Native “*maestro de alvañil*” (master stone mason), and Pedro de Alcantara, an adult Payaya whose surname may have reflected his occupation as a stone cutter.⁵²

Franciscan missions followed the model of the Apostles in the early years of the Church, holding all goods in common to be distributed according to need, as the friars determined through the quantities available.⁵³ In return for their work at the mission complex, mission inhabitants received many of the products of their labor. The missionary generally distributed food to the women, in amounts based on the size of their families and ages of children. Unshucked green corn was distributed during harvest; during the rest of the year, shelled, dried corn was given out, along with beans,

⁵⁰ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 34, 37-38.

⁵¹ Thomás Phelipe Winthuisen to [Viceroy], 19 Aug 1744, BA.

⁵² Burials of Mission San Francisco de Solano (San Antonio de Valero; Alamo), 1703-1782, typescript and translation by John Ogden Leal, 1978; entries 261, 1280, 1281, 1285.

⁵³ *Fr. Jose Rafael Oliva's Views Concerning the Problem of the Temporalities in 1788*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., ann. Fr. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1977), pp. 19-20.

chiles, lard, fruits, and a variety of melons. Salt was obtained from the presidio for distribution. *Piloncillo*⁵⁴ was produced at the mission and given to its residents. Other sweets, such as chocolate and *buñuelos*,⁵⁵ were also regularly given out. When a household was formed, or if items needed replacement, women were given griddles, pans, and copper pots for water.⁵⁶

The distribution of other goods occurred at different times of the year, depending on when cloth was woven or the arrival of a supply convoy. Every person was measured for the amount of cloth needed to make his or her clothing. Men wore shirts and unlined breeches; women wore shifts. Women's underskirts were usually ordered ready-made with other supplies. From purchases through the mission accounts, women received a basket containing three or four strings of beads, a necklace, ribbon, straps, a rosary, a brush or small broom, petticoat, camisole, linen, perhaps a shawl, some flannel, cotton and silk thread, shoes, and silk stockings as needed. Girls were given flannel for skirts, a belt, beads, ribbons, a basket, and other items. In addition to their clothing, men received a hat, a large knife, shoes, and wool stockings and cotton socks as needed. A tailor was hired to make coats and coveralls for the mission officers, who also got lined trousers.⁵⁷

Most, but not all, of the mission labor was done by its residents. Vecinos might be hired from the presidio or the villa for specialized work including saddle maker, candle maker, barber, tailor, and muleteer, or to fill in labor shortages; they were

⁵⁴ Cones of unrefined cane sugar.

⁵⁵ A fried batter typically made of wheat flour, eggs, water, salt, and lard, sweetened after cooking with piloncillo.

⁵⁶ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 20-23, 30.

⁵⁷ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 24-31.

usually paid in corn and meat. If there was no Native blacksmith at the mission, a vecino was hired from the presidio and paid either annually or by the project. A barber was hired to shave the missionary weekly, paid in kind or in cash on an annual basis. The barber also provided medical treatments such as bleedings or incisions, paid by the visit. A candle maker was hired from the presidio, with one of the boys resident in the mission assigned to work with him as an assistant. One or more vecino women were hired to knead wheat flour and make biscuits and bread for the missionary, and to wash and mend the church linens.⁵⁸

Mission residents had a variety of economic interactions with the Hispanic community. The residents had enough control of their time that, by the 1730s if not earlier, some hired themselves out to vecinos in the nearby villa as servants or as day laborers, doing construction, field work, and herding. The missions began objecting to this practice in 1739, offering reasons why vecinos should not be permitted to hire mission residents, and suggesting they work with non-mission indigenous peoples, instead.⁵⁹ On Christmas day and for the procession of Corpus Christi, the mission residents danced the *matachines*⁶⁰ at the presidio, governor's house, and other sites in the community. Mission residents could participate in fiestas at the presidio, although only men could attend bullfights. Vecinos also came to the missions for trade and

⁵⁸ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 11, 31, 36, 59.

⁵⁹ Fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana to Viceroy Archbishop Juan Antonio de Vizarrón y Eguiarreta, 24 Nov 1739, fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana to Governor Tomás de Winthuisen, June 1741, in *Letters and Memorials of the Father Presidente fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., Documentary Series No. 6, Documents on the Missions of Texas from the Archives of the College of Querétaro (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at Our Lady of the Lake University, 1981), pp. 32-34, 41-42; Thoribio de Urrutia to the Viceroy, 17 Dec 1740, *San José Papers*, Part 1, pp. 82-83.

⁶⁰ A ritual performance during Holy Week that blended elements of medieval Spanish and Native American music and dance to depict Christian victory over paganism; Sarah Cline, "Guadalupe and the Castas: The Power of a Singular Colonial Mexican Painting," *Mexican Studies/Estudios Mexicanos* 31, no. 2 (Summer 2015), pp. 237-238, n. 58.

games. The missionaries complained of their bartering and gambling with the neophytes, while Governor Ripperdá threatened to imprison and fine vecinos who engaged in trade with mission residents without explicit authorization from the missionary. During his 1777 visit to the Texas missions, fray Juan Agustín Morfi observed that the mission residents of San José were perfectly fluent in Spanish, and were so “well-dressed and abundantly fed” that the “less fortunate settlers of San Fernando . . . beg[ged] their food from these Indians.” Such observations indicate that mission residents and vecinos alike exchanged trinkets, tobacco, clothing, blankets, furniture, and other possessions in order to meet specific needs and wants, a practice that was part of a larger process of economic and social exchange.⁶¹

TEMPORALITIES

By the end of the 1740s, the temporalities at San José were fully operational, with secure housing, agriculture, ranching and weaving all well established. The other missions, too, produced sufficient food supplies to sustain their respective communities, and sold their surplus produce and cattle to the presidio. Documents do not indicate when they developed surpluses, but in 1745, for example, San Juan Capistrano reported that they cultivated sufficient land to provide for its population of forty-one families (173 individuals). That year, they harvested eight hundred *fanegas*⁶² of maize, and forty of beans; this amounted to nearly four and a half *fanegas* of maize and one-quarter of beans per person for the year. Agricultural production at San

⁶¹ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 20, 39-40, 48, 53; *Bando del Gov[ernado]r Baron de Ripperdá*, 15 March 1772, BA; fray Juan Agustín Morfi, *History of Texas 1673-1779*, Part I, trans. Carlos Eduardo Castañeda (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1935), quotation p. 98.

⁶² One *fanega* of corn is equivalent to 101.5 U.S. pounds. For variations in measures of different commodities, see Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor, and Charles W. Polzer, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), pp. 73-74.

Antonio de Valero that same year was similar, amounting to just under four *fanegas* of maize and one-quarter of beans per person.⁶³ Valero also reported that, despite their inability to round up and account for all of their livestock due to Apache raids, they had approximately 2,300 head of cattle. They counted 1,317 head of sheep for wool, and another 325 for skins. They pastured a herd of forty horses for ranch work, and had a blacksmith at the mission to meet its needs. In 1768, harvests from Mission San José's crops and orchards were so abundant that they supplied the other missions, and also the presidios of San Antonio, La Bahía, San Sabá, Orcoquisac, and Los Adaes.⁶⁴ According to fray Gaspar José Solís, in 1768 indigenous residents at Mission San José were responsible for every aspect of the mission's temporal operations: "*pues para nada se ocupa a otro que no sea de la Misión*" – there was no need for non-Mission workers.⁶⁵

The tables in the Appendix provide additional details on the status of mission temporalities, compiled from the mission *visita* reports created for the Querétaro apostolic college, and from reports at the time of secularization. The categories of temporalities that appear in the tables follow an outline prescribed by the college, and represent what the Franciscans thought was important in terms of mission production. The information shows that even with the mission population in decline, the number of

⁶³ While these estimates are based on the mission population, it is likely that individual residents received somewhat less than this amount: corn was also used as in-kind payment to vecinos who worked at the missions, and the surplus was often sold or exchanged to the presidios or others in the wider community. See Schuetz, "Indians of the San Antonio Missions," pp. 209-15.

⁶⁴ Report of fray Ignacio Ciprián to fray Juan Antonio Abasolo, commissary general, 27 Oct 1749, *San José Papers*, Part 1, pp. 97-98; fray Francisco Xavier Ortiz, "*Visita de las Misiones hecha de orden de H. M. P[adre] Comm[isari]o G[ene]ral Fr[ay] Juan Fogueras, por el P[adre] Fr[ay] Fran[cis]co Xavier Ortiz, en el año de 1745*," October 11, 1745, OSMHRC, microfilm ACZ 9:1265-1268; report on Mission San José in the diary of fray Gaspar José Solís, 6 Apr 1768, *San José Papers*, Part 1, p. 145.

⁶⁵ Report on Mission San José in the diary of fray Gaspar José Solís, 6 Apr 1768, *San José Papers*, Part 1, p. 146.

livestock on the mission ranches continued to increase. When secularization occurred in the 1790s, however, only a minimal number of animals were distributed. This leaves an open question regarding the fate or disposition of the remainder. Nevertheless, the reports made clear that agricultural and ranching production was sufficient to maintain the mission population. The matter of surplus production is not addressed in the documents.

Most mission inhabitants retained their connections with the non-mission indigenous world. One means of this was through the persistence of traditional cultural practices, including foraging and hunting. Missionaries accepted and at times even encouraged such connections, especially when it came to food. One missionary observed that several “well-fed” (*corpulenta*) nations abandoned San José in its early years due to it being established with more people than it was able to support. Yet the practice was neither confined to that mission, nor to the early years of operation. In the late 1780s, for example, the missionary at Concepción wrote that some of the women customarily left the mission late in the afternoon to gather and eat a wide variety of wild fruit, nuts and roots. Since agricultural and ranch production was stable, it is likely that such practices enabled residents to maintain a more varied and culturally traditional diet. Conversely, the Ervpiame, Mayeye, Deadosé and Yojuane residents at the short-lived San Xavier de Horcasitas continued to forage because of insufficient food resources at the mission (upon selecting the mission site in 1746, fray Mariano de los Dolores y Viana noted that the land had an abundance of “*cíbolos*, deer, turkeys, fish, persimmons, prickly pears, and other fruits used by the Indians.”). Similarly, residents of the missions in the middle Río Grande region frequently left due to food shortages, as

did the Aranama at Espíritu Santo in south Texas. The topography around the south Texas missions (and Presidio La Bahía) made irrigation impossible. In 1744, Governor Winthuisen reported that “although there are many Indians in the mission of Espíritu Santo . . . only very few are Catholic; for, because of the uncertainty of the crops, whenever these fail, the said priests are compelled to send the Indians away for that year until the next, if perchance, the crops are more promising.” Even as food production stabilized at that mission, the Aranama maintained traditional hunting and fishing practices to augment their mission provisions.⁶⁶

Most of these groups did not have fixed villages to return to; instead, they camped in different resource areas within territories where they might find allies. The mission represented part of their annual cycle of resource gathering. Marie Duggan demonstrated that especially in the early years of the Santa Bárbara (Alta California) Franciscan mission, traditional native resource economies coexisted with the new mission economy. It was fairly common at some of the Texas missions, too, for residents to come and go according to their needs. As historian Jesús de la Teja observed, particularly among the coastal Karankawa (who were among the groups that missions Rosário, Espíritu Santo, and Refúgio served), “the missions represented little

⁶⁶ Fray Benito Fernández de Santa Ana to Viceroy Conde de Revillagigedo, 23 Feb 1750 and [n.d.] Jan 1754, in *Letters and Memorials*, pp. 168, 194; *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, p. 49; first quotation from fray Mariano in Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 3, *The Mission Era: The Missions at Work 1731-1761* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1938), p. 247; second quotation from Winthuisen to Viceroy, 19 August 1744, BA; Tamra L. Walter and Thomas R. Hester, “Countless Heathens’: Native Americans and the Spanish Missions of South Texas and Northeastern Coahuila,” in *Indigenous Landscapes and Spanish Missions: New Perspectives from Archaeology and Ethnohistory*, ed. Lee M. Panich and Tsim D. Schneider (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2014), pp. 97-98, 108-110.

more than one stop among the various ones that made up their seasonal migrations.”⁶⁷

The missionaries accepted these temporary absences, and made no effort to restrict their movements. In this way, mission residents effectively subsidized under-resourced missions, enabling them to persist even when the institutions were incapable of supporting residents themselves.

ECONOMIC IMPACT OF THE SAN ANTONIO MISSIONS

The apostolic colleges kept account books for each of their missions, in which they annually recorded and balanced the credits and debits to that mission. Account books exist for the four Querétaro San Antonio missions for the period 1745 to 1772; these reference earlier books, which have not yet come to light. There is also an account book for Mission San José that covers the years 1792 to 1818. Credits were primarily in the forms of income discussed earlier – the missionaries’ annual stipends, donations from benefactors and pious funds, and income from the sales of goods produced by the mission. In addition, *libranzas*⁶⁸ (warrants, or bills of exchange) were recorded as credits when owed to a mission. Any credit remaining from the past year’s account was carried over to the next year. The debits consisted of a detailed list of supplies, including quantities, unit cost, and total cost of each commodity. A typical

⁶⁷ Marie Christine Duggan, *The Chumash and the Presidio of Santa Barbara: Evolution of a Relationship, 1782-1823* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 2004); Jesús F. de la Teja, *Faces of Béxar: Early San Antonio and Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2016), p. 17.

⁶⁸ When a mission itself held a *libranza*, it was securely stored in that mission’s archives; see, for example, fray Juan José Sáenz de Gumiel, fray Pedro Ramires, and don Juan María de Ripperdá, Baron de Ripperdá, “*Certificac[ió]n, e Ymbentario de la Mis[ió]n de la Purís[i]ma Concepc[ió]n*,” 16 Dec 1772, OSMHRC, 10:4258-4259. The mission account books document the use of *libranzas* for the purchase of goods from merchants (for example, see Nuestra Señora de Purísima Concepcion de Acuna, “*Libro en que se lleva la quenta, y razon de la importancia de los avios, que a la Mission de la Purissima Concepcion de Acuna, remiten los RR[everendos] PP[adres] G[uardian]es de este Ap[ostoli]co Colegio de la S[antissi]ma Cruz de Querétaro . . .*,” OSMHRC, 15:4557). Also see Pedro Pérez Herrero, “Las libranzas empleadas en Nueva España durante la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII,” in María del Pilar Martínez López-Cano and Guillermina del Valle Pavón, eds., *El Credito en Nueva España* (México, D.F.: Instituto de Investigaciones Históricas – UNAM, 1998), pp. 86-102.

shipment of supplies for the mission community might include a variety of textiles, sewing notions, clothing, adornments, tools, tobacco, chocolate, spices, confections, earthenware, cooking utensils, rosaries, and paper. All of the materials used to package the supplies were also charged to the account, as were the expenses of the mule convoy. In general, each mission's income and expenses balanced out when the accounts were closed at the end of the year. While unusual, any debts unpaid from the previous year were posted to the next year's account.

Figure 2: Page from Mission San Juan account book showing expenses paid and costs of goods ordered, 1764.⁶⁹

From 1792 to 1798, the Texas missions—including the missionary who served in Nacogdoches—expended a total of 41,957 *pesos* 4 $\frac{1}{4}$ *reales* for supplies and shipping charges. This amount indicates a portion of the missions' cumulative economic effect on the local economy for the period; the total was greater, given their local economic production and consumption (no records have been found for this). For its 1792 shipment of supplies, Mission San José covered nearly the entire cost of 1,566 *pesos* 4 $\frac{1}{2}$ *reales* through the sale of cattle, which netted 1,528 *pesos* 2 $\frac{1}{2}$ *reales*. In 1794, Mission San José paid 71 *pesos* 2 *reales* for freight on twelve *tercios*⁷⁰ of their surplus production for the return trip, plus 62 *pesos* to a shepherd for driving sheep to market in the south. They sold ninety *arrobas*⁷¹ of wool for 207 *pesos*; thirteen *arrobas* of cotton for 42 *pesos* 2 *reales*; eight buffalo hides for 32 *pesos*; and 568 head of sheep for 1,065 *pesos*. The following year, 1795, they sold 112 hides at 2 *pesos* each, for a total of 224 *pesos*. Another form of economic contribution was in the supply of small gifts to non-mission peoples. A shipment in 1793, for example, included 117 *pesos* $\frac{1}{2}$ *real* worth of tobacco and sweets to distribute among any indigenous groups whom the supply train might meet along the road. Such gifts were a display of friendship and goodwill that may also have served to dispel potential threats or raids, smoothing the conduct of regional trade.⁷²

Missionaries seem to have had broad discretion in terms of the expenditure of their funds, but one case stands out in which a missionary consistently failed to

⁷⁰ A *tercio* is one-half of a *carga*, or approximately seventy-five pounds. One *carga* (or two *tercios*) is one mule load, and weighs just over three hundred pounds. Barnes, Naylor, and Polzer, *Northern New Spain*, p. 73.

⁷¹ One *arroba* weighed just under twenty-five pounds; Barnes, Naylor, and Polzer, *Northern New Spain*, p. 74.

⁷² *Colegio Ap^{co} de N.S. de Guadalupe, Sept^e 3 de 1792, Memoria que remite . . . al Misson de Sor S. José*, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 18-21, 59-66.

conform to his college's standards and expectations for fiscal responsibility. Fray José Mariano Reyes, from the apostolic college in Zacatecas, served in the Texas mission field from 1782 to 1791; during this time, his reputation with the *Discretorio* steadily deteriorated due to financial mismanagement at each of his missions. During his tenure at Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Nacogdoches⁷³ from 1782 to 1788, for example, Reyes incurred significant debt with French and other merchants. At least some portion of the debt was the result of his unauthorized attempt to re-establish an abandoned mission at Orcoquisac in 1784. Initially, the college reassigned Reyes to Mission San Juan Capistrano, then abruptly recalled him from the field in 1789 and took the rare step of stripping him of his accounts.⁷⁴

The Council ordered the missionary who replaced him to report on the amount owed to secular merchants and negotiate for a delay in paying his debts. They identified several sources among donations and mission funds to resolve the debts. In 1790, not fully aware of the extent of the debts, they allocated 500 *pesos* from a benefactor toward repayment. They anticipated using any funds remaining after their

⁷³ This was a missionary endeavor for the faithful, established after the 1774 Spanish re-occupation of East Texas. The college of Zacatecas agreed to provide missionaries for ten years to the former residents of Los Adaes, after they founded the town of Bucareli; the missionaries were to be paid by the royal treasury. The missionaries moved with the residents to Nacogdoches when they abandoned the site of Bucareli. See Bucareli y Ursua to Rippardá, 26 July 1775, BA; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 418-22. In addition to their work in converting non-Christian populations, the apostolic colleges had a long-standing practice of mission work among Catholics, seeking to strengthen people's belief and hear confessions. See Brading, *Church and State*, pp. 18-19, 37.

⁷⁴ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 5, *The Mission Era: The End of the Spanish Regime* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), pp. 20, 36-37, 77, 91, 99; *Discretorio, Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 59, 65, 71, 82, 143. Upon his return to Zacatecas, the *Discretorio* declared Reyes perpetually disqualified for missionary work and considered expelling him from the college. Less than a year later, they decided "out of charity" to send him to work in the Tarahumara missions. He died in 1808 at the northern Tepehuan mission of Baborigame, in the western Sierra Madres in Chihuahua. Benedict Leutenegger, "New Documents on Father José Mariano Reyes," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (Apr. 1968), p. 586; Thomas E. Sheridan, comp. and ed., *Empire of Sand: The Seri Indians and the Struggle for Spanish Sonora, 1645-1803* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1999), p. 182n74.

annual review of the Texas missions' accounts toward repayment, and asked that the other Texas missions collect from their own debtors in order to balance out the accounts. In 1792, the Council decided to contribute an additional 200 *pesos* from the college toward Reyes's debts, and requested the fathers at the Franciscan hospice in Boca de Leones as well as in the Texas missions to contribute what they could and to use stipends from saying masses toward the payments. Soon after this decision, they received a letter from don Josef Luíz Barrera of Monclova asking for payment of nearly 1,030 *pesos* owed by Reyes during his service at Mission San Juan Capistrano. The Council paid 200 *pesos* through a benefactor and assigned the balance to be paid collectively by the Texas missions. The full extent of Reyes's debts was revealed three months later when the widow of a Natchitoches merchant, referred to as M. Dortigó (the Louisiana entrepreneur Jean-Baptiste Dartigeaux), requested payment of Reyes's debt to her late husband of nearly 1,885 *pesos*, which Reyes incurred while at Nacogdoches. At this point, Reyes's known debt had mounted to nearly three thousand *pesos*. The Council determined to handle the payment in a similar manner as Barrera's. Well into that year, they continued discussions regarding the saying of masses in the missions for alms to pay Reyes's debts.⁷⁵

The handling of Reyes's debts had repercussions for other missionaries, and also revealed the existence of a powerful set of vested interests in the mission supply system that the *Colegio* was unwilling to upset. The *Discretorio* asserted tighter control over the missionaries who served in the field by restricting missionaries' financial latitude,

⁷⁵ Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 65, 72-73; H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), pp. 74, 140.

prohibiting them from making purchases from a store by either cash or credit, from bartering or selling anything in large quantity, and from charging bills to the syndic or any other party.⁷⁶ These rules indicate that at least Reyes, if not other missionaries, bypassed the college's conventional mission supply system by going through local merchants. Furthermore, purchases the *Discretorio* referred to as "by either cash or credit" circumvented the college's accounting system, which was predicated on the missionary's stipend being converted to in-kind payment through the procurator and syndic's purchases. Unsettled by Reyes ignoring the usual supply chains, the Zacatecas *Discretorio* made great efforts to overcome the negative financial consequences of his actions.

Within the local community, missions served as banks for at least some of the vecinos. Information from wills,⁷⁷ compiled in Table 2, below, reveals that throughout the colonial period, the missions – or in some cases secular priests – provided loans to local residents. Unfortunately, the individual mission's account books that people referenced in their wills were likely destroyed or are otherwise missing, since they have not been located in any collection of Texas mission documents; these account books were, however, listed in mission inventories.⁷⁸ Although the number of testators who recorded their debt to a mission or priest in San Antonio was not large, the span of time the wills cover indicates that the practice was ongoing.

⁷⁶ *Discretorio*, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 73.

⁷⁷ The wills are located in BCSA, Wills and Estates; specifically, in the order referenced in the table, numbers 16, 92a, 93, 26, 112, 1, 59, 84, 109, 103, 72, 95, 11, 48, 110, 36, 97, 98.

⁷⁸ The 1772 inventory for Mission Concepción, for example, noted "a new book of accounts with everything settled; ... the book of accounts shows 1,512 pesos 4 reales are owed to this mission, of which 240 pesos are difficult to collect ...," fray Juan José Sáenz de Gumiel, fray Pedro Ramires, and don Juan María de Ripperdá, Baron de Ripperdá, "*Certificac[i]o[n], e Ymbentario de la Mis[i]o[n] de la Puris[i]ma Concepc[i]o[n]*," 16 Dec 1772, OSMHRC, 10:4263.

DATE	DEBT REFERENCED IN WILL
1742	J. Curbelo owes 5 mass alms to the priest Juan de Leon
1747	The priest owes M. Perez 5 pesos 4 reales
1752	J. Quiñones owes Padre Pres. Fray Marian Francisco de los Dolores 30 pesos
1764	F. Delgado owes 1) Concepción and 2) Espada the amounts in the account books; owes 3) priest Father Joseph Antonio Yldefonso de la Peña 28 p 4 reales
1764	J.J. Quiroz Valdez paid the president Father Salbino for a horse on behalf of Joseph Seguin
1769	M. Lorenzo de Armas owes Mission Concepción 1 cow
1772	Esmerejilda Hernandez owes to " <i>nuestro padre San Francisco</i> " [i.e., Mission Espada] the amount in account book
1779	J. Padron owes 1) Espiritu Santo 1,100 pesos for 400 head cattle they loaned him; 2) owes Concepción 5 pesos cash; 3) owes San Juan the amount in their account book, plus 1 ox and 1 yoke oxen; 4) San Juan owes him for 125 quarried rocks, has paid 6 ½ varas of paño and has also paid him 1,300 pesos in merchandise for other rock for construction of the church
1782	J.A. Travieso had business dealings with Mission San Antonio but doesn't know if he owes anything
1787	J. Salinas owes Mission San Antonio the amount in their books
[1794-95]	[Orders for secularization initiate closing out mission accounts]
1804	M. Menchaca owes Bachelor Gregorio Sanchez, priest of Candela, 24 pesos
1806	F. Rouquier owes President Friar Bernardino Vallejo 200 pesos
1808	J.J. Bergara owes Mission del Refugio 20 pesos
1809	J.P. de la Garza owes 40 pesos to Bachelor Priest José Miguel Martínez
1810	T. Travieso owes 1) the priest Father Flores 234 pesos; 2) the <i>Cofradía de Nuestra Señora de la Soledad, del Pueblo</i> 250 pesos
1815	María Concepcion de Estrada loaned 2 demasanas [demajuanas] to Rev. Pres. Fr. Bernardino Vallejo
1817	F. de la Rosa had a note signed by Father Manuel Gortari for 900 pesos [see 1820 below]
1820	Luisa Gertrudis de la Rua inherits promissory note for 1,000 pesos to her late husband Francisco de la Rosa from Priest Manuel Gortari [it is unclear why there is a 100 pesos difference between this note and de la Rosa's 1817 note]

Table 2: Lay debts owed to the San Antonio missions, 1742-1820.

More revealing of the scope of mission loan activity at a particular moment in time is a 1785 inventory of Mission San José. It noted that local residents – who were not specifically named in the account books – owed to Mission San José an aggregate amount of over 1,035 pesos (*sugetos de quienes se puede covrar 1,035 pesos 2 ½ reales*). This constituted almost twenty percent of the total loans in the mission account books at the time. Vecinos employed by the mission, who were listed in the accounts as

"*sirvientes*," owed 266 *pesos 4 reales*, most likely for supplies, rent, or in-kind production from activities such as sharecropping on mission land. The remaining sixty-four percent of the residents' debt was considered uncollectible, as was an additional 807 *pesos 2 reales* (*y lo demas inobrable como tambien amas desto otros 807 pesos 2 reales inobrables*).⁷⁹ In other words, Mission San José had injected over 4,500 *pesos* into the local economy that it did not expect to recover. There is no record of any efforts that may have been made to collect these debts.

FROM RELIGIOUS *DOCTRINA* TO SECULAR *CURATO*

As the religious life of the mission community evolved, both Franciscan and Crown officials expected the administration and governance of the community to change along with it. Most of this chapter has examined the economic aspects of the missions as they functioned in the *conversión* phase, when the missionary supervised the temporalities under the guidance of the Father President and the apostolic college; the remaining pages will examine the processes by which the Franciscans devolved the temporalities and the missions either became *doctrinas* or were secularized (became *curatos*). These processes occurred in different timeframes for the five Franciscan missions in San Antonio, under differing circumstances.

As the missions entered the final phase of their life cycle, they offered both converted indigenous residents and the vecino population opportunities for upward mobility through the acquisition and development of practical skills, and the availability of housing and agricultural lands. The Franciscans themselves brought vecinos into the missions, to live and work, replacing the declining pool of resident indigenous labor.

⁷⁹ *Ymbentario de lo que yo F. Josef Austín Falcon Mariano recivi en esta Mision de Sr Sñ Josef dela Provincia de texas, de el P.P.F. Josef Maria Salas*, 1785, in *San José Papers*, Part 1, p. 245.

For example, around 1780, Mission Espada, the southernmost of the five missions along the river, saw an expansion of infrastructure – including tripling the amount of mission housing – as vecinos moved into the community, either through intermarriage or by being hired into the mission’s work force. The missions had sufficient lands to rent for sharecropping to the growing population of vecinos, who sought new sources of land for farming and ranching. The apparent decline of the indigenous population of the missions during these years was more a mark of mission success – a result of intentional acculturation and intermarriage. The movement of Native Americans away from, and Hispanic vecinos into mission lands continued through the 1790s, then accelerated during the first decades of the nineteenth century.⁸⁰

Secularization was the final stage in the life cycle of a mission, based on the mission community’s spiritual readiness. To reach this stage, the missions first had to become *doctrinas* under the spiritual administration of a priest, who was either regular (under a religious order) or secular (under a bishop). Because the mission churches in San Antonio remained the property of the Franciscans, the missions became regular (rather than secular) *doctrinas*. Unlike the *conversión* phase of the mission’s life cycle, the priest (*doctrinero*) was not responsible for the community’s temporalities; therefore the mission’s lands, housing, tools, livestock, and all other properties except the church and *convento* buildings were divided among the mission’s indigenous residents. From this point on, residents were obligated to provide for themselves,

⁸⁰ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, p. 31; Tjarks, “Comparative Demographic Analysis,” p. 304; Schuetz, “Indians of the San Antonio Missions,” pp. 331-57.

without the assistance of the missionary or his religious order. In a *doctrina*, the missionary's only responsibility was religious instruction.⁸¹

Although the Franciscan Order and the Crown both supported secularization, their reasons differed. The convergence of their goals disguised a growing tension between the Franciscans' desire to expand their mission fields, and the Bourbon Crown's objective to expand secular access to mission properties. The internal motives within the apostolic colleges of Queretaro and Zacatecas consisted chiefly of the desire to free up personnel and funds from the established missions in Texas, and direct them to new mission fields. In contrast, Crown officials expected to redistribute the missions' tax-exempt lands and other sources of wealth to acculturated Native American and Hispanic vecinos who would be subject to pay taxes, fees, and tithes to the royal treasury. The privileges of the *Patronato Real* gave the Crown authority to determine the disposition of mission properties: the Crown established and supported the missions with Crown funds, and had the final say in their operations. Yet Crown and Church were caught in a political conflict over economic resources, not just in Texas, but throughout Spanish America.⁸²

⁸¹ The creation of a mission as a *doctrina* was a new phase of the mission life cycle, based on the mission community's spiritual needs as defined by the religious orders. Some historians, following Hubert Bancroft, have used the term "partial secularization" for this phase. It is somewhat misleading in its implication that secularization would necessarily follow the surrender of temporalities. Experience in other areas of the northern frontier during the second half of the eighteenth century and early decades of the nineteenth shows that the creation of a *doctrina* was commonly reversed: rather than become secularized, the temporalities were restored to the missionaries and the mission reverted to a *conversión*. See Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California*, Vol. 3: 1825-1840 (San Francisco: The History Company, 1886), p. 103; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 22, 66; Bringas, *Friar Bringas*, p. 22; John L. Kessell, *Friars, Soldiers, and Reformers: Hispanic Arizona and the Sonora Mission Frontier, 1767-1856* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), pp. 182, 270-71, 277-80, 297, 301, 311.

⁸² Shiels, *King and Church*, pp. 193-94, 204-5. Weber, *Bárbaros*, pp. 107-134 provides an overview of the reasons behind the movement for secularization of missions.

The impetus for the transition of the San Antonio missions from *conversión* to *doctrina* began first with the apostolic colleges, and only later gained Crown support. The Queretaran father president of the Texas missions, fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Viana, proposed to Crown officials in 1759⁸³ that the San Antonio missions relinquish the temporalities. He renewed the proposal in 1762, arguing that it would allow them to direct resources to other areas, and eliminate one of the chief sources of conflict among the missions, soldiers, and vecinos – the ownership and use of ranch lands. Both of the offers seem to have been motivated by years of such conflict. During the 1750s, as private landholders from the presidio and villa had claimed ranchland throughout the San Antonio and neighboring river valley, the Querétaro missions sought clear title to the ranchlands they had been using since at least the early 1740s. They also agreed to partition an area known as the Monte Galván, to resolve a dispute among three of the missions as well as several private ranchers. In 1756, the cabildo of the Villa of San Fernando accused the Querétaro missionaries of “spitefully” preventing the vecinos from obtaining ranchlands, charging that despite the small sizes of the mission communities, the missionaries “in their avarice” maintained a monopoly on the ranchlands and prevented the townspeople from making a living. The missionaries’ 1762 missive asserted that they paid special attention to the temporalities not only because it was the primary means of survival for the missions, but also to attract

⁸³ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 4, *The Mission Era: The Passing of the Missions* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1939), pp. 259-60, including fn. 1, mistakenly gives the year of this document as 1769. The actual date of the document is February 6, 1759: see Bolton, *Guide to Materials*, p. 30, item 26.

unconverted indigenous groups, who the friars said noticed and paid attention to the “comfort and well-being” that mission residents enjoyed.⁸⁴

Crown officials rejected both the 1759 and the 1762 Querétaro requests to cede mission temporalities. In 1769, the Querétaro college took over the ex-Jesuit⁸⁵ missions in Sonora and Arizona, and began the process of transferring their Texas missions to the Zacatecas college, effectively ending their interests in the Texas mission field. The issue of the temporalities then languished for nearly a decade, until the Zacatecas college *Discretorio* took up the idea of renouncing them in 1778-79, for most of the Texas missions generally, and specifically with respect to Mission Valero. The reasons for singling out Valero are not explicitly given in the documents. Its population, however, was considerably smaller than those of the other missions. The mission community of Valero had increasingly become mestizo, was fairly well assimilated with the villa, and in practice was already largely self-supporting.⁸⁶ Unlike the other missions, Valero and its lands were close to the vecino settlement in San Antonio, strongly positioning it for further integration into the larger community.

The civilians’ growing need for land was an important factor in the push for secularization – more so, apparently, than whether the spiritual condition of the mission communities was ready for secularization. Local lands around the villa had

⁸⁴ Fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores, et al., “*Relación del estado en que se hallan todos y cada una de las misiones en el año de 1762, dirigido al Mui Reverendo Padre Guardian Fray Francisco Xavier Ortíz*,” in *Documentos para la historia ecclesiastica y civil de la Provincia de Texas o Neuvas Philipinas 1720-1779* (Madrid: Ediciones José Porrúa Turanzas, 1961), pp. 246-73; Francisco de Arocha et al. to Captain don Toribio de Urrutia, “*El Cavildo Justisia y Reximiento de la Villa de S[a]n Fernando . . .*,” 25 Aug 1756, BA.

⁸⁵ The Spanish Crown expelled the Jesuit order from their mission fields in the Americas in 1767. A good discussion of this event is John L. Kessell, *Mission of Sorrows: Jesuit Guevavi and the Pimas, 1691-1767* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1970); see also Weber, *Bárbaros*, pp. 109-10, 114-16.

⁸⁶ Schuetz, “Indians of the San Antonio Missions,” pp. 179-91; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 4, p. 344; López, “Report on the San Antonio Missions in 1792,” pp. 490-91.

already been taken up by each generation of retiring soldiers from the presidio.

Although population levels were mostly stagnant in the civilian community during this time, the 1773 addition of the Adaeseños to their numbers stretched local resources to their limits. Access to land was limited even before the influx of residents from the extinguished presidio and civilian community of Los Adaes. In 1771, for example, Vicente Travieso filed a complaint against the missions' monopolization of land and water, stating that "[w]e see ourselves forced to work in the farms of the fathers for half the crop in order to maintain ourselves." When the Zacatecas Council began its push for secularizing the Texas missions, the thirty-five Adaeseño families remaining in San Antonio had yet to receive land that Crown officials had promised. Instead, they were living and working on the lands at Mission San Antonio de Valero; they only received the lands promised them upon Valero's secularization in 1793.⁸⁷

The Zacatecas *Discretorio* initially proposed giving up their missions in Texas in order to focus on a new mission field for the Tarahumara (Raramuri) in Chihuahua. In 1778, they petitioned Viceroy Croix to reduce the number of missionaries in the four other San Antonio missions in order for them to open new missions elsewhere. In 1780, they requested that Viceroy Croix accept their surrender of the temporalities of the other Texas missions. In 1782, the Council noted that due to Texas Governor Cabello's failure to order the three missionaries to end their work in San Antonio, they

⁸⁷ Alicia V. Tjarks, "Comparative Demographic Analysis of Texas, 1777-1793," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Jan. 1974), pp. 303-304, 317, 330, 337; "Protest of Don Vicente Alvarez Travieso and Don Juan Andres Alvarez Travieso against Claims of the Missions of San Antonio to lands," 12 Aug 1771, with further notes through 1783, Alvarez Travieso Papers, translated by Mattie Austin Hatcher, Box 2Q236, Barker Texas History Collection, Briscoe Center for American History (CAH), University of Texas, Austin, p. 4; "*Lista y procedimientos seguidos para el reparto de las tierras de San Antonio de Valero a los Adaeseños y demas individuos de hijos de ella*," BCSA, Mission Records MR2.

remained unavailable to go to the Tarahumara.⁸⁸ A decade later, in January, 1792, the *Discretorio* authorized the college prefect, fray Manuel Silva, to petition the Viceroy to secularize Valero and to consolidate the remaining four missions into two *doctrinas*. These actions would make available both personnel and funding to establish new missions that the college now proposed for Karankawa, Tawakoni, and Taovaya groups in the coastal and southeastern areas of the province. In 1793, the Viceroy informed Silva that he approved the plan. Viceroy Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco obtained approval from a *Junta superior* and in January, 1793, ordered the new governor, Manuel Muñoz, to secularize Mission Valero. Muñoz immediately complied: after having lands surveyed and property inventoried, he distributed the mission's holdings and equipment to its residents. Seventy-five years after its founding in San Antonio, thirty-four years after the idea of creating a *doctrina* was broached, and fourteen years after it was ordered to be secularized, Mission Valero successfully fulfilled its life cycle and ceased operations.⁸⁹

Although it would be another thirty years before the other four San Antonio missions were secularized, they were divested of their temporalities in 1794, one year after Valero's secularization. The removal of their temporalities followed a different route of authority than had Valero's secularization. Commandant General Pedro de Nava, whose position was independent of the viceroy, issued a decree on mission temporalities to the governors under his jurisdiction in April, 1794. It applied to all

⁸⁸ Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 38.

⁸⁹ Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 73; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 5, pp. 36, 39-40; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, p. 85; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, p. 66; Gerald E. Poyo, "Immigrants and Integration in Late Eighteenth Century Bexar," in Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa, eds. *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. 100; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 4, pp. 352-54.

missions founded before 1784 in the provinces of the eastern half of the northern frontier under his jurisdiction:⁹⁰ Texas, Coahuila, Nueva Viscaya, Sonora, and Nuevo Mexico. The decree immediately abolished “the old method of communal living that has been followed and observed in the administration of temporal property” in all missions more than ten years old. Nava ordered that eight *suertes* be separated from the best lands and reserved as a communal corn field, its produce to be used toward the *mayordomo*’s salary. The remaining land was to be divided into similar-sized lots and distributed to each of the mission’s families. The head of household would receive title to the land on the condition that they maintained their homes and families there; they could not sell or mortgage it. The herds, seeds, implements, and tools were all to be distributed among the mission community’s families, and the missionaries were to be released from the care and management of all temporalities.

On May 30, the *Discretorio* accepted Nava’s plan. Following his receipt of the orders in June, 1794, Texas Governor Manuel Muñoz notified the father president of the Texas missions that each mission was to prepare a census of its population and a formal inventory of its holdings so that the distribution could be done. This took place at Mission San José, for example, the following month, in a process that consumed two weeks. Once the property had been distributed, only the mission church buildings, and the *conventos* at San José and Espada, remained under the purview of the missionary and the college.⁹¹

⁹⁰ The western part remained under the viceroy’s jurisdiction; see Barnes, Naylor and Polzer, *Northern New Spain*, pp. 61-64.

⁹¹ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 5, pp. 40, 42-43; “*Ynventario de los bienes de Temporalidad de la Mision de S.S. José. Año de 1794*,” including certified copies of Pedro de Nava, “*Reducción y fundación, se reforme y quede abolido . . .*,” 10 Apr 1794, and Manuel Muñoz, “*Auto de obedecim[ien]to*,” 5 June 1794, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 92-140; *Discretorio, Zacatecan Missionaries*,

The reasons for the long delay in determining the fate of the missions are not apparent.⁹² It was to the Franciscan Order's, the Crown's, and the civilian community's advantage to secularize. But not, as it turned out, to the mission structures themselves. The 1794 creation of *doctrinas* of the remaining four missions⁹³ after Valero had both immediate and long-term financial consequences. Divesting the temporalities had a deleterious effect on mission operations and stability, as little thought was directed toward its economic consequences. Once the missions stopped administering temporalities, they lost the income previously derived from the sale of its surplus. Coupled with the loss of stipends due to the reduction in the number of missionaries, they also lost the means to pay their debts. Although mission expenses decreased substantially, they could no longer rely on communal labor to maintain their infrastructure.

Planned obsolescence was an inherent characteristic of the mission institution, because it was taken as given that the missionizing process itself prepared the community to become self-supporting. Yet there was no economic framework for the community's transition from communal production to private livelihood. In the same way that the Crown never acknowledged the missions' economic role, neither did it consider the effect of its withdrawal of financial support. Instead, Crown officials

p. 87 (30 May 1794). Unlike the secularization of Valero, the other four mission communities retained their ranchlands undivided, and rented them to vecinos.

⁹² Elsewhere in New Spain – notably Sonora and Baja California – the ex-Jesuit mission temporalities had been assigned to civilian authorities. The immediate and spectacular failure on this approach may have been a cautionary tale for the Texas missions. Kessell, *Friars, Soldiers, and Reformers*, pp. 19-21, 51-53, 173-74; Harry W. Crosby, *Antigua California: Mission and Colony on the Peninsular Frontier, 1697-1768* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1994), pp. 388-89.

⁹³ Only Valero was actually secularized, in 1793. In 1794, the other four mission gave up the temporalities but continued to operate as spiritual missions under the Franciscans. See Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 103, 141, 178, 218.

intended the creation of *doctrinas* to benefit the royal treasury: the Crown expected to substantially reduce or end stipend payments to missionaries, and then to receive income from taxes and tithes paid by acculturated and independent former mission inhabitants. Furthermore, mission lands left over after distribution to its residents could be rented – or, eventually, sold – to vecinos, again producing revenue in the form of taxes paid to the royal treasury. Bourbon reformers had abandoned the earlier Habsburg model of separate indigenous and Hispanic settlements in favor of integrated communities.⁹⁴

The transformation of the San Antonio missions to *doctrinas* in 1794 entailed a reckoning of the mission's secular accounts. There is little documentation for these accounts. The *Discretorio*, however, determined that the missions could sell certain assets, "even the furnishings of the church that are not needed," in order to pay debts. Neither cattle nor grain was to be used for this purpose, as these assets belonged to the mission residents. In June, 1794, the Council determined "for various reasons" to cover 100 *pesos* the missions of San Antonio de Valero and San Juan Capistrano owed; the nature of these debts was not recorded. The Council required the Texas missions to sell part of their mule herd to help cover their debts, while keeping enough of the animals to continue transporting supplies as needed. This measure was repeated several times in the next few years, perhaps as the herd increased in number.⁹⁵

In 1793, don Phelipe Calzado, a peninsular merchant based in Saltillo, asked the college for payment of 5,678 *pesos* in goods that he had supplied to Mission San José

⁹⁴ Weber, *Bárbaros*, pp. 102-104.

⁹⁵ *Discretorio, Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 87-89, "for various reasons," p. 87, "even the furnishings," p. 91, pp. 93-94.

since 1791. The procurator had taken some silver vessels from the mission to sell since no other goods were available to settle the debt, and the Council again turned to their benefactors “to supply the money in order to pay on time in proportion to the amount the mission can contribute.” In 1794, just as the temporalities were surrendered, Mission San José also owed the Presidio of Béxar 458 *pesos* 2 $\frac{1}{4}$ *reales* for cash, tobacco, and cigars that the quartermaster provided the missionary for distribution to the indigenous mission community (in other words, the presidio could also function as a bank). The deal had been executed through a verbal agreement, by which the mission would pay its debt with grain from the fall harvest. Because the orders for removing the temporalities were implemented before the crops could be harvested, the mission had to collect funds from fifteen of its debtors to repay its own debt to the presidio.⁹⁶

One aspect of the creation of *doctrinas* supported by both the Franciscans and the Crown, was the change in status of Concepción to a *visita* of San José, and of San Juan Capistrano to a *visita* of San Francisco de Espada. The practical result of these combinations was a reduction of eight missionaries – two in each of the four missions – to only two – one at San José and the other at Espada.⁹⁷ In financial terms, this resulted in the reduction of income from six stipends of 450 *pesos*, totaling 2,700 *pesos* per year, to two stipends, totaling 900 *pesos*. As *visitas* without resident missionaries, Concepción and San Juan lost the entirety of their incomes, while San José and Espada each lost half of their income, with only one missionary each rather than the former

⁹⁶ Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, pp. 86-91, quotation p. 87; Offut, *Saltillo*, pp. 36, 40, 49; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 5, pp. 61-62; proceedings concerning Gabriel Gutiérrez's letter to Governor of Texas urging payment of sum owed by Mission San José, 29 Aug 1794, BA.

⁹⁷ Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 142, 178, 220. This differed from the 1788 proposal for Espada to become a *visita* for a missionary stationed at San José. In the ensuing years, the status of the former missions – whether they served as a church staffed by a missionary or as an unstaffed *visita* – changed according to the availability of personnel and needs of the respective communities.

standard of two. The missionary stipends, together with the sale of surplus products, had previously been used to provide the mission communities with supplies imported from the interior. Now, however, with the divestment of temporalities, the missionary no longer had these expenses.⁹⁸ Yet the loss of temporalities and income directly resulted in the long-term deterioration of the church buildings and infrastructure. The communal model of labor that constructed and maintained the buildings throughout the eighteenth century had been abolished. Any future work would be for hire, but this was too great a burden as the four mission's collective income had been reduced by seventy-five percent.

In 1809, Texas Governor Manuel de Salcedo described the mission churches as being in good condition (*buen estado*), and noted that the mill at San José was still used for grinding wheat. Yet the situation for the financial administration of the missions rapidly deteriorated: by 1813, only one missionary was left for the two missions and their *visitas*, stretching limited funds even further. Local political upheaval beginning in 1811,⁹⁹ exacerbated by Comanche raids, had weakened the presidio and villa, disrupted ties with the missions, and significantly curtailed agricultural and ranching activities throughout the area. In 1813, the Gutiérrez-Magee army – a combination of Mexican insurgents and Anglo-American mercenary troops that numbered around five hundred – occupied Concepción and perhaps San José, where many ecclesiastical records were destroyed. The missionaries and mission residents remained loyal to the Crown during

⁹⁸ After San José became a *doctrina* in 1794, for example, only a few supplies – habits, sandals, underclothing, chocolate, and tobacco or snuff – were sent the missionary, in contrast to the large orders previously supplied to the entire community when the mission had been a *conversión*. See *Libro en que constan las memorias . . . desde el año de 1792*, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 11-66.

⁹⁹ Discussed below, in Chapter 6.

this insurrection. In 1816, the lone missionary's annual stipend payment ceased, and in the fall of 1818 the *Zacatecas Discretorio* authorized fray José Maria Huerta to go to Mexico City to ask that the allowances be paid the missionaries from the *Colegio* funds in Zacatecas. The records are silent regarding the outcome of his request.¹⁰⁰

By the final secularization of the missions in 1824, Concepción had been abandoned and its buildings were in ruins. This scenario was repeated at the other missions. The church building and most of the *convento* rooms remained intact at San José, although several rooms were in poor condition. Most of the rest of the structures – including the carpentry and weaving shops – were in total ruins and were sold for their stone. Only four occupants were listed as inhabiting the pueblo. The houses and walls of the pueblo at San Juan, too, were in ruins and sold for the stone; only the *convento* rooms where the missionaries lived remained habitable. It had an unfinished building intended as a new church. The stone walls and wood roof beams of the old church (a rebuilt granary building) were described as very poorly maintained (*mui maltratadas*); the roof would soon collapse. At Espada, the Queretaran mission had only an interim structure used as a church when they transferred the mission to the Zacatecas college in 1772. A full-size church was never completed; in 1824 the roof beams of the building used as the church were badly deteriorated and would soon fall in. Most of the *convento* and some of the pueblo houses were in ruins and sold for stone, while a few *convento* rooms and other houses in the pueblo were sold intact.¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ Manuel de Salcedo, *Padrón General de las quatro misiones*, 19 June 1809, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, pp. 274-77; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 107, 144; Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 101 (Sept. 26, 1818).

¹⁰¹ Manuel de Salcedo, *Padrón General de las quatro misiones*, 19 June 1809, in *San José Papers*, Part 2, p. 277; Discretorio, *Zacatecan Missionaries*, p. 134; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, p. 220; James E. Ivey and Anne A. Fox, *Archaeological Investigations at Mission Concepción and Mission Parkway*, Archaeological

The economic prosperity that the five San Antonio missions developed during the first half of the eighteenth century was based on the communal labor of their indigenous residents and the extensive land grants they held for agriculture and ranching. During the second half of the century, missions increasingly relied on hired labor to maintain temporal productivity even as the resident populations declined. The blending of the mission and vecino communities not only offered proof of the missions' institutional successes, it also reveals that they provided significant economic resources to the larger area. The following chapter will examine other aspects of San Antonio's formal economy, focusing on the civilian community in the Villa of San Fernando de Béxar.

Survey Report No. 114 (San Antonio: Center for Archaeological Research, University of Texas at San Antonio, 1999), pp. 50-51; Inventory of the Property of San José Mission, 23 Dec 1823, in *San José Papers*, Part 3, pp. 138-48; *Abaluo de las Casas y Muralla de la Mision de San Juan*, 11 Feb 1824, BCSA, Mission Records MR15; *Inventario general y particular de las Yglesias de las cuatro Misiones . . .*, 29 Feb 1824, OSMHRC, ACZ4:5578-79; *Abaluo de las Casas y Muralla de la Mision de San Francisco de la Espada*, 12 Feb 1824, BCSA, Mission Records MR64FE.

Chapter 3
“People here trade some things for others”:¹
San Antonio and Formal Economic Activity

On June 2, 1783, a lone rider entered the Presidio Rio Grande to report that Mescalero Apaches had ambushed the party he was traveling with, killing all save himself. A servant for the group, he survived only because he was lagging behind, separated from the others. An escort of thirty soldiers went to the site, where they found the bodies of Fernando de Beramendi, a wealthy merchant from San Antonio, and his companions. Their bodies were riddled with bullets and arrows, and their belongings – including a substantial amount of cash – were scattered about the site. The group of seven men, en route to Mexico City from San Antonio on a purchasing trip, included Beramendi himself, three petty merchants, a muleteer, and two servants.² The incident revealed that despite Spain’s eight-decade presence in the region, the ability of frontier residents to conduct business in the interior remained fraught with risk. Yet such travel was essential to maintaining economic and cultural ties with the viceroyalty of New Spain. Texas residents negotiated these ties, as well as their economic and consumer needs, in a variety of ways to overcome the logistical odds against them. In so doing, they bootstrapped their own local economy into a thriving system of exchange characterized by chance, ingenuity, and perseverance.

The civilian community of San Antonio began informally in association with the founding of the Presidio of San Antonio de Béxar in 1718; the villa of San Fernando de

¹ Texas Governor Juan María, Baron de Ripperdá to Viceroy Marqués de Croix, in *Numero 18, Papeles Correspondientes a la Goleta Ynglesa llamada Tow Friendes, que significa Dos Amigos . . .*, 22 Oct 1771, Bexar Archives (BA).

² Record of proceedings conducted by don Man[ue]l de Cerecedo y Velasco, captain and governor at S[a]n Juan Bap[tis]ta de[l] Río Grande Presidio, [5 June 1783], BA.

Béxar³ was formally established in 1731. During this period, late Hapsburg and early Bourbon policies, which coexisted for the first decades of colonial Texas settlement, were broadly focused on asserting, extending, and maintaining dominion over territory and inhabitants. Officials gave little thought to economic matters in frontier areas such as Texas, and ignored the development of trade and commerce. In theory, Spanish mercantilist policy meant that its colonies were closed markets allowed only to export raw materials and commodities to Spain, and in turn to purchase its manufactures. Local production and trade were permitted for bulk goods, such as foodstuffs. Military and civilian settlements together were intended to be mutually supportive, with civilians earning a living by producing and selling foodstuffs to the presidio. Supplies that could not be made locally were to be brought into Texas by mule train from the interior of New Spain. Presidios were provisioned as needed from the interior, with military payroll credits exchanged for supplies.⁴

The standard historical narrative of colonial Texas is focused on discord among royal government, military and ecclesiastical officials, and the policy shortcomings that resulted from their disagreements. This view overshadows the important and interdependent roles religious and military institutions played in the formation and development of the colonial Texas economy, but more critically it ignores the broad extent of economic activity that took place outside of these formal structures.

³ For ease of reference, I will generally refer to the presidio as “Béxar,” and the villa as “San Antonio.” Occasionally, as context requires, I will instead use “San Fernando” for the villa.

⁴ David J. Weber, *Bárbaros: Spaniards and their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), pp. 180-82, 205; J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 110-14, 232-34, 409; Haring, *Spanish Empire in America* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1985 [1945]), p. 293; Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), pp. 209-10, 222, 235; Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 31-33, 92-95.

Beginning with Herbert Bolton, historians of colonial Texas have described a weak economy that suffered from a range of problems: limited resources, distance from other settlements, absence of markets, insufficient labor, restrictive trade policies and taxes that stifled growth, hostile attacks by indigenous groups that inhibited or blocked both economic activities and the transportation of goods, and economic dependence on an underfunded military. Subsequent historians developed this theory, making generalizations based largely on documents concerning the missions and the presidio. Some continued Bolton's focus on the specific institutions of mission, presidio, and villa. For example, Carlos Castañeda's multi-volume *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* remains the most detailed and comprehensive study of the Texas missions. Max Moorhead chronicled the administrative and functional evolution of presidios across the northern frontier, including logistical support for military supplies and the various reforms imposed on the system. Frank de la Teja carefully researched the social history underpinning the Villa of San Fernando. He described the variety of civilian occupations that developed as the settlement grew during the eighteenth century, and identified constraints on both agriculture and ranching. He argued that overall, production was limited because markets were limited. "Geography, demography, and economic conditions" prevented ambitious Texans from achieving wealth and power.⁵

According to these views, rather than function as a harmonious triad the frontier institutions of mission, presidio, and villa instead undermined one another economically – either by design or by context. The early years of the local San Antonio economy saw the missions quickly produce surpluses and, with their large, coordinated

⁵ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, 7 vols. (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1936-1958); Moorhead, *The Presidio*; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, quotation from p. 98.

labor forces, undercut efforts by civilians to supply the presidio market. Although the original civilian settlement that formed around the Presidio de Béxar developed irrigated farm land, no records have been identified that document trade between these civilians and the presidio. When the formal villa of San Fernando was established with Canary Island immigrants in 1731, the new settlers were granted the existing irrigated land, displacing those civilians who had labored to improve it. Despite this, vecinos remained at a disadvantage because the missions held far more extensive irrigated farmlands, a sizeable labor pool, and a well-established means for supplying the presidio. Without a market for their goods, many vecinos could engage in little more than subsistence production. As historian David Weber summarized the situation, “subsidized” missions with “cheap communal labor and large-scale irrigated agriculture” made it impossible for civilian settlers to compete in local markets. Without “viable external markets,” civilians were unable to rise above “eking out a hardscrabble existence.” Presidios had “developed haphazardly,” and the military “operated with notorious inefficiency.”⁶

Close examination of a variety of archival documents, however, reveals that this assessment positing an economically isolated frontier is misleading. Instead, the residents of San Antonio created a dynamic local economy with robust regional ties that incorporated vecinos and their communities into global trading networks. Wills, debt collections, and criminal investigations reveal a high degree of local and regional

⁶ Fray Juan Agustín Morfi, *History of Texas 1673-1779*, Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, trans. (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1935), Vol. 2, pp. 291-93; Herbert E. Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Colonial History and Administration* (New York: Russell & Russell, 1962), pp. 22-27; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 76-80, 83-86, 89-92; Moorhead, *The Presidio*, pp. 34-35; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), pp. 193, 214.

exchange through cash, barter, credit, and labor for trade. Archival documents describe both petty and large exchanges; they also reflect material, social and legal aspects of vecino life. Military payrolls enabled first-generation soldiers to purchase real estate with cash, which sellers used to invest in other enterprises. Business entrepreneurs operated within the community, ranging from itinerant peddlers to merchants whose stores offered goods from a global market. Vecinos, soldiers, and Native Americans routinely traded items among themselves, in private homes and public spaces, in the missions, and in tribal villages. On a small scale, for example, many people exchanged items of utilitarian value or loaned just a few *reales* or *pesos* to a family member or acquaintance. At the other end of the spectrum, several people engaged in large transactions involving thousands of *pesos*. Most exchanges fell somewhere between these ranges. Regardless of amount, economic transactions kept assets, goods, and wealth moving within and across a variety of local and interregional networks. As a result of such activities, Texas was connected to and supported local and regional economic centers and beyond, which in turn promoted material ties within local communities, and cultural ties between the frontier and the interior.

Historians of colonial Texas have consistently noted that specie was generally in short supply in New Spain and barely circulated on the frontier, equating lack of currency with poverty. De la Teja observed that commerce was based on credit and debt because of the scarcity of coinage. Porter echoed this view, noting that most people were in debt. Yet such arguments ignore that debt is possible only in the presence of money, which allows a lender to extend credit to a debtor. While barter, credit and debt were common means of exchange, a significant number of transactions

were conducted with cash throughout the colonial period: a detailed inspection of documents reveals that many people had at least small amounts of cash, and that the local availability of cash fluctuated over time. Indeed, when the cabildo of San Fernando complained to the Viceroy in 1756 about the dearth of opportunities for commerce in the area, they cited indigenous hostilities and economic obstruction by the missions as causes – not a shortage of currency or credit.⁷

Even during the early years of the villa's settlement, cash circulated among the vecinos. For example, half of the thirty-four property transactions recorded in notarial books from the 1730s and '40s were made in cash. The average cash sale for real property was just over 250 *pesos*; amounts ranged from eighteen *pesos* for a share in a property that had been divided among heirs, to 662 *pesos* for two lots in the villa, each with a house built of stone, fruit trees, and other plants.⁸ The most expensive sale, totaling 842 *pesos* 3 *reales*, was purchased through a combination of cash, promissory note, and goods. This sale was for two contiguous lots fronting on the San Antonio River, enclosed together with wooden fencing, and including a stone house, a stone room, other improvements, and fruit trees.⁹ Another property was recorded purchased with two *libranzas* (promissory notes); the remainder of the property sales were for bartered livestock, goods or effects, and products of the land.¹⁰

⁷ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. V, *The Mission Era: The End of the Spanish Regime* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), p. 27; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 119, 135; Amy M. Porter, *Their Lives, Their Wills: Women in the Borderlands 1750-1846* (Lubbock: Texas Tech University Press, 2015), p. 21; N^o 9 *El Cabildo, Justicia, y reximiento de la Villa de S[a]n Fernando*, 25 Aug 1756, BA.

⁸ “con dos casas de piedra . . . con todas las vien hechurias, arboles fructales y de mas plantas,” *Sepan quantos essta cartta de venta R^l y perpetua . . .*, 2 Oct 1748, *Protocolos* of the notary public of the Cabildo, Francisco José de Arocha, Vol. 2 (1747-49), BA [hereinafter cited as Arocha *Protocolos*].

⁹ *Venta de dos solares y casas pr D. Manuel de Niz*, 28 May, 1748, Arocha *Protocolos*, Vol. 2 (1747-49), BA.

¹⁰ Arocha *Protocolos*, Vol. 1 (1738-46), Vol. 2 (1747-49), BA.

In 1746, Cristóbal de los Santos Coy, known only as a local teacher, petitioned the governor for the grant of a lot in the villa in order to build a school. Two years later, in 1748, he purchased two lots with their stone houses for 662 *pesos* cash. Five months after this, in 1749, he purchased another lot with a stone house, as well as branding rights and livestock, for 300 *pesos* cash. The same year, he married the Canary Island immigrant María Curbelo; the following year, 1750, they were listed as *sirvientes* at Mission Valero.¹¹ Given their apparently high economic status, their position at the mission seems unlikely to have been menial. As discussed in the previous chapter, the missions hired vecinos for a wide range of work and skilled trades. Yet how Santos Coy had sufficient resources to spend nearly one thousand *pesos* cash in less than six months is shrouded in mystery.

Almost one-quarter of the notarial recordings of property transactions involved Isleños¹² who sold lots or agricultural land, granted them by the crown as first settlers, to military residents. Unlike the settlers, those who served in the military had a regular annual salary and were able to purchase property with cash, goods, or a combination of the two. Military residents represented nearly one-half of all purchasers inscribed in the notarial records. These figures indicate that both groups used land to diversify their economic activities. Most of the Isleño sellers, who had land but little earnings, exchanged their real property for cash, livestock or goods that they could then sell or trade to others. Military buyers made an equal number of purchases between cash and

¹¹ *Donación de tierra a Cristóbal de los Santos Coy*, 7 Jan 1746, Bexar County Spanish Archives (BCSA), Land Grants; Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1937), p. 75; Arocha *Protocolos*, 2 Oct 1748 and 12 Apr 1749, BA; Mardith Keithly Schuetz, "The Indians of the San Antonio Missions 1718-1821" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1980), p. 297.

¹² Isleños were the Canary Island immigrants who were the villa's founding settlers, and their descendents. They held high social and political status in the community throughout the colonial period.

barter; military sellers almost always sold real property for cash. While the available data is insufficient for broad generalizations, it suggests that the military community had more currency circulating within it than did the civilian villa. The Isleños' barter of land for goods may have been an avenue for them to sell at least some of the items to military families for cash.

One place to look for cash is in the hands of merchants, store keepers and peddlers, who aggregated circulating coinage through the sale of goods to the community. There is little indication of mercantile activity in San Antonio before the 1770s (but see the discussion below of debt proceedings against Martín Lorenzo de Armas, Juan Curbelo, and Joseph Antonio Rodríguez). The 1773 account book of the merchant Marcos Vidal, who had relocated to San Antonio from Los Adaes, itemized sales to men and women in the civilian and military communities, and skilled artisans working on construction at the missions. Many transactions were quite small, on the order of a few *reales*. Larger purchases were up to sixteen *pesos*, yet some accounts totaled from over sixty to well over one hundred *pesos*. Most of Vidal's sales were for wine and *aguardiente*. He also sold a range of foodstuffs, including chocolate, *piloncillo*, figs and fig cakes, bananas, raisins, flour, maize, and sweets (*colación*). Dry goods included a range of fabrics imported from Spain, England, France, and Italy; as well as clothing and under garments, shoes, stockings, a hat, kerchiefs, and soap. The accounts indicate cash sales, credit sales, and loans; one customer secured his credit purchase of shoes and stockings, totaling seven and a half *pesos*, with a gold reliquary.¹³ In other words, Vidal not only operated a store, he also served as an informal bank and pawn

¹³ *Quaderno perteneciente a D[on] Marcos Vidal Año de 1773*, 1773, BA.

shop for the community. The account book showed a total of over eight hundred *pesos* due from his customers.

In October, 1774, the recently-arrived merchant Santiago Villaseñor reported the theft of seven hundred *pesos* in cash from his San Antonio store, that occurred while he was engaged in an all-night poker game in a nearby field. He described the amount of cash as four hundred *pesos* in half-*pesos* and *pesetas*, and three hundred in *pesos duros*.¹⁴ This amount of cash suggests that his mercantile operation was similar to Vidal's in volume of transactions. No description of the types of goods he sold has been located.

The merchant Fernando de Beramendi, who was ambushed and killed en route to Mexico City in 1783, represented a significantly larger scale of business.¹⁵ A Spaniard from Navarre, Beramendi had come to San Antonio around 1770.¹⁶ While historians have characterized merchants in colonial San Fernando as chronically indebted, Beramendi held a large cash balance for his store. When he and his entourage departed San Antonio on May 19, he carried with him 2,814 *pesos* 7 *reales* of his own money in cash and bills of exchange; in addition, he left behind, in the care of the Spanish merchant Juan Josef de la Santa, 7,141 *pesos* 2¼ *reales* in cash. Among the men traveling with Beramendi were Antonio de las Bárzenas, a merchant from Spain to

¹⁴ *Sumaria del Rofo a D[o]n Santhiago Villas[eño]r*, 28 Oct 1774, BA: 700 pesos "*en medios y algunas pesetas los quatrocientos, y en pesos duros los trescientos restantes...*" The half peso and *peseta* (also called a *pistareen*) are each worth four *reales*; the difference was that a half peso was literally a silver peso coin cut in half (one peso equaled eight *reales*), while a *peseta* was a separately denominated coin minted from bronze. See John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600-1775: A Handbook* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1978), pp. 5, 10, 98-100. According to the *Diccionario Moderno Español-Inglés* (México, D.F.: Ediciones Larousse, 1976), a *duro* was worth five *pesetas*; I have not been able to verify this in other publications.

¹⁵ This discussion is based on *Año de 1783, Num[er]o 62, Causa Mortual de D[o]n Fern[an]do Beramendi Nat[ur]a[l] del Reyno de Nabarra, y Vecino de la Villa de S[a]n Fern[an]do*, 28 April 1783, BA.

¹⁶ Jesús F. de la Teja, *Faces of Béxar: Early San Antonio and Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2016), p. 106.

whom Beramendi had advanced 2,849 *pesos* in cash; and Pedro Texada,¹⁷ a petty local merchant to whom Beramendi had earlier advanced some goods, and also loaned his travel expenses.

Beramendi and his fellow merchants were not just on their own expedition to resupply their stores. Beramendi's wife and twenty-three other people, including one of the local missionaries, had asked him to obtain specific items for them from Mexico City. The requests were enumerated in the notes and papers he carried with him. Many of the requests, accompanied by small amounts of money, were for religious devotional items; two people gave Beramendi a few *reales* for novenas to be prayed to Our Lady of Sorrows and Saint Joseph; one included the price of a bouquet of flowers for her devotion. Others gave him watches, jewelry and other objects for repair or replacement. A dozen customers gave Beramendi lists of specific goods they wished to purchase. The contents of these lists were not transcribed in the record, so it is unclear whether they prepaid their orders or would pay upon receipt. Nevertheless, the expedition illustrates that frontier inhabitants had the ability to maintain cultural and material ties with the interior.¹⁸

In Beramendi's store just off the main plaza in San Antonio, customers were able to purchase fabrics imported from across the world – France (Pontivy, Brittany, and Rouen cloth; Lorraine lace), China (green and blue fine silks, coarse silk, camlet cloth, handkerchiefs, and hosiery), Germany (imitation Brittany), Spain (calico from

¹⁷ Texada, originally from Mexico City, had accused his wife of adultery the previous year. The defendant suspected of being her partner testified that he worked in Texada's store (*tienda*), and that Texada nightly attended the games and other entertainments he owned, in order to sell cigarettes, aguardiente, and other provisions from his store; Pedro José Texada v. Juana Francisca Pérez, 4 January 1782, BA.

¹⁸ *Año de 1783, Num[er]o 62, Causa Mortual . . .*, 28 April 1783, BA.

Barcelona, ribbon from Granada, lace from Flanders), and New Spain (common cotton cloth, napped fustian and a shawl from Puebla). In addition to sewing notions, such as scissors, needles, pins, various threads, thimbles, and buttons, Beramendi's customers could purchase such items as sequins, fringes, gold and silver thread and threaded buttons, silk embroidery floss, strings of pearls, gold earrings, thin sheets of tinsel or brass, and colored paper. A few cups and bowls, chocolate, sugar, rice and garbanzo beans rounded out the goods on offer in the store.¹⁹

A year and a half after Beramendi's death, his widow remarried, yet seemed to have made little effort to carry on with the thriving business the Spanish merchant had left behind. Nor, it seems, had the other co-executors of the estate (one of whom was a fellow Spaniard and merchant in the villa). Customer debt to the store remained uncollected. The store and its contents deteriorated, as did the large, impressive dwelling Beramendi had built. In 1787, customer debt owed to the store totaled over 4,600 *pesos* – more than double the 1,680 *pesos* customers had owed Beramendi four years earlier, indicating that many sales were made through credit rather than cash.

¹⁹ *Año de 1783, Num[er]o 62, Causa Mortual . . .*, 28 April 1783, BA. Not only were these kinds of fabrics, and more, available on the far northern frontier, a similar range could be found in other frontier communities, as well. For the geographic origins of textiles mentioned, see Barbara L. Voss, *The Archaeology of Ethnogenesis: Race and Sexuality in Colonial San Francisco* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), pp. 270-71. In addition to Voss, for comparative availability of goods, see, for example, Marcia Bianchi Vilelli, *Organizar la diferencia: Prácticas de consumo en Floridablanca (costa patagónica, siglo XVIII)* (Buenos Aires: Editorial Teseo, 2007), pp. 80, 175, 180-81; Joaquín Durán y Días, *Estado general de todo el Virreynato de Santa Fe de Bogotá en el presente año de 1794*, Archivo de la Economía Nacional, Colección Bicentenario (Colombia: Banco de la República, 2012), pp. 433-72; Jonathan D. Amith, *The Möbius Strip: A Spatial History of Colonial Society in Guerrero, Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005); José de la Torre Curiel, *Twilight of the Mission Frontier: Shifting Interethnic Alliances and Social Organization in Sonora, 1768-1855* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012); Giorgio Perissinotto, ed., *Documenting Everyday Life in Early Spanish California: The Santa Barbara Presidio Memorias y Facturas, 1779-1810* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Trust for Historic Preservation, 1998); and Mariano Ardash Bonialian, *El Pacífico hispanoamericano: política y comercio asiático en el Imperio Español (1680-1784)* (Mexico, D.F.: El Colegio de México, 2012).

The notarial records of cash purchases of real property, together with the income and account books of Vidal, Villaseñor, and Beramendi are clear evidence of the circulation of specie in San Antonio. Wills and estate inventories also offer some insight into the accumulation of wealth. If people generally had cash in hand, it should appear in their assets listed in wills. Only seven people, however, most toward the end of the colonial period, mention cash in their wills. The merchant Fernando de Beramendi had nearly 10,000 *pesos* in cash at the time of his death in 1783. When Governor Manuel Muñoz died in office in 1799, he held 932 *pesos* cash. In 1805, Manuel de Luna recorded that he had five hundred *pesos* cash in the care of his daughter at the Rio Grande Presidio. In 1810, José Lorenzo de Villareal, chaplain of the presidial company of San Fernando de Béxar, stated that Mariana Herrera had two *doblones* of his, worth sixteen *pesos* each; the fact that she had loaned him fifty *pesos* on the coins reveals that gold coins may have had a much higher value on the frontier than the official valuation, and that most transactions required smaller coinage. Also in 1810, José Antonio Puga stated in his will that he had forty-two *pesos* in his mattress. In 1812, Francisco Amangual recorded that he had two hundred *pesos* in cash; on his death in 1814, the rancher Ygnacio Calvillo held at least one hundred *pesos* in cash; and in 1816, María Antonia Ruiz had seven hundred *pesos*.²⁰

There are several reasons that cash money might not be listed in wills or estate inventories. It was a simple asset for the decedent to distribute to heirs prior to death. Money could also be easily concealed or taken, particularly if family members agreed

²⁰ *Año de 1783, Num[er]o 62, Causa Mortual . . .*, 28 April 1783, BA; BCSA, Wills and Estates, Manuel Muñoz WE70 (1799), Manuel de Luna WE66 (1805), José Lorenzo de Villareal WE116 (1810), José Antonio Puga WE87 (1810), Francisco Amangual WE6 (1812), María Antonio Ruiz WE96 (1816); *Sumaria Ynformacion formada a los Paysanos que havitaban en el Rancho de los Calbillos*, 15 Apr 1814, BA.

that such measures were of advantage to them. In an econometric analysis of eighteenth-century probate inventories in Palencia, Spain, Esteban Nicolini and Fernando Ramos also found that only a small percentage of wills listed cash among the holdings. Taking this into account, their model demonstrated that comparing money to debt in inventories gave a reliable indication of the degree of monetization of the local economy. Their findings, correlating urbanization with an increase in demand for money and a decrease in prices, suggest that the fairly low cash to debt ratio observed in vecinos' wills in San Antonio is a sign that money was in tight supply.²¹

Local officials themselves occasionally wrote about the scarcity of cash. Commandant Inspector José Rubio, in 1777, recommended that Texas Governor Ripperdá begin paying out soldiers' accrued salaries in cash, while those who had deficit accounts should have their monthly pay reduced by a small percentage in order to resolve their debts.²² There is no evidence that this plan was implemented. In 1790, however, the newly appointed viceroy of New Spain, don Juan Vicente de Güemes Pacheco de Padilla y Horcasitas, the Count of Revillagigedo, observed that silver coins had only recently begun to circulate in the Interior Provinces, but barely enough to cover perhaps one-quarter to one-third of the salaries of frontier troops. He wrote that most inhabitants of New Spain did not share in the country's wealth, as did the owners of mines and haciendas, but rather had to live on a daily wage insufficient "to clothe the most shameless nakedness." In 1793, the *procurador* of the villa of San Fernando

²¹ Esteban Nicolini and Fernando Ramos, "A New Method for Estimating the Money Demand in Pre-Industrial Economies: Probate Inventories and Spain in the Eighteenth Century," *European Review of Economic History* 14, no. 1 (April 2010), pp. 157-59, 162-65, 168.

²² Josef Rubio to Señor Barón de Ripperdá, 14 June 1777, BA.

reported to the governor that no one was able to purchase cattle from the tithe collector due to a shortage of cash at that time.²³

Viceroy Revillagigedo in particular urged the crown to issue small-denomination copper coins, which not only would make petty transactions easier to conduct, but would also serve as part of a comprehensive effort to abolish the use of privately issued coins or scrip called *tlacos*. Shopkeepers in urban areas of New Spain issued *tlacos* in wood or copper; exchanged with customers for pawn, these coins were valid only for goods in their own store. Although *tlacos* facilitated commerce, authorities disparaged them on the pretext that shopkeepers used them to inflate prices to their customers while avoiding paying higher taxes on the goods.²⁴ It was in the crown's interest to increase the circulation of official coins rather than *tlacos*, in order to collect more tax.

There is no evidence that *tlacos* were used in Texas, but late in the colonial period government-issued copper coins called *jolas*, worth one-half *real*, were briefly minted in San Antonio. In 1815, in the context of a shattered community and ruined local economy during the upheavals of the independence movement, Commandant General Joaquín de Arredondo ordered a local blacksmith to make a stamp for minting the coins. San Antonio merchant Manuel Barrera minted the first of these coins two years later. The following year saw the recall and replacement of these coins, most likely for political reasons. Governor Antonio Martínez, who succeeded Arredondo as

²³ El Conde de Revillagigedo to don Antonio Valdez, 27 March 1790, English translation in J. Villasana Haggard, *Handbook for Translators of Spanish Historical Documents* (Austin: University of Texas, 1941), pp. 88-94; quotations from p. 91; *Expediente promovido por el administrador de Diezmos D[on] Joaquín Flores contra su antecesor D[on] Juan Barrera . . . Numero 72*, 3 July 1793, BA.

²⁴ In fact, copper coins had been minted early in the colonial period, but the indigenous populace of Mexico City had so little regard for the coins that they "threw them away or melted them down for other uses." As a result, officials ended their production in the 1560s; Thomas C. Barnes, Thomas H. Naylor, and Charles W. Polzer, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), p. 67, including quotation.

interim governor in 1817, appointed local postmaster José Antonio de la Garza to mint new coins in 1818, but the practice was apparently soon discontinued.²⁵

Because of the tight supply of official coinage, other mechanisms of exchange were frequently employed throughout the Texas settlements, reflecting a much more robust economy than might otherwise be supposed. The alternative frontier exchange economy – based on commodity money, barter, and debt – allowed people to obtain the goods, payments, or services they needed in order to earn their livelihoods or otherwise meet their needs. The products of agriculture and ranching, for example, including corn, livestock, dried beef, tallow, hides, tobacco, and deerskin were all used as commodity money for trade.²⁶ Viceroy Revillagigedo noted in 1792 that hides and chamois were a common form of currency in the Texas province.²⁷ At the local level, petty exchange might involve pawning or holding in security personal items, clothing, tools, or even livestock, either until the debt was repaid or the items exchanged or sold to a third party.²⁸ While Mexico City had state-sponsored pawn shops and charitable institutions that allowed people to pawn items for small-scale loans, there were no such services in San Antonio.²⁹ Instead, people turned to one another within their familial,

²⁵ Joaquín de Arredondo to Manuel Varela, 10 Oct. 1815, BA; Manuel Pardo permission to Manuel Barrera to coin money, 29 March 1817, BA; José Antonio de la Garza request to mint copper coins, 30 Nov 1818, BA; Antonio Martínez order allowing José Antonio de la Garza to mint copper coins, 6 Dec 1818, BA. As yet, the only such coins recovered archaeologically date from 1817 and 1818; Casey Hanson and Maggie McClain, *Archaeological Investigations for the Main Plaza Redevelopment Project, San Antonio, Bexar County, Texas*, Texas Historical Commission (Austin: Atkins, 2016), pp. 192, 216, especially figure 142.

²⁶ For a discussion of commodity money, see, for example, Gary M. Walton and Hugh Rockoff, *History of the American Economy*, 13th edition (Boston: Cengage, 2018).

²⁷ Viceroy Revillagigedo to Governor Muñoz, 26 Sept 1792, BA.

²⁸ One example of pawning appears in *Causa criminal formada de oficio p[or] el Gobernador contra Prudencio Barron Vezino del Pres[idi]o de S[a]n Ant[oni]o de Bexar, y Villa de S[a]n Fern[an]do sobre la muerte violenta de Clemente Xavier Mendez*, 12 Mar 1775, BA. A dispute over pawned personal items that the lender sold to a third party before the borrower could redeem them escalated, with fatal results.

²⁹ Marie Francois, "Cloth and Silver: Pawning and Material Life in Mexico City at the Turn of the Nineteenth Century," *The Americas* 60, no. 3 (Jan. 2005), pp. 325-62.

social, or military networks – or to merchants, as describe above – for petty transactions to meet their immediate needs.

Closely related to the use of commodity money was barter, in which parties exchanged items that they agreed had equivalent value. Viceroy Revillagigedo observed that “sales and purchases are made by barter or exchange of one article for another, in such a manner that a poor man is compelled to make many exchanges in order to obtain whatever he needs.”³⁰ As a commonplace activity, barter was generally unrecorded, yet the ingenuity and number of transactions that might be required in order to obtain a desired item is in part borne out by the volume of exchanges memorialized in wills and testaments. Historians have used wills, including those from San Antonio, to describe the material world of colonial settlers, and to elucidate the control and distribution of assets, especially by women.³¹ In contrast, wills are used here to provide insight into the frontier exchange economy, including barter and the collection and payment of debt. Extant wills reflect only a small percentage of the thousands of people who lived in the province during the colonial period. Yet facing death, vecinos from all walks of life cited incomplete economic transactions in their wills and testaments, directing their executors to pay or to collect debts according to memory, promissory notes, or account books.

³⁰ El Conde de Revillagigedo to don Antonio Valdez, 27 March 1790, in Haggard, *Handbook for Translators*, pp. 88-94.

³¹ Several publications have used wills to explore the material world of the Spanish colonial period, and more particularly, women’s domestic and legal spheres. See, for example, Asunción Lavrin and Edith Couturier, “Dowries and Wills: A View of Women’s Socioeconomic Role in Colonial Guadalajara and Puebla, 1640-1790,” *Hispanic American Historical Review* 59, no. 2 (May 1979), pp. 280-304; Richard Eighme Ahlborn, “The Will of a New Mexico Woman in 1762,” *New Mexico Historical Review* 65, no. 3 (July 1990), pp. 319-55; Donna Pierce and Cordelia Thomas Snow, “A Harp For Playing,” in *El Camino Real de Tierra Adentro* Vol. 2, comps. Gabrielle G. Palmer and Stephen L. Fosberg, ed. June-el Piper (Santa Fe: Bureau of Land Management, 1999), pp. 71-86; Heather B. Trigg, *From Household to Empire: Society and Economy in Early Colonial New Mexico* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2005); Porter, *Their Lives, Their Wills*.

Of the eighty-four wills preserved in the Bexar County Archives (as well as additional wills in other collections), dating from 1740 to 1821, one third were written by women. Many of these women were widows, but all of them were aware of their legal rights and asserted control over their own property. For example, in 1802, Teresa Sáenz de Zavallos required that her husband, the presidio's master tailor Juan Antonio Romero, reimburse her heirs for the value of fourteen gold rings, a gold band set with emeralds, silver bracelets embossed with gold, and several other articles of hers – all of which he sold without her permission in order to gamble.³² María Antonia Ruiz, a wealthy widow originally from Querétaro, pardoned a debt owed by María Mangrucia, in addition to bequeathing her a portion of her house and a small supply of building materials.³³

The wills reflect a high frequency of barter among the residents, regardless of wealth. They include over a hundred examples of exchange not only in commodities, but also in shoes, clothing, weapons, tools, horse tack, utensils, and chocolate. While some transactions are difficult to categorize, a rough classification reveals that 14% of debts owed were to be repaid in livestock, 7% in goods, 4% in produce, 1% in labor or land, and 1% in goods or textiles. The remaining 73% of debts were specified in terms of *pesos* and *reales* owed.

Regardless of the medium of exchange, items were nearly always valued in terms of *pesos* and *reales*. This supports anthropologist David Graeber's argument that people engage in barter due to the scarcity or absence of cash, but that doing so

³² The property that women brought into their marriage was held separately from their husband's, or from the joint property of the marriage. Lavrin and Couturier, "Dowries and Wills," pp. 282-83.

³³ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Teresa Sáenz de Zavallos WE121 (1802); María Antonia Ruiz WE96 (1816).

necessitates a uniform system of credit. The use of currency as a unit of account both provides a standardized means of recording credit and debt, and ensures that relative values remain stable over time.³⁴ The terminology of *pesos* and *reales*, then, was the most straightforward method of accounting, and did not imply expectation of whether repayment would be in cash or in kind. Regardless of the amount of currency circulating in the province, the wills demonstrate that cash values for livestock, produce, labor, goods, and textiles were widely known and agreed on. The incomplete nature of transactions documented in wills imply a relationship of credit and debt, whether paid in kind or in cash. The itemizations of credit and debt in wills provide key information for understanding the development of the local economy, and the mechanisms and networks of trade through which it functioned.

The aggregate number of credits and debts in the group of eighty-four wills is 830. Parsing out the credit-debt transactions: one hundred (12%) were made by women; 695 (84%) by men; nineteen (2%) were institutional, involving either the military or a mission; and sixteen (2%) were not identifiable. The number of transactions, however, were unevenly distributed. Some people recorded no credit or debt. Many had only a few outstanding transactions to be resolved when they died. Thirteen people had ten or more transactions at the time of their death, with the highest numbering twenty-five.

³⁴ David Graeber, *Debt: The First 5,000 Years* (Brooklyn and London: Melville House, 2011), pp. 37-40, 48. This method of accounting is what Ross Frank discusses as “imaginary monies,” drawing on the contemporary observations of fray Atanasio Domínguez and fray Juan Agustín de Morfí; Ross Frank, *From Settler to Citizen: New Mexican Economic Development and the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), pp. 139-51.

Items that residents traded either in kind or for amounts or services calculated in currency included produce such as maize, beans, and flour; livestock, both tame and wild; skilled labor services such as rock carving, woodworking, blacksmithing, and tailoring; and a range of goods and materials, including tools, shoes, clothing, furniture, wood planks, horse tack, stonework, weapons, chocolate and wax. Sometimes, no actual amount was recorded, but instead an equivalent value was cited. For example, Domingo Delgado's 1772 will stated that Juan de la Masa owed him either the freight mule Delgado had loaned him, or its "value." Similarly, in 1804 Manuel Menchaca testified that the presidio's armorer "owes me a double-action pistol or its value." Such phrasing stands in contrast to the specific items and amounts that others owed. At times, the term "cash" (*en reales*) was specified, as when, for example, Manuel Menchaca stated that militia cadet Andres Farías of Laredo owed him thirty-five *pesos* cash and two horses; or when Joseph Padrón acknowledged that he owed José Antonio Bustillos a mule and fifteen *pesos* cash, "Cipriano's brother" sixteen *pesos* cash for helping move a herd of cattle, and five *pesos* cash to Mission Concepción. Juan José Ydalgo stated that the late Juan José Flores owed him seventy-five *pesos* in cash.³⁵

Although debts often passed to a family member after a death, death also offered the opportunity to forgive debts or preserve family honor. The phrasing of the wills on these matters is worth noting. For example, upon his death in 1800, Antonio Gil Ybarbo stated that in deference to his second wife's daughter, he had paid 3,271 *pesos* toward 5,420 *pesos* that her husband Juan Timoteo Barrera had embezzled from the tobacco

³⁵ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Domingo Delgado WE27 (1772); Manuel Menchaca WE72 (1804); Juan José Ydalgo WE120 (1801).

monopoly funds he collected.³⁶ Gil Ybarbo directed that the balance of the amount be paid from his estate, and that Barrera – who was reimbursing Gil Ybarbo in installments – must pay the balance to Gil Ybarbo’s heirs as he was able. The will stipulated that upon completion of payment, the heirs should regard the affair “as an incident that never happened.” Similarly, in 1812, retired military captain Francisco Amangual had been paying off his deceased son’s debt of more than 668 *pesos*, tactfully described in the will as “the shortage in his accounts for army equipment of which he was in charge.” Amangual’s will stated that as a result of these payments, any property that his son or his son’s heirs might otherwise have inherited had been exhausted. In contrast, Felipe de Jesús Flores, listed on the 1779 census as a *labrador* (farmer), hoped to be pardoned from his debt, stating in his will that he owed various debts in the city of Saltillo, “the amount of which I am uncertain; I am sure that there is not enough money to pay them; so I pray my creditors to absolve me of these debts and likewise any other creditors who might appear.” Joseph Curbelo relied on the honesty of those to whom he owed money, acknowledging that he owed each of his creditors “an amount that they know.” José Lorenzo de Villareal stated that Cayetano Cantú owed him thirty-one *pesos*, “of which there is no evidence except his word of honor as a man;” Juan Caso owed him twenty *pesos* under the same conditions. Villareal also forgave his brother-in-law Juan Cantú his 141-*peso* debt.³⁷

³⁶ See Antonio Gil Ybarbo Bond for Juan Timoteo Barrera, 26 May 1798; and Juan Ignacio de Arispe to Interim Governor don Juan Bautista Elguézabal, 8 Oct 1799, 22 Jan 1800.

³⁷ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Antonio Gil Ybarbo WE119 (1800); Francisco Amangual WE6 (1812); Joseph Padrón WE84 (1779); Felipe de Jesús Flores WE41 (1808); Joseph Curbelo WE17 (1767); José Lorenzo de Villareal WE116 (1810).

Many residents on the frontier had limited resources. Some had little beyond their own labor, or the products of their labor. Labor took the forms of skilled artisanship, various degrees of skilled or semi-skilled occupations, and unskilled work. Plots of land, sometimes together with irrigation water, farming implements, and draft animals, might be rented to others in return for improvements or a portion of the produce; the tenant exchanged labor for the use of land. There are several instances among the wills in which someone owed labor to another, such as building a fence, sewing clothing, or making furniture. Labor itself might be traded: the carpenter Juan Jupier noted in his will that he and the blacksmith Juan Leal had agreed to exchange work with one another. When the quarryman Joseph Padrón died in 1779, while supplying the stone for construction of the church at Mission San Juan Capistrano, he pledged that his heirs would complete the work, taking into account that the project had become more extensive than the original agreement. The mission had already paid 1,300 *pesos* worth of merchandise for his labor, but would owe more to his estate upon his heirs' completion of the work.³⁸ How they may have used such a large volume of goods – whether for trade or their own needs – is unknown.

While smaller transactions were often made on informal credit, larger transactions frequently employed *libranzas*, a type of monetary instrument secured by collateral property or a guarantor, that pledged to pay a specific amount of cash or goods within a defined period of time. *Libranzas* are rarely mentioned in wills, but ample evidence of the use of such instruments is found in unpaid debt cases, as well as

³⁸ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Domingo Delgado WE27 (1772); Pablo Flores WE40 (1797); Francisco Delgado WE26 (1764); Juan Jupier WE65 (1783); Juan Andrés Travieso WE109 (1783); and Joseph Padrón WE84 (1779).

in notarial records and mission account books that indicate *libranzas* were accepted in lieu of cash.³⁹ Local merchants or missions who made many such transactions entered them in their account books for future repayment. Evidence in the wills reveals that, in general, extensive debt and credit obligations were successfully met. When this was not the case, however, a lender could sue to collect the money owed. An examination of debt cases reflects broader regional economic ties than the primarily local exchanges recorded in wills.

Because debt cases were filed in the jurisdiction where the borrower resided, the twenty-nine debt cases identified in the Béxar Archives involved funds either flowing into, or already circulating within, the Presidio and Villa. Thirteen loans originated in either the Presidio or the Villa, while four loans originated in Saltillo, the closest regional market center to Texas. Six more originated in other Texas settlements (Los Adaes, Nacogdoches, La Bahía, and Presidio San Xavier), one in Louisiana, and the remaining three in the province of Coahuila. Regarding the borrowers themselves, sixteen resided in San Antonio, two in the missions there, six in the other Texas settlements, one in Louisiana, and two in Coahuila. Although the purpose of the loans was not always stated, fourteen were for mercantile goods in some form, five were related to military supplies, and ten were for unspecified personal loans. Keeping in mind that debt cases only represent loans that went into default, it can be assumed that a much higher number of loans were successfully repaid. None of the debt cases in the Béxar Archives involved women; only men were involved in litigated debt cases.

³⁹ Schuetz, "Indians of the San Antonio Missions," pp. 247-49; see also de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 135-36.

Women, however, played a significant role in both petty and large transactions, as evidenced in their wills.

The earliest debt case found in the Béxar Archives is from 1736, just five years after the crown established the Villa of San Fernando (San Antonio) with a group of Canary Island immigrants. Francisco Fernández de Rumayor was a merchant in Saltillo who served as an intermediary between merchant houses in Mexico City and military contractors for the northern presidios. In his 1736 lawsuit, he alleged that Fermín de Ybircú, cashier at the Presidio de Béxar, had only partially repaid a bond he pledged in 1731. In an apparent shuffling of accounts that reveals closely-connected supply chains among the frontier presidios, Ybircú settled the claim by using assets from the nearby presidios of La Bahía and San Juan Bautista del Rio Grande to pay off the balance for the presidio at Béxar.

Rumayor also made loans to at least three of the Isleño settlers in Béxar in 1733, just two years after their arrival in San Antonio. Because the Isleño settlers had been granted lots, houses, and irrigated agricultural land, they would have been reasonable credit risks from a merchant's point of view. Rumayor sought repayment for a series of *libranzas*: according to the 1736 filing, Martín Lorenzo de Armas owed 215 *pesos* on a bond for 315 *pesos*; Juan Curbelo had a balance of 93 *pesos* due on a bond for 301 *pesos*; and together, the two of them had a bond for 450 *pesos*, on which Lorenzo de Armas had paid 100 *pesos* and Curbelo 200 *pesos* through a third party, General Juan Antonio Bustillo. Another Isleño, Joseph Antonio Rodríguez, also had a debt to Rumayor, but the

amount was not specified in the document.⁴⁰ Although the documents offer no details regarding their purpose, the amounts, timing, and structure of the debts suggest that the men pooled their resources to purchase goods in Saltillo for resale to other settlers. This indicates that a few of the *vecinos* served the role of merchants for the community in the early years of the settlement. They accomplished this through mutual trust, creative financing, and the leverage of combined assets.

The outcome of Rumayor's legal claims was not indicated in the documents, but it may be presumed that he succeeded in recovering his funds. According to Juan Curbelo's will, for example, when he died in 1742, his only debt was 186 *pesos* to Ana María de Almandos, a wealthy land-owner in Saltillo. While there is no information about this debt, the connection may have been through Almandos' second husband, Prudencio Orobio y Basterra, a Saltillo merchant who was a former commander at Presidio La Bahía and former Texas governor. Beyond that, Curbelo apparently had little more than the *solar* (house lot) he was granted as a first settler, where he had built a house and grew corn and beans.⁴¹ In contrast, the much younger Martín Lorenzo de Armas developed considerably more wealth. When he died in 1769, he owned a stone house with its lot and irrigation water, a grant of farmland, a ranch known as San Antonio del Cibolo, numerous head of branded cattle and horses, other livestock, and

⁴⁰ *Legajo y Proceso de Littis Seguydo por D[o]n Fran[cis]co Fern[ande]z de Rumayor, recidente en la Villa del Saltillo, contra distintos Ynquilinos de esta Prov[inci]a de Thexas, que Se Sigio Antte Su Govern[ado]r D[o]n Manuel de Sandoval, y fenecio como de ellos constta en Diez dias del mes de Mayo de 1736, No 12, 11 April 1736, BA.*

⁴¹ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Juan Curbelo WE16 (1742); Leslie S. Offutt, *Saltillo 1770-1810: Town and Region in the Mexican North* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2001), pp. 102-3; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 3, *The Mission Era: The Missions at Work 1731-1761* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1938), p. 171. Although Curbelo may not have lived long enough to develop material wealth in his adopted homeland, his children would become prominent members of the community.

three pair of oxen. He owed no significant debt, indicating that he had made good on his payments to Rumayor.⁴²

Taking on debt may represent a lack of sufficient resources for a given goal, but it also reflects a degree of economic confidence. Rumayor's cases against residents of San Fernando show that in the earliest years of the villa, at least some of the settlers had sufficient faith in their economic security to take on significant debt, or else were not worried about the consequences if they defaulted. Debt cases are about the failure to pay, not the timely repayment of debt. It is difficult to say whether other settlers had purchased items on credit and subsequently met their obligations. If they had, then Rumayor's cases would represent the infrequent failure to clear a debt. Alternatively, these debtors might have been the only ones during the early years of the community willing to take on debt, only to discover that the risk was greater than they anticipated. It seems unlikely, however, that only a few residents took on debt and that none were then able to repay it.

After Rumayor's lawsuit, nearly two decades passed before any other cases for debt recovery appeared in the records. This may indicate an early period of growth, followed by a longer period of retrenchment; or that people made timely and successful repayments of their loans. Alternatively, it may be that the records are simply missing. Other settlers, having discovered that the missions already had a powerful grip on the local economy, may have been unwilling to borrow, although some accepted loans from the missions. In most of the subsequent debt cases dating from the 1750s, the borrower had a specified period of time in which to repay the loan – usually three years.

⁴² BCSA, Wills and Estates: Martín Lorenzo de Armas WE1 (1769).

Sometimes, the borrower made partial payments but failed to pay the entire balance. If any of the debt remained unpaid at the end of the three years, the creditor could sue to recover or refinance the funds. Only rarely was the guarantor obliged to cover the debt for which he stood surety. If a case reached that point, the debt was usually either paid by the borrower, refinanced, or the borrower's assets were liquidated to pay the loan.

Further evidence of economic ties among the frontier settlements in Texas and the interior regions of New Spain is found in local notarial recordings of powers of attorney. Mexico City – where the Royal Treasury was located – was the anchor for business, military, and ecclesiastical operations on the Texas frontier. Residents of San Antonio issued seventeen powers of attorney to people in Mexico City, five in the mining town of Boca de Leones (north of Monterrey), three in Saltillo, and one each in Guadalajara, Presidio Río Grande del Norte, and Presidio de los Adaes. Only one was given locally, by a gravely ill former parish priest to the current priest, in order to collect any salary or money due him and to compose his last will and testament.⁴³ Half of the people who assigned powers of attorney to others did so from two to five times, covering ongoing or recurring business activities. The powers of attorney were granted for the collection of salaries or debts, legal representation, the settling of business accounts, and the sale of property.⁴⁴ Soldiers also signed powers of attorney annually for the collection of their salaries. These instruments reveal that some residents of San Antonio maintained business or financial interests in the capital or in their communities of origin, promoting connections between frontier and interior economic life.

⁴³ Power of Attorney from Juan Resio de León to Juan Francisco de Espronseda, 22 Mar 1738, in Arocha *Protocolos*, Vol. 1 (1738-1746), BA.

⁴⁴ Arocha *Protocolos*, Vol. 1 (1738-1746) and Vol. 2 (1747-1749), BA.

As assets moved between different hands, they traced various networks within the military service; between the presidio and the villa; among kin, neighbors, and government and church officials; and between Texas and other provinces.⁴⁵ Military networks, for example, constituted an enduring part of the local economy throughout the colonial period. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, most crown and military officials expected to enhance their own wealth during their terms of office.⁴⁶ Joseph de Urrutia, who at the time of his death in 1741 had been captain of the Béxar Presidio for eight years, noted in his will that he had long-term accounts with the Mexico City merchant Juan de Angulo for troop supplies. Urrutia instructed his executors to compare the prices at which goods were normally sold in Mexico City with the amounts that Angulo charged him, before paying any balance due; if he had overcharged, they were to collect the difference. This may have been an effort to maximize the value of his estate, but his military trade was sufficiently lucrative that he was able to employ his son-in-law as cashier with an annual salary of five hundred *pesos*, plus food for his family. On Urrutia's death, his son Toribio became presidio captain and continued to provide supplies to the soldiers. The family's military network was extended through further generations when Toribio's nephew Luís Antonio Menchaca was promoted into the same position in 1763, upon Toribio's retirement. Luís Antonio's son José also became

⁴⁵ No such studies have been made for colonial Texas, but studies of other families and their economic networks along the northern frontier include Charles H. Harris, III, *A Mexican Family Empire: The Latifundio of the Sánchez Navarro Family, 1765-1867* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975); Offutt, *Saltillo 1770-1810*; Donald T. Garate, *Juan Bautista de Anza: Basque Explorer in the New World, 1693-1740* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 2005); and Louise Pubols, *Father of All: The de la Guerra Family, Power, and Patriarchy in Mexican California* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2009).

⁴⁶ One study of how such efforts led to excessive abuses of power, and subsequent removal from office, is Fay Jackson Smith, *Captain of the Phantom Presidio: A History of the Presidio of Fronteras, Sonora, New Spain 1686-1735, including the inspection by Brigadier Pedro de Rivera, 1726* (Spokane: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1993).

a presidio officer; another son, Luís Mariano, was a shopkeeper.⁴⁷ Other family members included Félix Menchaca, a rancher and trader who owed Governor Manuel Muñoz two thousand *pesos* when the latter died in 1799; and Manuel Menchaca, who died in 1804 with a lengthy list of military officers and soldiers – not only from San Antonio, but also from Laredo and Candela – owing him various amounts of money and goods.⁴⁸

Soldiers often traded among themselves, and sometimes even relied on their officers to collect their debts. José Matías de los Santos requested in his will that the commander or captain of the presidio collect eighty-six *pesos* owed him by various others. Francisco de los Santos Coy, who had retired from the presidio company, was owed money by nine people, including three officers and four soldiers. He himself owed sums to area merchants Antonio Baca and Benito Outón. Mariano Guerra owed Captain Juan Bautista Casas fifty *pesos* in 1809, as well as other amounts to local merchants Victor Blanco and Erasmo Segúin. That same year, José Pantaleón de la Garza died owing a bridle horse to the gun maker of Presidio La Bahía; two other soldiers respectively owed de la Garza a bridle horse and a halter horse. The retired military captain and former paymaster Francisco Amangual owed Saltillo merchant José Miguel Lobo Guerrero more than 378 *pesos*, due in two installments spaced six months apart.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ In 1780, José was transferred to the Company of Aguaverde in Coahuila, as punishment for his role (with his father) in contraband trade; he returned to the villa of San Fernando after his retirement. Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), p. 64; Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio*, pp. 103-4. The Menchacas' contraband trade is further discussed in Chapter 5, below.

⁴⁸ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Joseph de Urrutia WE114a (1740); Manuel Muñoz WE70 (1799); Manuel Menchaca WE72 (1804).

⁴⁹ BCSA, Wills and Estates: José Matias de los Santos WE104 (1799); Francisco de los Santos Coy WE19 (1802); Mariano Guerra WE47 (1809); José Pantaleón de la Garza WE48 (1809); Francisco Amangual WE6 (1812).

Government and church officials in Texas took part in providing supplies to both presidio soldiers and civilian settlers, sometimes indirectly.⁵⁰ Upon the 1743 death of Juan Leal Goras, one of the villa's founding settlers from the Canary Islands, a half dozen soldiers owed Leal sums ranging from twenty-five to more than one hundred forty *pesos*. In turn, Leal owed the provincial Governor Juan Antonio Bustillo y Ceballos three hundred fifty *pesos*, suggesting a series of trade networks. When Governor Manuel Muñoz died in office in 1799, the merchant and former presidio soldier Antonio Baca owed him an undisclosed amount for advances, indicating the governor was involved to some degree in trade and provisions for the presidio. José Lorenzo de Villarreal, chaplain of Presidio Béxar originally from Nuevo León, died in 1810: he had made various loans to officers and soldiers, and several large loans – between two hundred and six hundred *pesos* – to other residents in the villa. Nearly 3,600 *pesos* was owed to him at the time of his death. He also owed money to several local merchants, mentioning that one should credit him with twenty-five *pesos* for unfulfilled purchases to have been made in Saltillo. In addition, he had a trunk with some goods he had procured for his brother to sell in order to earn his living.⁵¹

The volume of credit and debt, and variety and extent of trade networks that can be gleaned from the documents reveal a robust local economy within the province, supplemented by a lively trade in goods imported from interregional markets. Beyond the limited local market, the closest regional opportunity for civilian ranchers to sell

⁵⁰ The Reglamento of 1729 specifically excluded governors from the purchase or issuing of supplies to troops, but the rule was not enforced. The ban was renewed in the Reglamento of 1772. Moorhead, *The Presidio*, pp. 42, 57.

⁵¹ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Juan Leal Goras WE44 (1743); Manuel Muñoz WE70 (1799); José Lorenzo de Villarreal WE116 (1810). Antonio Baca was a former cavalry soldier who became a merchant and provided food to Native Americans who visited the villa; see de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, p.132.

their products was the annual trade fair at Saltillo. The Saltillo trade fair linked San Antonio ranchers, farmers and merchants to the wider economy of New Spain, providing them a singular opportunity to sell their products and purchase goods from others within the region, and from merchants who traveled there from Mexico City. Texas governors and quartermasters also purchased supplies in Saltillo; after a subtreasury was established there in the 1790s, military payrolls were collected from this location. The origins of the trade fair were rooted in religious celebrations honoring St. James, the patron saint of Saltillo, whose feast day was July 25. By the eighteenth century, the fair was firmly established as a regional commercial market, and the fair itself was moved to late September – after harvests were in and the weather was more temperate. Ranchers in the San Antonio River valley who were able to obtain a license to export cattle completed their roundups in August to begin the weeks-long trek to Saltillo.⁵²

Despite its lure as a market, conditions of trade at the fair did not favor the Béxareños, as evidenced by some of the debts examined earlier in this chapter. Although Texas was exempt from the *alcabala*, an excise tax levied on exchanges and sales, its residents were required to pay it on the cattle, hides, jerked meat, tallow, and other products they sold in Saltillo. Cattle sales were also subject to the *diezmo* (tithe, or tax of one-tenth of cattle and agricultural output collected annually by the Crown for support of the church) and the *mesteña* tax (the tax paid per head of wild cattle

⁵² De la Teja, *Faces of Béxar*, pp. 79-89; Governor Domingo Cabello to Commandant General Teodoro de Croix, 12 July 1780, BA.

captured).⁵³ Furthermore, many transactions, especially larger purchases, were based on credit, which increased costs through interest charges. The price ratio between goods sold and supplies purchased for the year was such that some who incurred debts were unable to repay them, as was the case for Felipe de Jesús Flores, mentioned above. Despite such disadvantages, according to historian Jack Jackson, selling products in Saltillo represented “one of the few sources of income available” to the residents of San Antonio.⁵⁴

Jackson’s observation echoed that of Sandra Myres, whose brief overview of colonial Texas ranching practices noted that ranching provided “the only opportunity for economic growth immediately available” for Texas settlers because livestock – which was mostly feral – required little investment yet provided food, clothing, beasts of burden, wool, leather, and tallow.⁵⁵ As Jackson pointed out, however, there were significant obstacles to the development of civilian ranching in Texas. Decades of political conflict over land ownership and use between civilian (or secular) and mission ranches was fueled in large part by Crown officials because they generally favored mission ranch interests over secular ones. Ongoing cycles of hostile raids by Apache, Comanche, and other indigenous groups against ranches and those who worked on them also slowed its growth. It was not until the 1770s, with Bourbon policy focused on reducing Church power in favor of the Crown, that viceregal authorities ruled

⁵³ Frontier colonies were often exempt from taxation for renewable periods of time; see Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p. 299. On the *diezmo* and *mesteña* (or *orejano*) taxes, see Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 67, 228, 363; and Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, p. 288.

⁵⁴ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Felipe de Jesús Flores WE41 (1808); Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 130-31.

⁵⁵ Sandra L. Myres, *The Ranch in Spanish Texas 1691-1800*, Social Science Series no. 2 (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1969), p. 52. De la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 106-111, confirms that vecinos accessed cattle on a subsistence basis. Note that sheep did not become feral, but required constant care in order to survive. Outside of the missions, few people in Texas raised sheep during the eighteenth century, but by the 1810s some individuals owned flocks that numbered in the thousands.

against the San Antonio missions' petitions to be given full title to the ranchlands they claimed. Subsequently, some mission land was made available to vecinos to rent or as grants.⁵⁶

By that time, the San Antonio economy had diversified beyond ranching and agriculture, although these industries remained the foundation of local and regional trade. The remainder of this chapter will pay close attention to the years surrounding 1779, when the first available census was created that enumerated individual households, identified by the head of household's name and occupation, and measured wealth in terms of real property and livestock.⁵⁷ These years reflect a period of economic maturity, with new immigrants finding opportunities in the province alongside well-established military and civilian families who were by this time in their second or third generations. Military regulations had been updated, the line of the frontier reorganized, east Texas officially abandoned, and the provincial capital transferred from Los Adaes to Béxar. Native American populations in the missions had peaked and their residents were assimilating into the community, adding weight to new policies making mission resources available to the Hispanic population. These were all

⁵⁶ Neither Myers nor Jackson seems to have been aware of this shift in policy. My statement is based on don Vicente Alvarez Travieso, "Protest of don Vicente Alvarez Travieso and don Juan Andres Alvarez Travieso against Claims of the Missions of San Antonio to Lands," August 12, 1771 with further notes through 1783, Alvarez Travieso Papers, Box 2Q236, Barker Texas History Collection, Briscoe Center for American History (CAH), University of Texas, Austin.

⁵⁷ The census that accompanied Cabello's report is one of only two conducted in the province during the eighteenth century that enumerate inhabitants by household, occupation, real property, and livestock ownership. A similar census was carried out in 1777, but the detailed enumeration itself has not been located. Only summary tables of the data collected in each of the settlements in 1777 have been identified, and these lack sufficient detail for this discussion. See Samuel Abell and G. Douglas Inglis, "Of Documents and Archives: The First Modern Census of Texas," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 122, no. 2 (Oct. 2018), pp. 186, 193-97, 200. The 1779 census used herein is "Extracto de la Revista de Ynspección Egecutada por mi el Coron[e]l de Ynfanteria Don Domingo Cabello . . . , 1 July 1779, Ramo Audiencia de Guadalajara, legajo 283; microfilm print reproduced in Jesse O. Villarreal, Sr., *Tejano Patriots of the American Revolution 1776-1783*, ed. Judge Robert H. Thonoff (Austin: author's private publication, 2011), pp. 4-5, 84-101.

measures that were part of what were collectively known as Bourbon reforms, implemented across the northern frontier of New Spain beginning in the 1750s.⁵⁸

On July 6, 1779 – three days after completing a full census of the presidio troops of Béxar and civilian residents of the villa of San Fernando – Governor Domingo Cabello wrote that the agricultural potential of the land was not realized because of “the indolence and poverty of its inhabitants, who cannot afford what should be invested in cultivating the land,” adding further that the residents “neither plant nor work due to a lack of people and resources.” He urged his superiors to consider increasing the number of troops to protect the Spanish civilians from Comanche and Apache raids, and to allow two hundred Tlaxcalan families to emigrate to San Antonio from their settlement near Saltillo, in order to develop agricultural land.⁵⁹ Neither recommendation was implemented. Cabello ignored or did not understand the fact that, without a market for their produce, civilians had no reason to cultivate land beyond what was needed for their own subsistence.

When Governor Cabello characterized the 1779 residents of the presidio and villa as “indolent, neither planting nor working,” what were they actually doing? The occupations listed in the 1779 census, summarized in Table 1, below, refutes Cabello’s description and underscores his bias against the people he governed. Three hundred

⁵⁸ Moorhead, *The Presidio*; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*; Marion A. Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions: A History of San Antonio’s Five Old Missions* (Chicago: Franciscan Herald Press, 1968); Weber, *Bárbaros*.

⁵⁹ Villarreal, Sr., *Tejano Patriots*, pp. 84-101; the quotation cited is given in English on p. 4. The Tlaxcalan people allied with the Spaniards to defeat the Aztecs in the sixteenth century; since that time they had been accorded legal and economic privileges, and received additional benefits for helping establish settlements that extended Spanish rule northward. Several plans for them to populate Texas settlements were put forth throughout the eighteenth century, but none were carried out. Schuetz found only one Tlaxcalan, living at Mission San Antonio de Valero. See Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p. 345; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, p. 192; Schuetz, “Indians of the San Antonio Missions,” p. 53.

seventy-two households were enumerated, reflected in the column heading for households; the total of 498 workers referenced in the preceding column represents the sum of heads of households plus *sirvientes* and *criados* within the households.

Occupation	Number	% of 498 workers	% of 372 households
Sirviente (Servant)	106	21%	0%
Military Service	80	16%	22%
No occupation listed (including 54 female heads of households, of whom 52 were widowed)	70	14%	19%
Labrador (farmer, rancher)	69	14%	18%
Campista (field hand, shepherd)	69	14%	18%
Jornalero (day laborer, farm hand)	23	5%	6%
Criado (ransomed Indian captive)	17	3%	0%
Sastre (tailor)	12	2%	3%
Arriero (muleteer)	11	2%	3%
Comerciante (merchant)	8	2%	2%
Albañil (stone mason, master mason)	7	1%	2%
Carpintero (carpenter) ⁶⁰	7	1%	2%
Herrero (blacksmith)	3	0.6%	1%
Carretero (cart driver)	3	0.6%	1%
Platero (silversmith)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Adarguero (shield maker)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Barbero (barber)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Alfarero (potter)	1	0.2%	0.2%
de Pluma (public scribe)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Zapatero (shoemaker)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Cuere[?]ro (leather armor maker)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Panadero (baker)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Escultor (sculptor)	1	0.2%	0.2%
Minero (miner)	1	0.2%	0.2%
TOTALS⁶¹	495	98.20%	99.00%

Table 1: Occupations listed in the 1779 census for the Presidio de Béxar and the Villa of San Fernando.⁶²

Contrary to Cabello's remarks, the occupational categories of the 1779 census demonstrate that far more households were engaged in agricultural and ranching

⁶⁰ The 37-year-old gunsmith (*armero*) Francisco Orendain, enumerated with the Presidio troops, was the only military man listed with an additional occupation – carpenter. Rather than count him twice in the table, I have included him only with the military, as in the context of the census his occupation as a carpenter was considered secondary.

⁶¹ Due to fractional rounding, percentages do not total one hundred percent.

⁶² *Estado Gral de la Tropa de el Preso de Sⁿ Ant^o de Bexar y Vencind^o de la Villa de Sⁿ Fernando . . . en los Dias 1^o, 2^o, y 3^o del Mes de Julio de 1779*, in Villareal, *Tejano Patriots*, pp. 84-101.

activities than in any other occupation.⁶³ More than forty percent of total households grew agricultural produce or processed animal products including meat, hides, tallow, and wool as their principal livelihood. Among *vecinos*, or non-military households, the percentage is even higher: more than half were identified as *labradores*, *campistas*, or *jornaleros*. *Labradores* and *campistas* worked in agricultural fields or herding cattle or sheep, while *jornaleros* performed a variety of menial tasks as day laborers. These terms covered a wide socio-economic range. Many people who can be identified through other documents as ranch owners were listed on the census as *labradores*, yet other known ranch owners had no occupation listed on the census. Eighty percent of *labradores* owned both real property and livestock. In contrast, twenty-seven percent of *campistas* and nine percent of *jornaleros* held such assets. Some of the latter groups found ways to supplement their living. Such was the case with Joseph Manuel de Alcala, listed on the census as a *campista*. He sold bread door-to-door, making his rounds long before sunrise. Individual purchasers paid from one-half to four *reales* per day for his bread.⁶⁴ If he spent his days working in the fields, it seems likely that his wife was the bread baker, but there is no information concerning her. Their work was apparently unrelated to that of Tomás Rodríguez, who was the only baker listed on the census.

If any of the census figures bear out the grim evaluations of Béxar as an impoverished area, it is that nearly twenty-five percent of its workers were either servants or *criadores*. Servants were non-indigenous people living within a household,

⁶³ Notably absent from the roster of occupations in San Antonio is that of weaver. The crafts of carding, spinning and weaving were common in *vecino* communities in other frontier areas of New Spain. For example, *vecino* weaving formed an important part of New Mexico's export economy. Ross Frank notes that New Mexico's 1790 census listed thirty-eight carders, sixteen spinners, and ninety-seven weavers. See Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, pp. 153-56.

⁶⁴ *Sumaria del Rovo hecho a D[o]n Santhiago Villas[er]o*, 28 October 1774, BA.

who performed domestic labor or agricultural work. *Criados* were indigenous people – usually women or children – who had been captured by other tribes and sold (“ransomed”) to vecinos. They were distinct from slaves in that their servitude, although lengthy, was neither lifelong nor heritable.⁶⁵ None were heads of households: their numbers are subsumed within the Hispanic populations’ household. Their status was sufficiently common to warrant an accounting of their presence, which in turn indicates increased productivity in the household unit. Nearly one in five households included such aggregate members: the majority of households with servants or *criados* were those with significant holdings of land or livestock. This suggests that their labor was used more intensively in agriculture and ranching, since the householder had to feed and house these workers. If there were not sufficient work for them, they would be an economic drain on the household. Merchants, tailors, muleteers, carpenters, and other tradesmen also relied on servile labor.

Seventy people, or nearly twenty percent of heads of households, were enumerated without an occupation. These seventy people represent a wide range of ages, family size, and wealth as measured in real property and livestock. Among them were some of the wealthiest households in the villa. Luís Menchaca, the retired presidio captain, had by far the greatest material wealth in the community as measured in

⁶⁵ Porter, *Their Lives, Their Wills*, pp. 21, 59; Frank, *From Settler to Citizen*, pp. 15, 287. Although the enslavement of indigenous peoples had been outlawed in 1542, holding them in bondage in exchange for their ransom was a common practice well into the nineteenth century. It was justified by the argument that servitude in a “Christian” household was a debt of labor for the salvation of their souls. The term “*criado*” is derived from *criar* – to bring up or educate. For diplomatic and political functions of the trade in captives, see Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007); for their transcultural role in social and familial relationships, see James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002). Black slaves were unusual in colonial Texas; although fifteen *esclavos* were counted in the 1777 census for the San Antonio area, the 1779 census did not include this category.

livestock and real property. He counted ownership of 125 horses, 40 mules, 4 pair of oxen, 860 cattle, and over 1500 head of sheep or goats, and was unique in owning two houses. His household included four *sirvientes* and one *criado*. At the other end of the spectrum, twenty percent of those without a named occupation owned neither real property nor livestock. Yet the most interesting aspect of the entire group with no listed occupation is its gendered nature.

Fifty-four of the seventy households listed without occupation named a woman as the head of the household.⁶⁶ Fifty-two of the women were widowed: they represented thirteen percent of all households at the time the census was taken, suggesting the harsh toll of frontier life where both soldiers and vecinos were subject to what could be fatal raids by hostile tribes. The remaining two women were enumerated without marital status: thirty-year-old María Carabajal, of Béxar, who lived with five children under the age of fourteen in her household; and twenty-five-year-old Luiza Flores, of Los Adaes, who lived with a girl under the age of fourteen. Neither of the two owned property or livestock, and – given the absence of notation of marital status – may have borne these children out of wedlock, making them particularly marginalized and vulnerable. There is sufficient ambiguity in the construction of the census, however, that they simply might have been caring for orphaned younger siblings.

Although none of the fifty-four women were identified by occupation, fifteen of them owned sufficient numbers of livestock to suggest that in they made a living from them in some manner – perhaps either renting out their beasts of burden, or selling the

⁶⁶ Married women were never considered heads of household and were not listed by name on the census. Their existence can only be inferred from the marital status of the male head of household.

animals or their products. For example, the widowed twenty-four-year-old Gertrudis Fuentes owned twenty mules; she was the sole woman and one of only a handful of people who owned these valuable animals. It seems highly likely that she earned fees from their rental as pack animals. Eighteen women owned between one and four teams of oxen, commonly hired out to others for clearing land, plowing, or local haulage. Canary Island immigrants Leonor Delgado, fifty-four, and doña María Ana Curbelo, sixty-three, each ranked among the owners of the most cattle – with one hundred ninety and three hundred head, respectively. Sixty-seven-year-old doña Josefa Flores y Valdez, originally from Saltillo, was one of only six people in the community who owned sheep or goats (*ganado menor*), with thirty head. Women heads of households owned sixteen of the eighteen *casas* owned by people who were listed with no occupation.

Aside from the census, other evidence shows that some women worked outside of their immediate domestic spheres. Ana Santos, who died in 1778, included specific notations in her will that several people owed her goods ranging in value from six to twenty-two *pesos*, produced from materials she had supplied them.⁶⁷ In 1788, fray José Rafael Oliva, father president of the Texas missions, wrote that the missions hired “Spanish” (non-indigenous) women to wash and mend church linens, as well as to make biscuits for the missionaries.⁶⁸ María Gertrudis Ureña, whose deceased husband had left her with an infant but no resources, earned a living by her personal labor. The specific nature of her work, unfortunately, was not recorded. In 1810, she petitioned for half the title and rental income of a stone house that her husband had inherited from

⁶⁷ BCSA, Wills and Estates: Ana Santos, WE102 (1778).

⁶⁸ *Guidelines for a Texas Mission: Instructions for the Missionary of Mission Concepción in San Antonio*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1976), pp. 10, 36.

his father, but the income instead was going to her late husband's stepmother⁶⁹ – perhaps because she was elderly and without means of support. The legal conflict may reflect that they both endured extremely limited economic opportunities.

For the remainder of the population, in addition to military service, ranching, and agriculture, men engaged in a range of skilled and artisanal trades. Among those involved in commerce and transportation, nearly all were from other parts of New Spain or the Spanish empire. For example, all except one of the eight merchants listed on the census had moved to San Antonio from elsewhere. Two were from Corsica, three from Spain (León, Navarre, and Viscaya), one from the Canary Islands, and one from Saltillo.⁷⁰ While their number represents only a small percentage of the local population, their presence signals a broad opportunity for trade in the area. From at least the 1770s, merchants brought money and goods to the province, and their businesses prospered. As discussed above, however, other sources reveal that more local men than indicated on the census served as merchants in earlier years. Such was the case with don Luís Menchaca, don Tomás Travieso, and don Simón de Arocha, all of whom are listed on the census as *labradores*. They each owned a large ranch, but were also known as merchants within the community. These men combined their ranching and commercial interests, driving cattle to Saltillo and returning with merchandise for local sale.⁷¹

⁶⁹ BCSA, Wills and Estates, José Joaquín de la Garza, WE49 (1810).

⁷⁰ This pattern is somewhat more varied than the peninsular background of immigrant Spanish merchants in the interior; see D. W. Brading, *Miners and Merchants in Bourbon Mexico, 1763-1810* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 104-107.

⁷¹ *Estado Gral de la Tropa de el Preso de Sⁿ Ant^o de Bexar y Vencind^o de la Villa de Sⁿ Fernando . . . en los Dias 1^o, 2^o, y 3^o del Mes de Julio de 1779*, in Villareal, *Tejano Patriots*, pp. 84-101; de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, p. 115-16, 133.

The importation of goods likely, but not always, would have contracted mule convoys from the point of origin.⁷² As elsewhere in New Spain, muleteers (*arrieros*) were primarily involved in long-distance transport. There were few roads able to sustain carts, but mules were sure-footed and could carry heavy loads long distance over rough pathways. The presence of eleven muleteers in the villa suggests a steady flow of goods in and out of the area. Only one of the *arrieros* resident in San Antonio was born there; the others were from Charcas, Coahuila, Jalapa, Monterrey, San Luis Potosí, and Saltillo. It was not unusual for residents to take advantage of mule trains bringing supplies from the interior. Despite its seeming isolation, there was sufficient traffic between the frontier and interior that people were able to access goods to their specifications. In 1788, for example, fray José Rafael Oliva, a mission supernumerary, complained that many private individuals, from the local area as well as along the supply route, requested goods from the conductor of mission supplies. According to the conductor, it was necessary for him to leave the route many times in order to trade with these people. "This large number of requests and detentions burden the pack train," complained Oliva, "and although the missions do not require much, there is always a great supply brought in."⁷³

Muleteers combined smaller trains to make larger, better protected ones. They also took advantage of their work to offer their own lines of trade, facilitating the

⁷² One of the few descriptions of mule transport in New Spain during the eighteenth century is Clara Elena Suárez Argüello, *Camino real y carrera larga: La Arriería en la Nueva España durante el siglo XVIII* (México: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social, 1997), pp. 43-69. While focused on the transportation of tobacco for the tobacco monopoly, the study unfortunately does not extend to the frontier provinces, despite the presence of monopoly stores in these areas.

⁷³ Fray José Rafael Oliva, *Management of the Missions in Texas: Fr. José Rafael Oliva's Views Concerning the Problem of the Temporalities in 1788*, trans. fray Benedict Leutenegger, ed. fray Marion Habig (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1977), p. 49.

regional exchange of goods and produce. In 1788, for instance, Santiago de Zúñiga, a muleteer from Guadalajara, brought several loads of wheat flour from Parras to the Villa of San Fernando and the Béxar Presidio. His convoy included seventeen mules and two other muleteers. One of his buyers, Juan Barrera, issued him a *libranza* for one hundred pesos payable by Simón de Arocha. Arocha agreed to pay the *libranza* in cash from proceeds from his upcoming trip to the Saltillo fair. While Zúñiga patiently awaited payment, he made a trip to Coahuila to pick up and deliver additional supplies to San Fernando; during the return trip, he even encountered Arocha, who was traveling the same road in the opposite direction. As his wait stretched into months, Zúñiga gathered pecans and rented some milk cows to make and sell cheese. He finally asked Arocha to pay in cattle rather than cash, so that he might take the dried meat and tallow to sell elsewhere. Eventually, he sued Arocha for the debt.⁷⁴ Although he worked for someone in Guadalajara, Zúñiga seemed to have relative autonomy with regard to collecting, transporting and selling goods.

In contrast to the *arrieros*, cart drivers (*carreteros*) handled local transportation, likely using oxen as draft animals. Each of the three cart drivers listed their *patria* as Béxar. It is probable that most of them hauled rock, timber, and other materials to construction sites. They would have had steady business, as the number of masons, carpenters and blacksmiths listed on the census suggests ongoing construction. Several of the missions were engaged in building at this time. At least two of the masons listed on the census – Antonio Salazar, master architect, and Pedro Huizar, master sculptor –

⁷⁴ N[umer]o 165, Año de 88, Expediente promovido por Santiago de Zúñiga sobre cantidad de dinero que demanda contra D[on] Simon de Arocha . . . , 9 May 1788, BA.

worked on the construction of the church building at Mission San José in 1779.⁷⁵

Because of the size of that project, it seems likely that other local artisans were also hired there. The other missions would have needed stone workers, too, since their own labor pools were diminishing during the 1770s. There were relatively few stone homes in the villa when the census was taken, yet given the number of masons and carpenters, it may be that this period is when the villa's built environment began to further develop – the reason for this is discussed below in more detail. It certainly corresponded with a general period of sustained, if gradual, population growth.⁷⁶

San Antonio's frontier economy – well-established by 1779 – was sufficiently developed to attract skilled immigrants. The remaining occupations, from *adarguero* (leather shield-maker) to *zapatero* (shoemaker), were dominated by men born elsewhere in New Spain. For all of these skilled trades combined, only a few of their practitioners originated in Béxar. Moreover, half of the thirty-nine skilled tradesmen were described as Mulato, Mestizo, or Indio. Despite its many hardships, the San Antonio area attracted workers from throughout the interior of New Spain, offering new opportunities for people who may have lacked them as a result of racial stratification in their own birthplace (alternatively, military service may have brought them to the frontier, then once they returned to civilian life they remained in San

⁷⁵ Habig, *The Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 97-100; Mardith Schuetz, "Professional Artisans in the Hispanic Southwest," *The Americas* 40, no. 1 (Jul. 1983), pp. 31-32.

⁷⁶ Between 1770 and 1793, the population of Béxar doubled, from 860 to 1,600. Much of this growth was from migration, rather than natural increase. It should be noted that there was actually a slight decrease in population between 1778 and 1783; however, in the context of this discussion the broader trend is more relevant. Jesús F. de la Teja, "Land and Society in 18th Century San Antonio de Béxar: A community on New Spain's Northern Frontier" (PhD diss., University of Texas, 1988), pp. 75-89; Alicia V. Tjarks, "Comparative Demographic Analysis of Texas, 1777-1793," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Jan. 1974), p. 301. The difference between de la Teja's and Tjarks' figures for 1793 is likely due to the former's inclusion and the latter's omission of presidial families and the residents of secularized missions.

Antonio and practiced their trade). Although de la Teja pointed out that the immigration of skilled tradesmen can be seen as an absence of opportunity for local people to develop artisanal skills, it might better be understood as a reflection of the early stages of a growing economy with a shortage of skilled local laborers, as young men tended to continue their families' occupations.⁷⁷ The census figures bear this out: more than half of those born in San Antonio worked in agriculture and ranching. Just under one-third were in the military, while only nine percent entered skilled trades.

In fact, immigrants outnumbered locals in almost every occupation. Over half of the total number of households were headed by individuals from outside of the province. Thirty-six percent were born in San Antonio, and nine percent had relocated from Los Adaes when Crown officials abandoned that settlement in 1773. The only occupation in which the majority were from the Texas province was the military. Just one-third of the military comprised immigrants, chiefly from northern New Spain; the rest were from Béxar and Los Adaes. Immigrants formed a slight majority of *labradores*, *campistas*, and *jornaleros*, and a significant majority of all other occupations (*sirvientes* and *criados* are not included in these calculations).

Occupations represented more than categories of skill; to some extent, they were tied to material wealth, indicated in the census by ownership of real property and livestock. Because the 1779 census is the only available enumeration of household assets, in terms of real property and livestock, it offers a rough correlation between occupation and wealth. Yet the census is difficult to interpret in this way for several reasons. As previously discussed, a significant number of households – many of them

⁷⁷ De la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, pp. 125, 137; Jackson, *Los Mesteños*. pp. 52-53.

headed by women – did not have an occupation listed. It can also be problematic to assess the meaning of the categories of real property employed in the census. Some of the terminology differed from local usage and therefore appears to encompass a wide range of properties.

For example, the census category *bienes raices* (real estate) was subdivided into structures: *casas* (houses) and *jacales* (huts); and land: *pedazos de tierra* (pieces of land) and *huertas* (gardens or yards). A *casa* usually would have been solidly constructed of stone or adobe brick. A *jacal* generally would be a less substantial or poorly built structure, often of vertical posts and adobe, but sometimes of stone or adobe brick. A *jacal* might serve as a dwelling, a kitchen, or an auxiliary space such as a workshop. The classification of real property included terminology for divisions of land that were not used locally. The census term “*pedazo de tierra*,” for example, is only rarely used in local documents. In one instance it indicated four square leagues of ranchland, in another it referred to a garden plot that measured sixteen by twenty-seven and a half *varas*.⁷⁸ Because many more people are listed on the census as holding one or more *pedazos de tierra* than actually had ranches, the term as employed on the census apparently indicated any piece of land regardless of size or use. Most likely it also included the locally-used term *solar*, or house site. The term *huerta* on the census may have been equivalent to the locally-used *labor*, or agricultural field.⁷⁹

⁷⁸ Ignacio Calvillo to governor of Texas, 17 May 1778, “*un pedazo de tierra donde mantener mi ganado*,” Texas General Land Office, Spanish Archives (GLOSA), Volume 50, p. 187; Bexar County Deed Records, Book G1, pp. 1-3 [grant to Pedro Charlí, 25 May 1785 and petition of María Estrada, his widow, 24-25 April 1793].

⁷⁹ The terms *solar* and *labor* are used in local wills, land grants, deeds, and recordings of sales. With the two exceptions indicated above, the term *pedazo de tierra* is not used in these documents to describe any parcel of land, while the term *huerta* is used specifically for a plot containing fruit trees or a kitchen

The other census category pertaining to material wealth was *ganados* (livestock). This was subdivided into *ganado mayor* (large animals, such as horses and cattle), and *ganado menor* (small livestock, such as sheep and goats). Included in *ganado mayor* were *yeguas* (mares), *caballos* (stallions), *mulas* (mules), *yuntas* (pairs of oxen), *bacas de biente* (milk cows), *toros y novillos* (bulls and young bulls), *burros* (small male donkeys), and *burras* (jennys, or small female donkeys). *Ganado menor* comprised a single category of *obexas y cabras* (sheep and goats). Because the method of the census enumeration is not known, it is unclear whether livestock counted on the census included animals on outlying ranches, or only those kept near the villa. Any animals listed would have been branded. Unbranded and feral cattle, however, were routinely rounded up for slaughter and processing; in this sense, more people had access to such resources than the census indicates. Burros were extremely rare in San Antonio; in fact, only three households owned any, and these owners were all part of the extended Menchaca family. Given the Menchacas' involvement in both legal and contraband trade (discussed in a later chapter), it may be speculated that they used burros as more nimble pack animals than mules, to carry goods through back country areas in order to avoid patrols on the primary routes between settlements.

A curious aspect of the census is that the number of families is nearly double the number of dwellings counted. Approximately half of the households are listed as having neither a *casa* nor a *jacal*. It is highly unlikely that they lived without shelter, yet there is an insufficient number of dwellings counted on the census to suppose that they were renting from other people. To some extent, the difference can be explained by the

garden. The 1731 distribution of land to the Canary Island settlers was done in terms of *solares* (house lots) and *suertes* (farming lots).

division between the military and civilian populations. Military households accounted for 22% of the population, 19% of the *casas*, and 21% of the *jacales* (the first sergeant owned one *casa* and four *jacales*); but slightly more than half of military households had neither type of dwelling. Instead, they would have lived either in barracks – one room per family or per small group of single men – or in houses they did not own, situated in the presidio compound.

The solutions to the apparent housing shortage for vecinos are both straightforward and unexpected. The straightforward reason is that multiple families lived on a given property. While there is little documentation for this, one important piece of evidence is found in the investigation in 1814 of an attack on the ranch of Ignacio Calvillo, located on the San Antonio River about thirty miles south of the villa. Piecing together the testimony reveals that the ranch had a central cluster of five houses arranged around a central patio, several out buildings, and at least two agricultural fields. At the time of the raid, there were twelve adults and nineteen children residing in the ranch houses, six *labradores* who occupied the fields, and at least five visitors staying among the various households. The residents included the extended Calvillo family, servants and their families, and a number of others whose relationships are unclear. In this single example, one property housed at least seven, and perhaps as many as twelve, families.⁸⁰

More unexpectedly, there is strong evidence that at least some of the growing vecino population found homes in unoccupied dwellings in the missions beginning in the 1770s. First, the missions had excess housing capacity. The indigenous populations

⁸⁰ *Sumaria Ynformacion formada a los Paysanos que havitaban en el Rancho de los Calbillos*, 15 Apr 1814, BA.

in the San Antonio missions peaked in the 1750s, then fell steadily through the remainder of the colonial era. As discussed in the previous chapter, the idea of the “decline” of the missions was based on this decrease in resident Indian populations. By the 1770s, the falling number of indigenous mission residents was the combined result of cultural assimilation, intermarriage, and a lack of autonomous Native American groups willing to enter the missions. Mission mortality rates had stabilized and become comparable to those of other population groups. Christianized Native Americans left the missions to live and work in the larger community. Mardith Schuetz profiled a number of families that resulted from intermarriage, tracing their genealogy through sacramental records. The 1779 census, however, provides insufficient information to ascertain which families may have included residents from the missions, as racial information (“*calidad*”) is recorded only for the head of the household.⁸¹

Second, as mission populations dwindled, the missionaries invited Hispanic vecinos to work and live in the missions. Such practices began in Nueva Viscaya in the 1750s, where according to Susan Deeds, “vecinos began renting [mission] pueblo properties . . . and gradually they established themselves on a permanent basis.”⁸² In 1767, as Bourbon officials began to reverse centuries of Hapsburg policies that required the separation of indigenous mission and Spanish communities,⁸³ the Viceroy, the Marqués de Croix informed the Apostolic College of Querétaro that “under no

⁸¹ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 4, *The Mission Era: The Passing of the Missions* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1939), p. 344; Schuetz, “Indians of the San Antonio Missions,” pp. 173-76, 181, 312-17; Tjarks, “Demographic Analysis,” pp. 317, 337. The physical deterioration of mission structures occurred decades later, as the result of a combination of factors that affected the missions, villa and the broader area.

⁸² Susan Deeds, “Rendering Unto Caesar: The Secularization of Jesuit Mission in Mid-Eighteenth Century Durango” (PhD diss., University of Arizona, 1981), pp. 98-99.

⁸³ The *República de indios* and *República de españoles*; the latter comprised of non-indigenous peoples, including Blacks and mixed-race *castas*.

circumstances are [mission] Indians [*indios*] to be deprived of civil intercourse, communication, commerce, or residence with Spaniards . . .”⁸⁴ The San Antonio missions had always employed vecinos to assist in specific mission operations. The earliest record identified that acknowledges a broader opening of opportunity for vecinos on mission lands, however, is Mission Espada’s deed of one *sitio* of its original *ejido*, or royal grant, to José Miguel Serna. This was an astonishing twenty-five percent of its lands, given in partial payment for his work as mayordomo in the mission during the 1760s and ‘70s. Another document appeared the following year, with Vicente Travieso’s 1771 protest against the missions’ claims to agricultural lands near the villa. Needing land to farm, Travieso rented (or sharecropped) irrigated fields from one of the missions (not specified in the document), stating that “[w]e see ourselves forced to work in the farms of the fathers for half the crop in order to maintain ourselves.”⁸⁵ Had the mission population remained stable or increased, these lands would not have been available to the non-mission community.

The replacement of indigenous mission labor with vecino labor was commonplace by the 1780s, and served to maintain the missions’ economic productivity as their labor pools shrank. Fray José Rafael Oliva starkly outlined the situation at the missions: “the decreasing numbers of the Indians increase the number of salaried workers.” He noted specifically that Mission San Antonio de Valero’s farmstead (*hacienda*) “daily supports 23 salaried servants.” Fray José María García discussed the necessity of hiring vecino staff (*sirvientes españoles*) at Mission

⁸⁴ Quoted in John L. Kessell, *Friars, Soldiers, and Reformers: Hispanic Arizona and the Sonora Mission Frontier, 1767-1856* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1976), p. 17 fn.6.

⁸⁵ GLOSA, Box 121, fd. 24: Luís Pérez, 21 Sept 1779; Travieso, "Protest of Don Vicente Alvarez Travieso . . .," August 12, 1771, Box 2Q236, p. 4, Barker Collection, CAH.

Concepción in the 1780s, and of ensuring they had the supplies they needed for their work. Also describing Mission Valero, the father president of the Texas missions, fray José Francisco López, wrote in 1792 that most of the generation that had currently come of age were “children of marriages between Indians and [non-Indian] women . . . It can therefore be inferred that this mission cannot be called a mission of Indians but a gathering of [Spanish] people.” Such statements reflect years of intermarriage and culture shift in mission families. Historian Gilberto Hinojosa concluded that by the end of the eighteenth century, “the once-Indian pueblos came to resemble Hispanic villas in practically everything save legal status.”⁸⁶ This describes the successful completion of the missions’ intended life cycles. When mission lands were distributed among residents during the initial *doctrina* phase in the 1790s, a number of Native American families from the larger community returned to claim the dwellings and lands to which they were entitled.

The most convincing evidence for vecino habitation in the missions during the 1770s is from Mission Espada. In December, 1777, fray Juan Agustín de Morfi recorded the population there as forty vecinos and 133 indigenous residents. Within a few years of this visit, the mission expanded the walls enclosing its extended pueblo, and built a series of rooms along the new walls. In contrast to the older, single-room dwellings for indigenous mission residents – which continued to be occupied – the new structures

⁸⁶ Fray José Rafael Oliva, “The Problem of the Temporalities” and “Letter to the Superiors of the College of Zacatecas, from San José Mission,” in *Fray José Rafael Oliva’s Views concerning the Problem of the Temporalities in 1788*, trans. Fr. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., introduction and notes by Fr. Marion A. Habig, O.F.M. (San Antonio: Old Spanish Missions Historical Research Library at San José Mission, 1977), pp. 28, 49-50; *Guidelines for a Texas Mission*, pp. 31-32; [fray José Francisco López], “Report on the San Antonio Missions in 1792,” trans. Benedict Leutenegger, O.F.M., with introduction and notes by Marion A. Habig, O.F.M., *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 7, no. 4 (April 1974), p. 490; Gilberto Hinojosa, “The Goals of the Friars,” in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, eds. Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. 80.

consisted of a large principal room with an attached, smaller kitchen room. The alterations in size and design indicate that the new occupants at the mission had different lifestyles or expectations for domestic architectural space than the usual cohort of indigenous inhabitants. These changes were part of a broader pattern of construction modifications among the San Antonio missions after 1772 that abandoned original plans for large enclosed complexes and instead focused on the completion of more modest church and *convento* buildings. Such changes responded to shifts in Bourbon policy that – as part of a broad effort to reduce the power of the church – pushed missions to make their resources available for secular use, and embraced construction of dwellings for non-indigenous residents.⁸⁷

A few Hispanic individuals enumerated on the 1779 census can be verified to have lived at the missions when the census was conducted. The Apostolic College in Zacatecas hired Antonio Salazar in 1767 (from his hometown of Zacatecas) to work as the master architect for the construction of the church at Mission San José. Salazar also worked on structures at Mission San Juan Capistrano, Mission San Francisco de Espada, and Espada's Rancho de las Cabras. Schuetz cites a series of sacramental documents

⁸⁷ Juan Agustín de Morfi, *Diario y derrotero (1777-1781)*, ed. Eugenio del Hoyo y Malcolm D. McLean (Monterrey: Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores, 1967), p. 98; *idem*, *Viaje de Indios y Diario del Nuevo México*, con una introducción biobibliográfica y acotaciones por Vito Alessio Robles (México: Antigua Librería Robredo de José Potrúa e Hijos, 1935), pp. 225-28. Although Morfi visited the other four missions in the area, he did not provide their population figures, noting only that San Antonio de Valero was in poor condition because so few Native American converts lived there. The analysis of construction modifications is based on James E. Ivey, "By Order of the Commandant General': Eighteenth Century Bourbon Reforms and the Architecture of Mission San Francisco de la Espada, San Antonio, Texas" (PhD diss., University of New Mexico, 2022) and includes unpublished field notes of archaeological excavations and the following documents and publications: Fray José Francisco López, *Razon e Ynforme que el Padre Presidente de la Misiones de la Provincia de Texas, o Nuevas Filipinas, remite al Yll[ustrissi]ma S[eñ]or D[on] Fr[ay] Rafael José Verger, del consejo de S[u] M[agestad] Obispo del Nuevo Reyno de Leon*, 5 May 1786, ff5v-6r, photostat, Barker Texas History Collection, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas, Austin; José Antonio Saucedo, *Abaluo de las casas y muralla de la Mision de S[a]n Francisco de la Espada*, 12 Feb 1824, BCSA, Mission Records no. 64, 2; Works Progress Administration Historic American Buildings Survey, Mission San Francisco de la Espada, TEX320 Sheet 1, 1937.

that place him continuously in residence at Mission San José from 1779 through 1794 (whether he lived there earlier cannot be verified because San José's sacramental books prior to 1779 were destroyed during the political uprisings in the 1810s). The census lists his only real property as a *jacal*, which would likely have served as a workshop. Pedro Huizar (spelled Guizar on the census) was a master mason who also lived at Mission San José. He is listed on the census as an *escultor* (sculptor) from Aguas Calientes, who arrived in the B́exar area in the early 1770s. Originally a carpenter, Huizar's skills are reflected in his intricate baroque detailing on the sculptures, rose window, façade, doors and retablos at Mission San José. The census shows that he owned no real property. Pedro de los Angeles Charlí (listed as Pedro Carlos de los Angeles on the census) was a carpenter originally from France, who immigrated to Texas from Louisiana in the 1750s. He lived and worked at Mission San Antonio de Valero, where in 1785, father president fray José Francisco López granted him a tract of land with a two-room stone house and a *jacal* that served as his carpentry shop. The 1779 census does not list real property for his household.⁸⁸

Although this sample is small, it demonstrates the plausibility that some households enumerated as part of the *vecindario* of the villa lived in housing at the missions. The mission records of daily and monthly expenditures, that would have included a list of these people, have yet to be located or identified. The manner and sequence in which the census was conducted are unknown. If enumerators had traveled door-to-door for the household survey, one might expect the information on the census to reflect spatial relationships between households. On the other hand, if

⁸⁸ Schuetz, "Professional Artisans," pp. 31-32, 35; Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio*, p. 255; Bexar County Deed Records, Book G1, pp. 1-3.

heads of households reported their information at a central location, the listing order would be arbitrary.⁸⁹ Either approach would have been effective in compiling the census, but without knowing which was used it is impossible to determine who or how many of the vecinos may have resided at the missions. The probability that some of them did so can help account for at least a portion of the housing insufficiency reflected in the property holdings listed at the villa.

One other factor that contributed to the shortage of housing was the Crown's abandonment in 1773 of east Texas, when the entire population of Los Adaes was relocated to San Antonio. This was part of the Bourbon policies that reorganized the entire northern frontier in order to streamline its administrative and military operations. In defiance of Crown policy, many but not all of the Adaeseños returned to east Texas the following year, as will be discussed in Chapter 5. Those who remained in San Antonio were offered lodging and work at the missions, assisting in the temporal productions.

The economic opportunities and activities outlined in this and the previous chapter fell within legal rules governing trade. The commercial and business ties between San Antonio and the interior followed Crown policies that required trade to remain within Spanish territory, and were subject to the payment of specific taxes. Although barter was a ubiquitous means of exchange, it was infrequently recorded, as were the many petty transactions that allowed people to meet their daily needs. Yet sufficient documentation is available to contradict long-held views of the Texas frontier as an economic backwater. San Antonio had enough economic pull to attract many

⁸⁹ Abell and Inglis, "The First Modern Census of Texas," pp. 185-91.

immigrants, who found a variety of means to make a living. The local population increased only gradually during the eighteenth century, but growth put pressure on housing. Residents responded to housing shortages in creative ways, helping to push Crown policies in new directions. This chapter has discussed San Antonio's strong economic ties with the interior. The following chapters will explore how the settlements in east Texas followed a very different trajectory, relying on extralegal and inter-imperial trade for their very existence.

Chapter 4
“We should provide for their relief,
or they would turn to the French”:¹
Institutional Contraband in East Texas

The Spanish settlements in east Texas followed a distinctly different economic trajectory than those in San Antonio. Neither missionary intent nor military force played a meaningful role at the east Texas crossroads of Caddoan, French, and Spanish territories. The sedentary Caddoans, long established and powerful in the area, rejected Spanish evangelical outreach, but allowed French and Spanish settlements on their periphery for access to trade in firearms, munitions, and manufactured goods. The French supplied this market through their settlement at Natchitoches. The situation presented the Spaniards with a conundrum: obstruction of French trade into Texas and other northern provinces was one of the primary reasons for establishing the missions and presidios of east Texas, yet from the beginning these institutions relied on French and indigenous trade themselves for survival. In spite of its illicit nature, extralegal trade was not just a bureaucratic strategy, it was an integral part of Texas-Louisiana frontier existence. This chapter will explore the ways that Church and military officials in this remote corner of the Spanish empire respectively interpreted Crown policies to their own advantage, developing economic practices that profoundly affected the region's fate.

¹ “...*que diese providencias para su consuelo pues de lo contrarios ocurririan a Nachitos.*” Governor Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui, decree, 29 Oct 1755, f21v, describing his meeting with a delegation of Caddoans and Bidais who requested trade with the Spaniards, in Certified copy of proceedings by Martos y Navarrete, 22 Jan 1761, Bexar Archives (BA). “Nachitos” is a Spanish variant spelling of Natchitoches, the French fort and supply depot. The word is here translated to refer to French traders based there.

Throughout the eighteenth century, Spain's colonial economic policies were based on measures to limit and control trade with foreigners, to supply the colonies through established monopolies in a limited number of designated ports, and to maximize revenues to the Crown. Crown policies regulating trade ignored the difficulties that colonists on the Texas frontier had in complying with the law. Officially, Texas was supplied with goods purchased in Mexico City or Saltillo, and transported overland by pack mules with a military escort. The distance between Mexico City and Saltillo is over 500 miles; to San Antonio it is nearly 900 miles; and to Los Adaes about 1,200 miles.

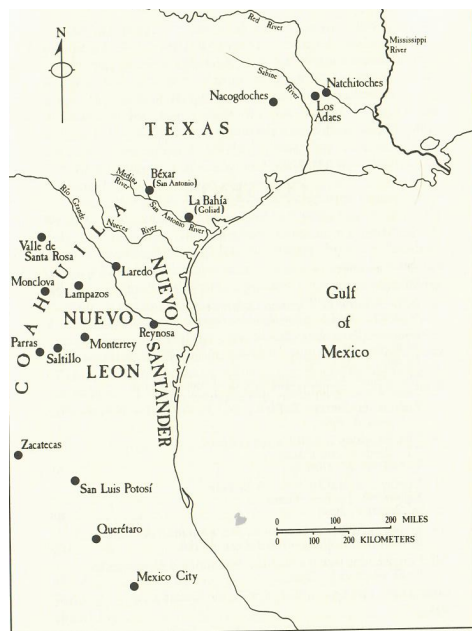


Figure 1: Location of Spanish settlements.²

Supply convoys from the interior to east Texas could take three to six months, or even longer, to arrive. By this time, goods were often spoiled or damaged beyond use. Seasonal flooding, and the potential for attack by hostile indigenous groups complicated

² From *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth-Century San Antonio*, ed. Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto Hinojosa (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1991), p. viii.

the transport of goods across these distances. In comparison, Los Adaes was twelve miles, or less than a day's ride, from Natchitoches; and only 350 miles from New Orleans. The entire distance between Natchitoches and New Orleans was navigable by river, and French goods were transported over water at comparatively little expense and risk. The geographic proximity of the Spanish and French populations in Texas and Louisiana, respectively; spatial and logistical challenges to legitimate trade; and a vigorous regional trade among autonomous indigenous groups and French and British traders combined to draw the Spanish settlers of east Texas into its orbit.

Natchitoches was the center of a dynamic French and indigenous regional economy, and sat on the edge of the broader southern Plains trading networks supplied by French and British traders. It was far cheaper in time and expenses for Spaniards in east Texas to trade with the French than to negotiate the obstacles to legal trade with the interior. The Spanish Crown decreed trading outside of the colonies illegal, yet without commerce with French Louisiana, the east Texas settlements could not survive, much less thrive. From the 1720s into the 1740s, the viceroy periodically issued narrow waivers of law that permitted limited trade for basic food items between Spanish residents of Los Adaes and French residents of Natchitoches. The waivers excluded other merchandise, but this limitation was generally ignored.³ These exceptions to interimperial trade provided east Texas officials a means of shaping

³ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Spanish Colonial History and Administration*, rev. ed. (New York: Russell & Russell, Inc., 1962), pp. 38-39. Trade with Louisiana was prohibited by law when it was under French rule, and this restriction continued even after it came under Spanish domain in 1763. The Spanish Crown also aimed to prevent trade in firearms and ammunition to indigenous peoples, as those could empower them against Spanish authority.

Crown policy to local needs, and to establish the informal trade so necessary for this frontier area.

Officials in east Texas engaged in illicit trade in different contexts. Broadly, missionaries tended to engage in petty exchange transactions with their indigenous and French neighbors, using gifts and trade to build relationships, encourage religious conversion, and supplement their own limited needs. Unlike their counterparts in San Antonio, east Texas missions did not attract indigenous converts. Lacking a labor pool for communal production, they added little beyond their own stipends to the local economy – instead, they sought to use their resources as a means to meet their ends. Similarly, east Texas presidios did not provide a market for local civilian production of produce and livestock.⁴ Instead, governors carried out large-scale exchange between indigenous communities in Texas and French merchants in Louisiana, using trade to create and maintain political alliances while at the same time enriching themselves. Their oversight of supplies for the presidial soldiers and families served as a cover for trading in a much larger extralegal regional market.

As trade grew over the years, frontier exchange incorporated Spanish east Texas into French Louisiana's developing trans-Atlantic economy, in which European manufactured goods were shipped to New Orleans, then redistributed through

⁴ In contrast, David Weber argued generally that the presidio became the dominant frontier institution during the eighteenth century, and historians have widely seen it in a mutually supportive economic relationship with neighboring civilian communities; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North American* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), p. 212. The most detailed discussion of this relationship is Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), pp. 222-42. In a different context, the long-term presence of the U.S. military in the Ohio Valley during the 1780s created lasting bonds between local economies and the national government; see William H. Bermann, "A 'Commercial View of This Unfortunate War': Economic Roots of an American National State in the Ohio Valley, 1775-1795," *Early American Studies* 6 (Spring 2008): 137-164.

intermediaries to indigenous villages. The goods were exchanged for hides, a valuable commodity shipped to Europe for a variety of purposes. This alternative economic network stood in sharp contrast to the officially-sanctioned Spanish Texas trade in which imports were restricted to New Spain's ports of Veracruz and Acapulco, then transported to Mexico City for redistribution overland via Saltillo to Texas. Extralegal trade materially supported the missions and presidios; it also served a diplomatic role in maintaining peaceful relations with many of the autonomous indigenous groups in the area. In effect, the east Texas borderland offered an environment where an informal economy came to flourish in spite of broader state efforts to suppress it. The regular trafficking of illicit goods distinguished east Texas from the rest of the province. Ultimately, contraband trade fractured and then remade the local Spanish community.

MISSIONARIES

One late November afternoon, in the year 1766, fray Francisco Zedano, father conductor of the Texas missions, and his entourage had just settled in at a stopping place near a Bidai encampment. Midway between Mission Dolores de los Ais in east Texas and Mission Espiritu Santo near the central Texas coast, they had stopped to prepare their meal when a small group of soldiers from Presidio Los Adaes approached. Greeting them, fray Zedano invited them to dismount and share the food. The sergeant declined, stating that it was getting late and their only purpose was to inspect the cargo in the group's possession. They had an order to do so from the governor himself. Fray Zedano requested his assistants to unpack the cargo, whereupon the soldiers seized it as contraband. The inventory included over thirteen hundred pounds of tobacco; such textiles as velvet, fine linens, and calico; thirty-eight dozen trade rings; three pounds of

trade beads; and a small barrel of aguardiente. Seven mules bearing the brand of Mission Dolores had carried the load from the trading post at Natchitoches. France had recently ceded Louisiana to Spain, but trade between it and Texas remained forbidden. The soldiers escorted the confiscated goods and mules back to Los Adaes, where the merchandise was valued at over five hundred pesos; the mules, at twenty pesos each, totaled an additional one hundred forty pesos.⁵ That Franciscans were engaged in trade across the border of east Texas into Louisiana is an unrecognized dimension of their economic networks.

The missions of east Texas are considered failures by Franciscan standards: they existed in the midst of large indigenous populations for nearly six decades, but were never able to attract more than a few residents nor to effect religious conversions. In contrast to the missions of San Antonio, without residents the east Texas missions had no labor pool to produce surplus goods and enable their temporal self-sufficiency. Historians have understood these facts as a measure of the missions' shortcomings and the reasons for their ineffectiveness. Although they lacked the profitability of their counterparts in San Antonio, trade with Louisiana and with neighboring indigenous groups was a factor that allowed the east Texas missions to be economic actors that contributed resources to and participated in the local and regional economy. In this overlooked context, it is fruitful not only to re-evaluate the role and function of missions in east Texas, but also to examine the legality of their trade activities.

Franciscans sporadically established missions in east Texas among various Caddoan groups between 1690 and 1716. These groups included the Adaes, Ais, Hainai

⁵ *Dilixencias Practicados por el Governador de Texas sobre la aprehension de los generos de contrabando que en allas se expresan, Año de 1766, 19 Nov to 4 Dec 1766, BA*

(also known as Tejas), Nacogdoche, and Nasoni. Caddoan culture had developed in the area over a millennium, taking advantage of regionally complex ecological systems. Spread throughout a large area that is today encompassed by parts of Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma, Caddoan groups had abundant food resources, stable villages, and strong political alliances. After the arrival of Europeans in North America, however, Caddoan lives were disrupted first by epidemic diseases, then by increasing raids by Osage tribes armed with British guns. During the eighteenth century, Caddoan societies experienced profound demographic and political changes as a result of these developments. Their need for firearms in particular prompted the Caddoans' desire for new trade relations. Consequently, they invited both French and Spaniards into their territories for political and economic reasons.⁶

In response to Caddoan overtures, the Spanish crown established two missions among the Hasinai in 1690. One, El Santísimo Nombre de María, was destroyed by a flood in 1692. The following year, angered by the missions' lack of trade and military support, as well as a fatal epidemic of smallpox that spread through their villages, the disillusioned Caddoans expelled the Spaniards from their territory, forcing them to abandon San Francisco de los Tejas – the second mission. With their focus on creating a defensive line against French incursions and influence in the area, the Spaniards had failed to understand that Caddoan peoples were interested in trade and military alliances in order to protect themselves from new enemies encroaching on their

⁶ Perttula, "The Prehistoric and Caddoan Archeology of the Northeastern Texas Piney Woods," in Perttula, *Prehistory of Texas*, pp. 370-72; Foster, *Spanish Expeditions*, p. 210; Martha McCollough, "Political Decentralization as a Strategy to Maintain Sovereignty: An Example from the Hasinai During the 1700s," *Plains Anthropologist* 46:177 (August 2001), pp. 305-22; and Daniel Hickerson, "Historical Processes, Epidemic Disease, and the Formation of the Hasinai Confederacy," *Ethnohistory* 44:1 (Winter 1997), pp. 31-52.

territory. In the early eighteenth century, France began to develop the colony of Louisiana to extend trade along the Mississippi River from Canada to the Gulf of Mexico. The French found ready trading partners with Caddoan groups, among many others. Firearms and ammunition formed a significant part of this trade. The Spaniards who engaged in similar trade did so outside the rule of Spanish law.⁷

In 1712, France ceded commercial control of the Louisiana territory to private individuals who planned to make it economically viable by developing a trans-Atlantic import-export trade based on the exchange of European manufactured goods for hides, fur, and other provisions. They established the port and capital of New Orleans, as well as several trading posts and villages along the Red River and its tributaries. To counteract French influence, Spain returned to the area in 1716 and established six missions and two presidios (the Franciscan apostolic colleges of Querétaro and Zacatecas each sponsored three missions). Four of the missions and one presidio were built among Hasinai communities, several leagues distant from the 1690 mission sites. The other two missions, respectively, were placed farther east in the independent Caddoan groups of Adaes and Ais, together with the second presidio.⁸

By this time, however, the Caddoans were firmly allied through trade with the French settlements that the Spaniards opposed. Events in Europe soon disrupted frontier life as the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-1720) pitted France, Austria, Holland, and England against Spanish aggression in Italy. The ripple effect of this war came to east Texas in 1719, when a small group of French soldiers took over Mission

⁷ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, pp. 154, 160-63; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 2, pp. 1-3.

⁸ H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2008), pp. 4-10; Quirarte, *The Art and Architecture of the Texas Missions*, pp. 199-200.

San Miguel de los Adaes. In the resulting confusion, the Spaniards abandoned all of the missions and presidios in east Texas. They returned in 1721, after the war's end, to resettle these establishments, with military fanfare and gifts to the populace within each of the villages near where the missions stood. In addition, the governor recognized local leaders with elegant uniforms and silver-capped batons to signify their authority. Presidio Los Adaes, located just twelve miles west of the French fort and settlement of Natchitoches, was made capital of the province and the governor's new home base.⁹

The Spanish settlements, however, remained under-resourced, and the ensuing years were difficult for the missions and presidios in east Texas. Illness was rampant, crops failed from drought, and they had difficulty securing adequate supplies and provisions from either San Antonio or the Río Grande. In 1729, following an administrative review, the viceroy abolished Presidio de los Tejas and reduced the garrison at Presidio Los Adaes by forty percent, from one hundred soldiers to sixty. The three Querétaran missions (San Francisco de los Tejas, San José de los Nazonis, and Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción) were moved to the Colorado River in central Texas in 1730, then moved again the following year to the San Antonio River where they were renamed and became part of the group of five missions discussed in Chapter 2. The remaining three Zacatecan missions (Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais, San Miguel de Cuellar de los Adaes, and Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches) continued in operation in east Texas until their suppression in 1773. Faced with the need for military defense of its northeastern frontier, Spanish officials

⁹ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, pp. 165-68; Habig, *Alamo Chain*, pp. 120-24, 158, 200.

had instead sent missionaries and then trimmed costs. The result – as David Weber observed – was to combine “strategic and religious objectives in a way that achieved neither.”¹⁰

Contemporary accounts repeatedly cite the missions’ lack of baptisms other than *in articulo mortis*. Few indigenous people entered the missions in east Texas, for the simple reason that the missions had nothing to offer them materially or spiritually. Although Spanish experience with some indigenous cultures found that the deathbed conversion of a village leader could result in mass conversion of the community,¹¹ this was not the case among Caddoan peoples. Undeterred by their neighbors’ lack of interest, by 1724 the three missions among the Hasinai had replaced temporary churches and dwellings with timber structures, yet they failed to attract indigenous residents to the missions. The missionaries instead spent their time learning local languages and dialects, and visiting the dispersed Caddoan farmsteads and settlements (rancherías) in an effort to convince their inhabitants to congregate at the mission. During the 1716 expedition to re-establish the east Texas missions, Captain Domingo Ramón had singled out the Nazoni village where they built Mission San José. He wrote warmly of the Nazoni peoples’ good character and observed that they were “glad to teach their language and especially to those of the mission.” While challenged by geographic distance, as villages periodically relocated from one place to another to allow fields to fallow, missionaries continued their efforts to sustain relationships

¹⁰ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 2, p. 175; Jack Jackson, ed., *Imaginary Kingdom: Texas as seen by the Rivera and Rubí Military Expeditions, 1727 and 1767* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1995), pp. 12-14, 61; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, p. 153.

¹¹ See, for example, John E. Worth, *Timucuan Chiefdoms of Spanish Florida* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1998), Vol. 1, p. 60.

through various forms of contact and economic exchange throughout the existence of the missions.¹²

In a 1744 report, Texas Governor Tomás Phelipe de Winthuisen noted that none of the three missions in east Texas had indigenous residents, concluding that “since every effort that has been made to this end has failed, it is now considered an impossible undertaking.” Later officials also acknowledged that the Caddoans had no incentive to alter their lifestyle and enter the missions. Traveling through the area in 1767, the Marqués de Rubí noted that the Hasinai “possess adequate granaries and fields of corn, beans, squash, watermelons, and nuts by which they live as rationally as the converted Indians.” Rubí affirmed that for nearly a half century, the missionaries in east Texas had “little more to do than baptize a few of the dying,” and asserted that none of the three missions had any results to show for their work. Only a single Native American resided at Mission Dolores de los Ais, he wrote, yet the two missionaries there “hid themselves upon our arrival . . . so we went on a short distance” to camp. Whether the missionaries deliberately avoided Rubí and his inspection party, or simply happened to be elsewhere at the time is a matter of conjecture.¹³

Even without indigenous residents, the missionaries had their own temporal needs to address. Yet documents barely hint at their daily activities. Upon their resettlement in 1721, fray Isidro Félix de Espinosa wrote that, “no oxen or any other livestock or implements were furnished to the missions.” Over the years, however, the missions gradually accumulated surplus food and livestock. Fray Gaspar de Solís, who

¹² Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 2, pp. 203-206; quotation in Habig, *Alamo Chain*, pp. 156-57.

¹³ “[S]ince every effort” in Winthuisen to Viceroy Cebrián y Agustín, 10 Aug 1744, BA; Jackson, *Imaginary Kingdom*, pp. 126-28, 130, 196: “possess adequate granaries” p. 126, “had little more to do” p. 127, “hid themselves” p.128.

visited Mission Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches in 1767, listed eighty sheep and goats, twenty-five horses, twenty mules, fifty cattle, thirty oxen, and two droves of mares with their stallions. There were agricultural implements and a granary, indicating the storage of dried foods, most likely maize and beans. Describing Mission Dolores de los Ais, Solís observed that although “poor in temporal goods,” the mission had a garden and orchard with onions, garlic, cabbage, lettuce, many types of green vegetables, peaches, figs, and native fruits. Due to the lack of irrigation, the crops depended on hand watering and rainfall. The mission had a few horses, fifteen to twenty mules, ten to twelve cows, ten to twelve bulls, and twenty oxen. The number of oxen in particular at each of these missions suggests the capability of extensive agricultural work. As for San Miguel de los Adaes, it had neither agricultural fields nor pasturage. Its location next to Presidio de los Adaes, and the fact that its missionaries served the spiritual needs of the military and civilian residents there, indicates that they likely were able to obtain food locally through purchase or trade.¹⁴

Between caring for their gardens, orchards, fields, and livestock, the missionaries at Dolores and Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches would have been steadily occupied. Yet they were not alone in their endeavors. In 1727, Pedro de Rivera found that soldiers from Presidio Los Adaes assisted the three missions in their jurisdiction with subsistence agriculture and other work, while those from Presidio Dolores worked at the other three missions “because the missions lacked Indians.” Forty years later, still without Native American residents or congregants, the three remaining missions in

¹⁴ “[N]o oxen” in Habig, *Alamo Chain*, p. 201; fray Gaspar José de Solís, “Diary of a Visit of Inspection of the Texas Missions Made by fray Gaspar José de Solís in the Year 1767-68,” trans. Margaret Kenney Kress, intro. Mattie Austin Hatcher, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (July 1931), pp. 65-69.

east Texas continued to find access to other sources of labor. Nicolás de Lafora, the engineer who accompanied the Marqués de Rubí expedition to east Texas in 1767, noted that Mission Dolores had in residence two missionaries, a lay brother, and two soldiers with their families. Similarly, Lafora described Mission Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches as having a missionary, two soldiers with their families, and “several servants for the farming.” At the same time, Solís related that, aside from the soldiers’ quarters, other good houses stood at a distance from the priest’s house. These structures may have been dwellings for hired workers.¹⁵

The east Texas missionaries used gifts and trade as a hopeful strategy for evangelization. Their spiritual realm was of no interest to potential indigenous converts, but earthly goods were an incentive to visit. The missionaries recognized the importance of trade in establishing and maintaining peaceful relations with the peoples in whose territories they resided. While documents are largely silent on the issue of the missionaries’ lives in east Texas, the archeological record provides richer detail of their temporal existence and demonstrates that intercultural trade offered a means of drawing the area’s inhabitants to the mission sites. Of the six east Texas missions, archaeological studies have been published for two: Mission Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de los Hainais (near present-day Douglass, Texas) and Mission Nuestra Señora de Dolores de los Ais (near San Augustine, Texas). The locations of Mission San Miguel de los Adaes (near Robeline, Louisiana) and Mission San José de los Nazonis (northwest of Nacogdoches, Texas) have been established through

¹⁵ *Pedro de Rivera and the Military Regulations for Northern New Spain 1724-1779: A Documentary History of His Frontier Inspection and the Reglamento de 1729*, comp. and ed. Thomas H. Naylor and Charles W. Polzer, S.J. (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1988), pp. 83, 85, 158; Solís, “Diary of a Visit of Inspection,” p. 67.

archaeology, although no reports have yet been published. None of the several sites of San Francisco de los Tejas have been located, nor has Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, which is assumed to lie beneath present-day downtown Nacogdoches, Texas.¹⁶

The scope of artifacts excavated from the site of Mission Concepción suggests that it served as a local economic hub where Spaniards, French, and indigenous peoples met to exchange manufactured goods and firearms for products of the hunt and the field. During its brief existence from 1716 to 1730, Mission Concepción apparently hosted ceremonial and trading activities, despite lacking influence to attract indigenous converts. The mission's location near a principal Hasinai village put it at a trading crossroads not only among indigenous groups, but also with French traders: the remains of a probable French trading site were located not far from the mission site. Among Mission Concepción's archaeological artifacts is a high number of both Spanish and French firearms parts – more than at Presidio Los Adaes, Mission San José, or Mission Dolores. These firearms were commonly associated with hunting, and would have been used by Spaniards at the nearby presidio and by their indigenous neighbors. The assemblage of ceramics excavated from the site was entirely indigenous utility wares from the village, used for food storage, cooking, and eating. This seems

¹⁶ Morris K. Jackson, Tom Middlebrook, George Avery, Harry Shafer, and Barbara Meissner, *Trade and Cultural Interaction Along El Camino Real de los Tejas During the Spanish Colonial and Republic Periods in Nacogdoches County, Texas*, Vol. 1 (Nacogdoches, Nine Flags Museum, 2012) p. 192. Remains of Mission Concepción's compound and some associated non-mission structures have been identified, respectively, at the Ben Gallant Farm and Gallant Falls sites.

consistent with Espinosa's complaint regarding the lack of supplies from the interior, and the fact that the provisions they received were from the nearby Caddoan villages.¹⁷

The ceramic artifacts excavated at Mission Dolores show a similar disproportion of indigenous utility wares over European ceramics. These artifacts reflect trade and cultural interaction within and, in some cases, beyond the Caddoan area. Most have been identified as produced by Adais, Ais, Nadaco, and Nacogdoche groups, within whose territories the mission was situated. Some of the objects are indigenous-made vessels influenced by European forms – in particular, shapes with either rimmed edges or footed bases. Such wares are market driven, produced to meet specific consumer preferences expressed through trade interactions over a sustained period of time. Outside the immediate mission compound, the presence of an unusually large amount of French-imported faience earthenware again indicates the presence of a French trader's residence just beyond the mission walls. Other utilitarian and trade articles included Chinese porcelain, English creamware and salt-glazed stoneware, glass trade beads, amulets, knife fragments, gun parts, gun flints, bridle pieces, and jingles fashioned from a salvaged copper chocolate pot. As at Mission Concepción, this is strong evidence that intercultural exchange regularly occurred at Mission Dolores.¹⁸

Trade at and near the missions supplemented the meager provisions and supplies shipped from the interior. Despite early difficulties with supply lines, the missionaries' stipends, together with the kind of additional financial support discussed in the previous chapter on the San Antonio missions, were annually converted to goods

¹⁷ Jackson et al., *Trade and Cultural Interaction*, pp. 151-168, 181, 207, 1006-7; Habig, *Alamo Chain*, 120-21.

¹⁸ James E. Corbin, et al., *Mission Dolores de los Ais*, Papers in Anthropology, 1 (Nacogdoches: Stephen F. Austin State University, 1980), pp. 210-16.

and delivered to east Texas. In turn, the missionaries would have distributed the items among the local indigenous populations, both to show their good will and to encourage them to move into the mission. The Texas governor also took part in providing diplomatic gifts to tribes in the area. In one such instance in 1731, Governor Bustillo y Ceballos reported that the 1729 removal of the three Querétaran missions from east Texas had left the local tribes unhappy. After meeting with Nabedache, Neche, and Hasinai leaders, he provided them with gifts of “cloth, beads, knives, and tobacco.” The items likely represented a symbolic effort to fill the void left by the departed missionaries.¹⁹ These gifts were similar to those listed at Mission Dolores in 1757, when fray José Francisco Caro reported that he had on hand, among other goods, three tercios²⁰ of tobacco and five dozen knives. Governor Bustillo’s efforts can be seen as an attempt to maintain relationships among those groups who had invited them into their territory. Gifting continued to play a fundamental role in Spanish relations with indigenous groups; as one of many later examples, the Marqués de Rubí wrote during his inspection of the Texas frontier that an autonomous band of Taovaya “were given on my behalf the accustomed gifts (which are indispensable) of vermillion, cloth, personal adornments, two horses, and baubles of little value, for which Captain Eyasiguichi showed himself to be very satisfied.”²¹

¹⁹ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 2, pp. 263-64.

²⁰ A tercio is one-half of a *carga*, or approximately seventy-five pounds. One *carga* (or two tercios) is one mule load, and weighs just over three hundred pounds. Barnes, Naylor, and Polzer, *Northern New Spain*, p. 73.

²¹ Perttula, *“The Caddo Nation”: Archaeological and Ethnohistoric Perspectives* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), pp. 207-13; quotation in Jackson, *Imaginary Kingdom*, p. 128.

In 1760, Louisiana Governor Louis Billouart, Chevalier de Kerlérec informed Texas Governor Martos y Navarrete that the missionaries in east Texas²² had daily trade with Natchitoches groups in Louisiana, and had an open and well-known trade with the Hasinai, Nadacotes (Anadarko), and Nacodoces (Nacogdoche). Their purchases, he said, were “*al precio de dinero*,” (at cash price), implying that even had they paid in commodities, they likely paid at a lower rate than the commodities were otherwise valued. Furthermore, according to Kerlérec, the scope of the missionaries’ trade ensured that goods circulated not only among “neutral” indigenous groups (*Indios neutrales*), but also among those that had recently become rivals or enemies of the Spaniards (“*vuestros nuevos contrarios*”) – most likely Wichita-speaking groups who had joined their Comanche allies to attack the Apaches at Mission San Saba in 1758. Kerlérec went on to list some of the many allied tribes (“*y una infinidad de otros sus Aliados*”) with whom the newly rebelling groups communicated, implying that these broader trade networks were so extensive as to render insignificant any infractions of trade regulations that either the French or the Spaniards might commit.²³

Kerlérec made these statements in a tense political atmosphere, against the backdrop of strained relations between Spain and France, before the two countries renewed the Family Compact during the Seven Years’ War. Martos had recently accused the French officer and trader Louis de St. Denis of attempting to provoke several coastal and inland groups – Deadoses, Akokisas, and Bidais – to revolt against the Spaniards and destroy Presidio de los Adaes in retribution for their having

²² Kerlérec refers to the missionaries at Nuestra Señora de los Dolores de los Ais, Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe de los Nacogdoches, and – farther south, recently constructed near the mouth of the Trinity River – Nuestra Señora de la Luz del Orcoquisac.

²³ Kerlérec to Martos y Navarrete, 13 Mar 1760, BA.

imprisoned the French trader Joseph Blancpain, who had worked among the central coast groups along the Trinity River for over twenty years.²⁴ In response, insulted by the accusation that an officer he held in high esteem would behave in such a manner, Kerlérec had turned the issue not just against the missionaries, but also targeted Martos's predecessor, Governor Jacinto de Barrios. According to Kerlérec, Barrios was deeply involved in trade with a number of tribes in the area, but had provoked their ire with his business disputes.²⁵

Kerlérec's contemporary allegations supplement archaeological evidence of trade and confirm that the east Texas missions had spent decades expanding their economic network to include trade relationships with autonomous indigenous groups. It is significant that he mentioned the involvement of the coastal mission of Orcoquisac. Like the three remaining east Texas missions, it was administered by the apostolic college in Zacatecas. As previously discussed concerning the missions in San Antonio, the apostolic colleges supplemented the Crown's financial support of the missions with funds from their benefactors. The missions and presidio in San Antonio were established in order to facilitate provisioning the missions and presidios in east Texas. Although no documents are currently available to verify the supplies that were sent to east Texas, the San Antonio mission account books confirm their own annual convoys. Based on this, it can be reasonably supposed that supplies were then successfully

²⁴ St. Denis was the son of Louis Juchereau de St. Denis (1674-1744), who established trade with the Caddoans and Spaniards of east Texas. Both men were held in high political esteem among the Caddoan peoples. For more on this extraordinary family, see David La Vere, "Between Kinship and Capitalism: French and Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian Trade," *The Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 2 (May 1998), pp. 197-218; and Patricia R. Lemée, "Tios and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (January 1998), pp. 340-58. The arrest of Joseph Blancpain is discussed below in this chapter.

²⁵ Kerlérec to Martos y Navarrete, 13 Mar 1760, BA.

relayed to the east Texas and coastal missions, as well. Each missionary's stipend of 450 pesos was paid in kind; with six missionaries, the east Texas missions would have yearly imported and distributed several thousand pesos worth of goods to surrounding tribes. While undoubtedly small in comparison with merchant traders, Kerlérec described the missions' trade as extensive. Nevertheless, the distribution of gifts and opportunities for exchange had both material and symbolic value in maintaining peaceful relationship between the Spaniards and the indigenous peoples in whose territories they resided.

It does not seem unusual that the Zacatecan missions would pool their resources to their mutual benefit. But the case of the conductor and procurator fray Francisco Zedano, described above, further broadens our understanding of the scope of the east Texas missionaries' activities. The goods that Zedano conveyed from a French merchant in Natchitoches were "gifts" from the Zacatecan mission Dolores de los Aix to the Querétaran mission Espiritu Santo, southwest of Orcoquisac near the Gulf coast. The missionary at Dolores, fray Francisco Xavier de la Concepción Boseta, testified that the tobacco was to be used "for the purpose of gathering" indigenous people into Mission Espiritu Santo. He also stated that the velvet fabric and trim – appraised at nearly two hundred pesos – were for a vestment for that mission. Fray Bernardo de Silva and fray Ygnacio Maria Lava, the missionaries at San Miguel de Cuellar, testified that Boseta had long wished to send tobacco to the indigenous residents of Espiritu Santo. The Natchitoches merchant Jean Piseros certified that he had given the tobacco

on credit to fray Boseta for that purpose.²⁶ Here, then, is a rarely documented instance in which the missions under one apostolic college assisted that from another college. The colleges governed their respective missions separately, administratively and financially, yet the missions acted in tandem to secure goods for the purpose of evangelization. At least in this instance, goods did not simply remain with local missions, or missions under the same apostolic college, but rather circulated throughout the Texas missions network as a whole.

Given the long history of mission trade with Native Americans and with French merchants in the area, it is curious that the case against fray Zedano is the only official interdiction identified. The confiscation of Zedano's goods may have been the by-product of a complex political feud between Governor Ángel de Martos y Navarrete and the Franciscan missionaries in Texas.²⁷ This idea is supported by the fact that Governor Martos forwarded the proceedings of the Zedano case to the viceroy, yet there is no record of whether the former sold the goods in the presidio store for the benefit of the Crown, as he stated he would, or of how the latter disposed of the case. Although by this time Louisiana was under Spanish sovereignty, trade between the two provinces remained prohibited. Nonetheless, the missionaries openly procured goods from there to gift or trade to those they wished to attract to the Texas missions. Indeed, all of the

²⁶ *Dilixencias Practicados por el Governador de Texas sobre la aprehension de los generos de contrabando que en allas se expresan, Año de 1766*, 19 Nov to 4 Dec 1766, BA.

²⁷ The dispute centered on administrative authority over Presidio San Agustín de Ahumada, near the Gulf coast. It started in 1763 when the presidio captain complained directly to the viceroy that Martos neglected to adequately supply it. The viceroy placed the presidio under an officer who answered to him directly. When most of the soldiers deserted, Martos ordered troops to arrest the commanding officer. In the process, they burned the presidio and in 1767 Martos was charged with the crime and summoned to Mexico for trial. The missionaries had sided with the presidio commander during the conflict, as he had secured valuable provisions on their behalf. See Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1970) pp. 364-72.

goods can be understood as either standard gift or trade items for indigenous exchange, or – as with the velvet fabric and trim – for the mission’s ceremonial use. It should be noted that Native Americans living within a mission were exempt from taxes, including tributes to the Crown and tithes to the bishop.²⁸ Fray Zedano and the east Texas missionaries therefore tested the limits of crown policy on illicit trade by acting as though this exemption extended to their provisions, as well – regardless of the source or place of procurement.

As it happened, the year after Zedano’s goods were confiscated, the *Colegio* in Zacatecas sent fray Gaspar José de Solís on a tour to inspect its missions in Texas and assess not only every aspect of mission life, but also the need for the missions themselves. Journeying through east Texas, Solís noted trade among local indigenous groups, French, and Spaniards. He described missions San Miguel and Dolores as deteriorated both materially and spiritually, without any indigenous residents. San Miguel, he wrote, had “only an abundance of [*aguardiente*] with which they are provided by the French at Nachitos [Natchitoches] seven leagues from here.” He described Mission Guadalupe favorably, but fumed at being stranded there for more than two weeks, waiting in vain for a military escort for his return trip. Eventually, he departed with a non-military convoy, an experience that enabled him to witness the kind of informal exchange that underpinned the frontier economy of east Texas. En route through the Bidai nation, “a great crowd . . . came out to trade. They had a lot of venison, buffalo meat, and other things” to trade to the vecinos. Sixteen days later, as they approached the Guadalupe River, Solís’s pleasure in at last being met by an officer

²⁸ Matson and Fontana, *Friar Bringas Reports to the King*, pp. 14-15.

and ten soldiers from Presidio La Bahía quickly evaporated when he realized that, rather than arriving as his military escort, they had been sent to search the group for French contraband. The routine nature of this action reflected the pervasiveness of smuggling in the region.²⁹

Other missions also took advantage of situational developments to supplement their supplies, and even to act as stores for local residents. Testimony regarding the 1771 shipwreck of an English schooner along the coast near the mouth of the Nueces River, near present-day Corpus Cristi, reveals some of these practices. The survivors – four English crew members, a merchant from Philadelphia, and three enslaved Blacks – were taken to Presidio La Bahía, where they lodged for several months in the home of master blacksmith Vicente Ramírez. During that time, fray Zertuche of the nearby Mission Rosario purchased from the merchant one of the slaves and two hogsheads of rum, for ten pesos, five cows, and four fanegas of corn. The English men paid Ramírez for their lodging with rum, a handsaw, a branding iron, and the ten pesos from Zertuche's purchase. Ramírez used some of the cash to purchase from Mission Rosario a blanket, two pounds of chocolate, some candy, a hat, some paper, and two pairs of shoes. The English men also traveled to San Antonio, where one crew member sold a slave to Governor Ripperdá for fifty-seven pesos, and purchased twenty-five head of cattle and some horses; and the merchant purchased thirty head of cattle and seventy horses.³⁰

²⁹ Foster, *Spanish Expeditions*, 197-200; Solís diary, p. 66, 71 (quotations), 72.

³⁰ *Papeles Correspondientes a la Goleta Inglesa llamada Two Friands, que significa Dos Amigos ...*, 22 Oct 1771, BA.

GOVERNORS

Franciscan missionaries in Texas, with their individual vows of poverty, engaged in temporal activities to offer material benefits to potential converts. Governors, on the other hand, sought personal wealth through their office. The office of provincial governor was an attractive post to military officers and career bureaucrats from Spain because it provided the opportunity for personal profit through a monopoly over the sale of provisions and equipment to the presidial soldiers and their families, as well as to other settlers in the province.³¹ The minimum at stake was what they might skim off the soldiers' annual salaries – at Los Adaes, collectively worth an average of 45,950 pesos per year from its founding in 1721 until 1729; after the 1729 reduction in troops and salaries, the collective worth dropped to an average of 30,080 pesos per year from 1730 until 1772.³² By inflating the costs of goods and transportation, exploiting the labor of soldiers, and trading in markets beyond the Hispanic community, Texas governors up until the 1770s found sufficient economic compensation off the record to outweigh the rigors of their posting.

The use of administrative offices for self-enrichment in New Spain had roots in the late sixteenth century. Office holders used their position and influence for profit, while giving the appearance of upholding and enforcing Crown regulations on trade and the payment of taxes. Corruption in this manner initially stemmed from the Hapsburg practice of selling bureaucratic positions with the implicit understanding that self-

³¹ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 8-9; Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, pp. 137-38; Gerhard, *North Frontier*, p. 15.

³² I have calculated these averages based on the number of years for which there is information. The amounts of total annual salaries are found in José Manuel Serrano Álvarez and Allan J. Kuethe, "La Texas colonial entre Pedro de Rivera y el marqués de Rubí, 1729-1772: aportaciones económicas al sistema presidial," *Colonial Latin American Historical Review* 14, no. 3 (Summer 2005), pp. 291, 300-301.

enrichment was allowed.³³ Although such behavior was technically illegal, the Crown overlooked the law in exchange for bureaucratic support and loyal service in the colonial territories. As historian Catherine Tracy Goode described it,

The disparity between rhetoric and action on the part of the Spanish Crown helps to explain that what were considered abuses of power were not simply transgressions on the part of fraudulent individuals but elaborate complexes of unwritten contracts. ... [B]ureaucrats relied on such exploitative practices to increase their wealth, power, and prestige while the Crown, in turn, relied on them to maintain control over its colonies.³⁴

In other words, the Crown was able to underfund colonial administration, paying less to colonial administrators while permitting a certain level of self-enrichment. The Spanish Crown's unwritten contract relaxed the rigid enforcement of policies and allowed a measure of local discretion and latitude. The practice brought unacknowledged dividends to the east Texas frontier. Illicit trade at all levels of Spanish society in east Texas – including governors, missionaries, soldiers, and vecinos – largely served a diplomatic function in maintaining peaceful relations with many of the autonomous groups who lived in the area. The subversion of economic policy yielded political results.

Officials in the province of Texas followed this long-established practice with relative impunity. For example, one practice viceregal authorities found of particular concern was the acquisition of supplies for presidial troops. Despite sustained crown efforts during the eighteenth century to regulate the authority for procurement and the

³³ The practice is outlined in J.H. Parry, *The Sale of Public Office in the Spanish Indies under the Hapsburgs*, Ibero-Americana:37 (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1953).

³⁴ Catherine Tracy Goode, "Merchant-Bureaucrats, Unwritten Contracts, and Fraud in the Manila Galleon Trade," in Christoph Rosenmüller, *Corruption in the Iberian Empires: Greed, Custom, and Colonial Networks* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2017), p. 173.

pricing of supplies, the practice was rife with corruption. Governors were specifically prohibited from procuring military supplies beginning in 1729, but Texas governors remained deeply involved in the process well into the 1770s.³⁵ Governor Manuel de Sandoval, for example, who served in office from 1734 to 1736, withheld soldiers' salaries and used the money instead to import goods from French merchants in Natchitoches, which he then traded with neighboring Caddoans. Further, according to soldiers' complaints, he charged the soldiers' payroll accounts excessive prices for their supplies, verbally abused and physically threatened soldiers who complained of his accounting practices, and coerced them into bartering for the rations rightfully due them.³⁶ The investigation of these charges, in keeping with the concept of an unwritten contract, exonerated Sandoval of any wrongdoing.

The outcomes were similar for other governors, as well. Francisco García Larios, governor from 1744 to 1747, among numerous alleged abuses, withheld gunpowder shipped to the presidio. Rather than distribute it to the soldiers, he traded it to the Caddo, who needed it for the firearms they obtained from French traders. In exchange for the gunpowder, García received deerskin, seeds, and other goods that he then offered for sale to the soldiers, effectively replacing their salaries with commodity monies. Like Sandoval, he charged soldiers' accounts inflated prices for goods he obtained from trade with the Caddoans, the French, and Spanish suppliers in Saltillo.

³⁵ The patterns of repeated disregard for and abuse of regulations regarding military supplies throughout northern New Spain have been detailed by Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975); and Moorhead, "The Private Contract System of Presidio Supply in Northern New Spain," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 41, no. 1 (Feb. 1961), pp. 31-54. A more narrow study of the local economies of three presidios in Sonora is Jack Williams, "The Archaeology of Underdevelopment and the Military Frontier of Northern New Spain," *Historical Archaeology* 26, no. 1 (1992), pp. 7-21.

³⁶ Galán, *Los Adaes*, pp. 101-105. Moorhead describes similar practices at other presidios; Moorhead, *Presidio*, pp. 31-46.

When the soldiers at Los Adaes filed a set of complaints against García, the former governor Juan Antonio Bustillo y Zevallos was tasked with conducting the investigation. The soldiers opposed his appointment on the grounds that he had introduced the same abuses, which had subsequently become standard practice.³⁷

Governor Ángel Martos y Navarrete engaged in similar offences during his tenure from 1759 to 1766. In 1767, Field Marshal the Marqués de Rubí visited Los Adaes as part of an inspection of presidios across the northern frontier of New Spain. Martos was absent from the province, having been arrested in 1765 concerning a different matter; all of his property in Los Adaes was confiscated, and he was imprisoned Mexico City. Rubí's findings at the presidio were troubling. For the sixty-one troops present, only twenty-five horses, two rifles, seven swords, and six shields were found serviceable. No soldier had a uniform; few had even hats, shirts, or shoes. Some of their families were reported to be insufficiently clothed to appear at muster.³⁸ Yet when Martos's confiscated goods were inventoried that same month, the document itemized an abundance of merchandise covering everything from the soldiers' most basic needs to small luxuries – in quantities far exceeding the number of local residents. The inventory covered 130 boxes of Castilian and domestic merchandise, as well as five hundred *doblones*³⁹ in specie, allegedly meant to satisfy the governor's debts to French merchants in Natchitoches.⁴⁰

³⁷ Proceedings concerning Güemes y Horcasitas' dispatch relative to the freedom of García Larios of all charges imputed against him by the soldiers of Los Adaes, 18 Jan 1747 to 22 May 1747, BA.

³⁸ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 4 (1939; reprint ed. New York: Arno Press, 1976), pp. 238-239.

³⁹ Equivalent to eight hundred pesos.

⁴⁰ Proceedings regarding confiscation of contraband money and merchandise belonging to Martos y Navarrete, 22 Aug. 1767 to 12 Sept. 1767, BA.

Such investigations of a governor's behavior in office typically followed the end of his term in office, and was conducted by his successor. These proceedings, known as a *residencia*, were public displays of accountability designed to ensure that the outgoing official had competently executed his duties according to the Crown's orders, administered justice fairly and impartially, prevented illegal trade and communication, and provisioned the military in accordance with regulations. Once a *residencia* was announced, a sixty-day period allowed for any persons to file a grievance or complaint. The incoming governor then interviewed military and civilian witnesses, assessed the military rolls and account books, and forwarded his findings to the viceroy for legal judgment. These investigations were largely pro forma, as evidenced by the cases referenced above.⁴¹

Much less frequently, after the mid-eighteenth century, judicial investigations of contraband – apart from *residencias* – were conducted against several Texas governors. Whether these were the result of political maneuvers or a shift in Bourbon policies is unclear because other governors' corrupt practices were not investigated during these years. There is unlikely to be a single explanation for this, as local politics also played a role in who might have access to illicit trade, but these investigations offer a glimpse into Crown tolerance of unlawful behavior at the provincial level. The commercial activity of Governor Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui, who served in Texas from 1751 until

⁴¹ Citing evidence from other parts of the northern frontier, historian David Weber has written that the conduct of *residencias* was "notoriously corrupt," as it was not unusual for an incoming governor to extort his predecessor in order to give him a clear record. Despite reforms during the eighteenth century, "the investigators and the investigated both had more to gain from collusion than they did from obeying the law." Weber, *Spanish Frontier in North America*, p. 129. In contrast, it is reasonable to surmise that governors in Texas actually shared with their successors details concerning the transaction and conduct of illicit trade. It is also likely that the local knowledge and experience of soldiers and vecinos were strong factors enabling each incoming governor's prosperity in such trade.

1759, is a case in point. The combined documentation of the routine *residencia*, conducted in 1757,⁴² and a contraband investigation against him in 1761, provide direct evidence of the mechanisms and scope of contraband trade, as well as the scale of collusion – or perhaps coerced involvement – of local residents.⁴³ The 1761 investigation, in particular, gives an exceptional view of the frontier exchange economy in east Texas.

A comparison of the *residencia* of Governor Barrios with the investigation of charges against him for contraband trade yields two different stories about his behavior in office. Despite being under oath, witnesses who testified in both proceedings contradicted their own testimony from one case to the other. During Barrios's *residencia*, twenty-four military and civilian witnesses testified that he had adhered completely to Spanish laws, having neither permitted nor conducted unlawful trade. Ten of these witnesses were subsequently among the twenty-seven called to testify in the 1761 contraband investigation, where they readily admitted to both Barrios's and their own involvement in contraband trade. When questioned about the discrepancy with their prior testimony, they each stated that they believed Barrios's trade to have been legitimate. Implicit in their defense was the idea that the governor's orders were lawful because he represented Crown authority. Whatever ambiguity this may reveal

⁴² Barrios's term as governor was originally to end in 1757, but was extended to 1759 due to the establishment of El Orcoquisac; Bolton *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 74, 347. Despite the extension, his *residencia* was conducted as originally scheduled: the order for it was given July 7, 1757; it was initiated March 10, 1759 and concluded March 30, 1760. *Autos de la Residencia Publica y Secreta que se le ha formado a el theniente coronel Dn Jazinto De Barrios y Jauregui*, 11 July 1757, BA.

⁴³ In 1760, the viceroy ordered Texas governor Martos y Navarrete to conduct a secret investigation of alleged contraband trade by Governor Barrios. Depositions were taken the following year. The charges against Barrios were linked to a complaint that Martos had made to the French commander Kerlérec at Natchitoches against the trader Louis St. Denis, for attempting to incite indigenous groups in the south coast area against the recently-established Spanish presidio of San Agustín de Ahumada.

about attitudes toward the state, soldiers and vecinos chose to follow its local agent. They could not be faulted for obeying his orders.

During his time in office, Barrios assigned a majority of the garrison of Los Adaes to carry out his clandestine trade. At least forty-five soldiers – an astonishing three-quarters of the sixty-man garrison – were directly implicated in the transport and exchange of French goods from Louisiana for indigenous products and commodities on behalf of Governor Barrios. At first, he started off with only a few men and limited trade. To illustrate, during his first year in office he ordered Jacinto de Leon to obtain one thousand hides in exchange for two *arrobas* of gunpowder, four *arrobas* of bullets, twelve pounds of beads, and two pounds of vermillion. The order did not specify where or from whom de León was to get the hides. Presumably he was to trade with nearby villages, as he had two weeks to accomplish the task. The hides were to be used, Barrios wrote de León, “in order to pay what is owed” (*para pagar lo que se deve*).⁴⁴ At the end of Barrios’s first or second season of trading, he sent a substantial number of hides and chamois to Saltillo with the official military supply convoy. These were delivered to Francisco Furundarena and Diego Antonio Giraud.⁴⁵ While the former’s identity remains obscure, the latter held the power of attorney to collect the presidio soldiers’ salaries and arrange for the provisions that constituted their in-kind payment. It seems likely that Barrios financed the establishment of his trade through loans from

⁴⁴ Governor Jacinto de Barrios y Juareguí to Jacinto de León, 5 Nov 1752, f21 of certified copy of proceedings by Martos y Navarrete investigating charges against St. Denis for inciting Indians against Spaniards, and against Barrios y Jáuregui for Indian trade, *En esta Pres[idi]o de N[uest]ra S[eñor]a del Pilar de los Adaes...*, 22 Jan 1761, BA (hereafter cited as Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui).

⁴⁵ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, ff6-6v, 13v-14, 19.

these two men; after repaying them, he subsequently conducted his trade solely through his French suppliers in Natchitoches.

The trade quickly escalated from a means of repaying debt into what was certainly a lucrative deal for Barrios. While the record is mute on the number of trading expeditions that Barrios sent out during any given year as his trade grew, each expedition returned with anywhere from six hundred to two thousand deer skins.⁴⁶ During this period, Natchitoches merchants annually sent around fifty thousand deer skins to New Orleans.⁴⁷ Based on the number of indigenous villages to which Barrios sent the soldiers, as described in the testimonies, it can be estimated that his exchange accounted for between roughly two and ten percent of those annual shipments.

Barrios's trade was a skillful fusion of policy goals, independent decision-making, and self enrichment. Broadly, Crown goals were simple: to win the alliances of indigenous groups, and to keep foreigners out of Spanish-claimed territory. Yet Barrios recognized that official policies were an ineffective means to these ends. The idea behind Crown policy was to build indigenous alliances through religious conversion, but the east Texas missions had long been recognized as unable to attract potential converts. Under the Bourbon Family Compacts, Spanish officials in Texas were not to provoke their French counterparts in Louisiana. Yet interfering in French trade with Native Americans yielded precisely that result. It was in this growing trade that Barrios saw the opportunity to meld the Spanish Crown's broader political goal of keeping peace with the indigenous groups in his jurisdiction with the prospect of enriching himself.

⁴⁶ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, ff9v, 10v, 11, 13, 17v-18.

⁴⁷ Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, p. 111.

Although much of the trade that Barrios conducted was clandestine, he made several efforts to secure permission for his activities. In 1753, for example, he appealed to the viceroy for a local exception to prohibitions against trade with foreigners and with indigenous groups. In requesting legal consent for his trade, he offered the viceroy a pragmatic means to achieve Crown objectives for maintaining peaceful relations on the frontier. In effect, Barrios used economics to simultaneously challenge and resolve the inherent contradiction between Crown policies and goals on the frontier. Barrios's challenge to Crown control over economic behavior on the frontier first made the case that opening trade between Spanish Texas and French Louisiana would not only prevent French encroachment in Spanish territory, it would also develop and strengthen Spanish-Indigenous alliances within areas where Spain claimed dominion. Indigenous loyalty to the Spanish crown could be secured through trade, Barrios argued, but Spaniards could only accomplish this by replacing French traders in Texas – through the purchase of French trade goods. Native Americans preferred French goods over those procured through Spanish trade networks, Barrios continued, because they were both more affordable and of higher quality.⁴⁸

Along with his 1753 letter, Barrios sent the viceroy samples of a variety of trade goods that French merchants bartered to indigenous groups in Texas “at prices for which we could not pay the freight.” The samples included a musket, different colors of loincloths, a blanket, glass beads, a mirror, a shirt, and some powder (likely gunpowder). He claimed that Spanish soldiers and vecinos could purchase goods from

⁴⁸ Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui to Viceroy, the Count of Revillagigedo, 17 Apr 1753, in fray José Antonio Pichardo, *Pichardo's Treatise on the Limits of Louisiana and Texas*, trans. and ed. Charles Wilson Hackett, Vol. 4 (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1946), pp. 66-67.

French merchants with deerskins rather than barter their horses, saddles, or other equipment. They would trade these goods with the local indigenous population, and in the process win their loyalty to the Crown without the expenditure of currency from the royal treasury.⁴⁹ Several issues were left unspoken in Barrios's argument. The arrangement inserted Spaniards as middlemen in the French and indigenous trade. To gain such a position, the new middlemen would need sufficient resources either to purchase goods on credit for subsequent trade, or otherwise have prior access to sufficient deerskins to purchase the goods outright. It is unlikely that most soldiers or *vecinos* would have been able to engage in the trade that Barrios described; he himself – or other officials like him, with access to credit – would have been the primary beneficiary of permission to do so. Further, it is unclear whether such trade might appease the French through a higher demand for their goods, or provoke them because of potential competition in their market area.

Barrios's second challenge to Crown policy, deliberately put forth in less detail at the close of his letter to the viceroy, was over the role of the Church in developing political alliances with tribes in the area. Having built his case for opening trade, Barrios pointedly observed that the Caddoans loved the French not just for their merchandise, but also because "they never talk to them about religion." Although Barrios's discussion implied Spanish moral superiority over French "libertinage," his message was clear that Spanish emphasis on culture change was a political dead end as

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

far as indigenous groups in east Texas were concerned. Alliances were built on trade, not shared religion.⁵⁰

If Barrios's trading activities demonstrated that the kind of unwritten contract historian Catherine Tracy Goode described in the seventeenth-century Manila galleon trade operated on New Spain's northern frontier well into the eighteenth century, the viceregal officials' discussion of Barrios's proposal reveals the discursive space that enabled it. In response to his letter, communications between the *fiscal* and the *auditor* in Mexico City reasoned that because French-Indigenous trade in Texas violated Crown policy, the king himself would need to decide whether to grant Barrios's request for Spanish subjects there to take part in it. Without such dispensation – which in fact was never granted – the governor was legally bound to prevent it. The officials wrote that Barrios should uphold Crown law with “zeal and prudence,” apprehending foreign traders and sending them to Mexico City for trial.⁵¹

At the same time, viceregal officials acknowledged that indigenous loyalty to the French was indeed the result of trade, through which the French had made a “silent conquest” in Texas. Therefore, the officials left to the governor's discretion “the details of putting [such measures] into execution in accordance with the occasion and opportunity that may present themselves to him, so that their use may not alarm the suspicions of the Indians and so that no break or misfortune shall come to the good relations which it is important to preserve undisturbed with our frontier neighbors.” In other words, Barrios was not to antagonize either the Caddoans or the French, even

⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

⁵¹ The señor *auditor* to the señor *fiscal*, [n.d.], in Pichardo, *Pichardo's Treatise*, Vol. 4, p. 99. Barrios complied with these orders, arresting the French trader Blancpain the following year. As detailed below, Barrios used the arrest to eliminate a competitor and expand his own market area.

though upholding Crown policies against their trade would do just that. Having already been explicit that trade was the essential component of diplomacy, Barrios could easily find space between these contradictory lines to take upon himself a circumspect engagement in trade to promote peaceful relations with indigenous and French neighbors alike.⁵²

The viceregal correspondence, then, offers an explanatory mechanism for Barrios's unwritten contract: his actions might be overlooked if they achieved the desired policy outcomes. At the same time, Barrios had to adhere to a particular official script in the context of relations with his political superiors. Otherwise, he risked legal consequences for his illicit trade. As long as the governor and those within his jurisdiction provided appropriate responses during the *residencia*, viceregal officials were content to accept their testimony at face value. But once the French governor of Louisiana complained to the viceroy of Barrios's trade,⁵³ this tolerance dissipated. Despite the fact that more than a year had elapsed since he left office, Barrios was suddenly held to account through a secret investigation of his conduct. Although the viceregal correspondence indicates a broad latitude within which he might operate, he could not overstep the bounds of discretion.

The soldiers who testified in the contraband investigation also recognized the diplomatic value of commerce with different indigenous groups. To some extent, this was implicit in their universal acknowledgment that Barrios monopolized the trade, which they believed was in order to avoid competition. Yet as the symbolic figure of local Spanish authority, Barrios could be perceived to enact the Crown's largesse,

⁵² *Ibid.*, pp. 98-99.

⁵³ See above, pp. 203-4.

particularly if he held a monopoly. Because Native Americans' livelihoods increasingly required the use of firearms, they were loyal to those who could provide them. If the Spaniards did not offer such trade, according to several of the witnesses, indigenous people could obtain firearms either directly or indirectly from the French. Moreover, a number of witnesses stated that indigenous groups traded among themselves and formed alliances based on such trade. The Hainai (Tejas), Nasonis and Tebaidas (likely Taovayas, a Wichita tribe), for example, were said to trade with neighboring Tawakonis (Tebacanes), Kadohadacho (Caudacho), and Yatasi at "convocations" and gatherings.⁵⁴

In fact, such trading networks extended to the Euro-Americans in their midst. It appears that Barrios – and most likely his predecessors, as well – traded with groups that French traders did not. French traders avoided commerce with those groups in the immediate areas of Spanish settlements; the Spanish governors of Texas conducted this business. Generally, the groups with whom the Spaniards traded lived along the Sabine, Neches, Trinity, and Colorado rivers. The French traded with groups farther to the north, along the Red and Arkansas rivers, as well as with some coastal groups. This idea is corroborated by the testimony of warrant officer Pedro de Sierra, who noted that the French trader called El Provensal worked with the Yatasi, Athenase de Mézières with the Kadohadachos (Caudachos), and the trader identified as Decur with others.⁵⁵ In 1774, Antonio Gil Ybarbo wrote that French traders lived among the Orcoquisac, Bidais (at Paso de Tomás), Hainai (at San Pedro), Quichas, Nacodoches, and among all the

⁵⁴ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, ff4v, 7v, 17v.

⁵⁵ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, ff3-3v.

nations as far as the Brazos de Dios. An English trader lived with the Aix.⁵⁶ Regarding coastal groups, five years before Barrios became Texas governor, Captain Joaquín Orobio y Basterra made a reconnaissance of the Trinity River. He reported in 1746 that the the Bidais and Orcoquisacs were greatly surprised to see them as they had not seen Spaniards before in their territory, but that the French were there often to trade with them, as well as with the Deadoses, Cujanes, and Tejas. Some of the French came overland, others along the coast and up the rivers.⁵⁷

Barrios – and perhaps other governors before him – created a hybrid system of Spanish and French trading practices. Barrios treated the merchants in Natchitoches as the equivalent of *almaceneros* (warehouse owners) in Mexico City, responsible for the bulk importation of merchandise. He purchased goods on credit from the French merchants, then – similar to the French system of indigenous trade – redistributed the goods through a series of intermediaries, some of whom transported goods and others who remained for short periods in villages to conduct the actual exchange. This contrasted with French merchants' sustained presence in indigenous villages, represented by traders in residence accompanied by wage laborers and indigenous and black unfree laborers who transported merchandise and built structures in or near the villages to store it.⁵⁸ Rather than go to the expense of hiring labor, however, Barrios

⁵⁶ Antonio Gil Ybarbo to Hugo Oconór, 8 Jan 1774, in Hackett, *Pichardo's Treatise*, Vol. 4, p. 197. Both French and British traders had moved into some of these areas as soon as the Spaniards abandoned their settlements in east Texas in 1773, discussed in below in Chapter 5. The Brazos River was the boundary between Caddoan and Tonkawa groups.

⁵⁷ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. IV, pp. 47-48.

⁵⁸ Andrew Konove, *Black Market Capital: Urban Politics and the Shadow Economy in Mexico City* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2018), pp. 80-85, provides an overview of commercial practices in Mexico City. French practices in Louisiana are described in Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, p. 108; and H. Sophie Burton, "Vagabonds along the Texas-Louisiana Frontier, 1769-1803: 'Men Who are Evil, Lazy,

simply assigned presidio soldiers under the command of their officers to the task of hauling goods and commodities. The fact that he was able to exploit the labor of the garrison under his command suggests that he had a much higher profit margin than his French counterparts in the trade.

In the course of the 1761 investigation, every witness detailed the monopoly on illicit trade that Governor Barrios exercised while purchasing goods from French merchants in Louisiana and then selling them to indigenous groups in the eastern areas of the province. They described their own roles, too, in the well-organized system of transport and exchange that Barrios orchestrated. The process began when a core group of men, including the *arriero* Juan Antonio Maldonado, journeyed to Natchitoches to pick up trade items from various merchants there. Often, they departed Los Adaes at midnight, in order to keep their movements from public view. Each expedition picked up differing amounts of goods, depending on the village with which they were assigned to trade. For example, the quantity of gunpowder might range from one to nine *arrobas*, and of bullets from two to eighteen *arrobas*.⁵⁹ Other trade items included rifles, various types of knives, beads, razors, combs, vermilion, and tobacco; less frequently, they might also include flint, wadding for rifle barrels, shirts, loincloths, petticoats, cloth, scissors, and hoes. The group usually returned to Los Adaes to distribute the goods among the soldiers assigned to exchange them for hides at specific villages of Hasinai, Nabadaches, Nasonis, Nadotes, Yojuanes, Tonkawas, and Tawakonis, and later with the Bidais and Orcoquizas.

Gluttonous, Drunken, Libertinous, Dishonest, Mutinous, etc. etc. etc. – And Those Are Their Virtues,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 4 (April 2010), pp. 443-46.

⁵⁹ In the descriptions of this trade, the weight of bullets was always double the weight of gunpowder. One *arroba* is equal to approximately twenty-five pounds.

In exchange for the goods from Natchitoches, the soldiers accepted horses, deer hides, chamois, buffalo hides, and sometimes corn. Barrios usually reserved the horses, chamois, and corn to sell to the soldiers at Presidio Los Adaes, while the deer and buffalo hides, together with anything not reserved for Los Adaes were sent on to Natchitoches to settle his accounts with merchants there. Juan Antonio Maldonado, the *arriero*, testified that he departed with his convoys “in strict secrecy, at odd hours” (*salia con todo sigilo a deshoras*) to deliver these items to Natchitoches.⁶⁰ Many of the soldiers Barrios used in his trade almost certainly had previous experience either independently or under the direction of previous governors. Indeed, they apparently traded for their own needs while working on behalf of Barrios; soldier Ambrosio Vasques, for example, noted in his testimony that he had obtained some chickens on one such expedition.⁶¹ For both soldiers and vecinos, engaging in this trade developed or broadened their geographical knowledge of the area, and their contacts with local indigenous groups. A number of them spoke Caddoan dialects, furthering the transcultural relationships that supported peaceful trade. Each of these factors contributed to their ability to participate in the type of commodities barter that was fundamental to the developing Texas-Louisiana frontier exchange economy.

Barrios rapidly organized and extended his own role in the area’s trade. A group of Caddoan leaders met with him at Los Adaes in 1755 to discuss trade, making clear that if the Spaniards chose not to trade with them, they would go to the French. This was a common strategy calculated to play off Spaniards against French in order to obtain the goods they needed. Barrios affirmed to the delegation that trade was

⁶⁰ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, f4v.

⁶¹ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, f8v.

fundamental to securing their mutual alliance. He quickly issued licenses to two vecinos and three soldiers to engage in such commerce, with the expectation that “generous exchange” (*cambalache superabundante*) would retain tribal loyalties. In naming the five men he sent to trade, he wrote that at least three of them were “beloved” (*amados*) among the various nations. This was a clear indication that the men already had sufficient personal relationships and trade experience to have earned their reputation among a broad group of Caddoan peoples, perhaps through their own private trade or by conducting trade on behalf of previous governors.⁶²

Barrios also presided over the expansion of Spanish trade into coastal areas of Texas. In the process, he was able to extend his own tenure as governor of Texas. This expansion came about in 1754, when Barrios – under a cloak of secrecy and great haste – ordered the arrest of French traders along the lower Trinity River. Within days of an unattributed report⁶³ that four Frenchmen and two Spaniards were trading with Atakapans near the mouth of the Trinity River, on the Gulf coast, Barrios ordered two officers and twenty-five soldiers to the area to investigate. In order to make a broad political statement, Barrios wished to convince Bidai and Orcoquiza tribal members to

⁶² Jacinto de Barrios y Jauregui, decree, 29 Oct 1755, in Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, BA. Galán references this document in his discussion of smuggling, but misattributes the meeting as occurring between Governor Martos y Navarrete and the Caddoan and Bidai groups in 1761; Galán, *Los Adaes*, pp. 134-35. This misattribution is likely because Barrios’s 1755 decree was copied into the record of the 1761 proceedings that Martos y Navarrete conducted against him.

⁶³ Although fray Juan Agustín Morfi wrote that Blancpain “served Barrios in his trade” and that Barrios arrested him in order to avoid discovery during his *residencia*, there is no evidence to support this claim. See Morfi, *History of Texas*, Vol. II, p. 373. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. IV, p. 53, states more generally that Barrios colluded with French traders, which may have involved payment in exchange for allowing them to carry out their trade in his jurisdiction.

join them in the raid. To seal the alliance, he provided a load of trade goods as gifts, together with the promise of the spoils of seized goods from the French trading party.⁶⁴

The French trader Joseph Blancpain and a number of others were encamped as reported near the mouth of the Trinity River, not far from an Atakapan settlement. Despite Barrios's professed stealth, Blancpain's indigenous informants provided him with nearly a week's advance notice of the Spaniards' plans. Blancpain took advantage of this time to send most of his party back to Louisiana with a boatload of hides, but remained in place with four others to challenge the Spaniards' authority to arrest them. He later testified that they always remained within the territory of the Atakapas, whose lands along the Gulf of Mexico extended from Laguna de Cheti, five leagues west of the Mississippi River, through southwest Louisiana and into southeast Texas where it ended at the Trinity River. Blancpain was licensed by the governor of Louisiana to trade with the Atakapas in their territory and had been doing so for twenty-five years; other traders had been there since 1722.⁶⁵ This is further evidence that French traders recognized indigenous territorial sovereignty over Spanish claims to lands they did not occupy; indeed, the Spaniards had no presence at all along the Texas coast. Barrios would soon change this with the establishment of a new presidio and mission at the site of Blancpain's trading camp. Not only would this action ensure that the French understood it was Spanish territory, it would also enlarge his own scope of trade.

⁶⁴ *En el R[ea]l Presidio de Nuestra Señora del Pilar de los Adais ...*, Proceedings concerning Barrios y Jáuregui's order for the investigation of French settlement at mouth of Trinity River, 20 Sept 1754, BA.

⁶⁵ *Declaración en la Ciudad de Mexico ...*, Certified copy of proceedings relative to Blancpain's deposition of his activities at mouth of Trinity River, 19 Feb 1755, BA. Although Blancpain seemed to expect to be fully exonerated, he died in prison in Mexico City and his companions were subsequently sent to Spain to serve out their terms. The date and cause of Blancpain's death are unknown. The French Governor Kerlérec repeatedly protested to the viceroy against Blancpain's arrest, claiming that he had been in French territory; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 338, 359.

Barrios's twenty-seven troops arrested Blancpain and his four companions. Later testimony offered conflicting accounts regarding the confiscation and distribution of Blancpain's goods among the soldiers and their thirty-one Bidai and Orcoquisa allies. Rather than bring the traders to Los Adaes for questioning, Barrios ordered the troops to take them to Presidio San Xavier, in central Texas, and thence directly to Mexico City. Those returning to Los Adaes were not to divulge any information about the events that had transpired. In this manner, Barrios expected to control the narrative and to shape it not only to the concerns of Crown policies, but also to his own material advantage. A comparison of his investigation with Blancpain's testimony reveals serious discrepancies that, together with Barrios's subsequent actions, support this interpretation.

Aided by the testimony of his soldiers, Barrios made it appear that Blancpain had only a small amount of trade goods. The reporting officer, Lt. Marcos Ruíz, provided an inventory of confiscated goods, stating that "the tumult of Indians did not allow us to see fully what more there was" (*Esto es lo que bido Porq[u]e la boruca de los indios no dio lugar a ber Por Entero lo que abia mas*). Ruíz's inventory represented only a small fraction of what Blancpain claimed to have had; this allowed most of the goods to disappear into the hands of the soldiers and the Bidai and Orcoquisa allies on the raid. In contrast, Blancpain himself provided a detailed inventory of a large volume of goods procured in New Orleans at a wholesale value of six thousand pesos. Blancpain's testimony revealed a stable and sizeable market for European goods among indigenous groups along and inland from the Texas Gulf coast. Barrios was able to take over this market by using Blancpain's very presence as the pretext to establish a new presidio

and mission in the area. Acting on his soldiers' statements alleging that fifty French families and a priest were en route from Louisiana to establish a settlement and mission at the site – a claim that Blancpain denied and one at odds with French focus on trade, but deceptively aligned with Spain's emphasis on missionization – Barrios solicited testimony from the missionary of Nacogdoches that the Orcoquiza desired a mission, and then convened a *junta de guerra* in Los Adaes to recommend establishing a new presidio and settlement on Blancpain's trading site.⁶⁶ Four weeks after the first group of soldiers had returned to Los Adaes with their secret report, Barrios forwarded the results of his investigation, together with the junta's recommendations, to the viceroy. Blancpain's interrogation in Mexico City would not begin for another three months, giving Barrios the upper hand he needed to implement his plan.

The proposal was quickly approved, and Barrios appointed Lieutenant Domingo del Rio, who regularly led the governor's illicit trade expeditions from Los Adaes, to establish and command the new military post known as San Agustín de Ahumada. In his 1761 testimony, del Rio discussed extending Barrios's trade from Los Adaes to San Agustín de Orcoquizac, stating that he conducted this trade himself with the Orcoquizas after his transfer to the new presidio.⁶⁷ Once Barrios left office, however, the new settlements proved difficult to provision and suffered from shortages of supplies. When the Marqués de Rubí made his inspection of the Texas frontier in 1767, he found the new presidio and mission to be worthless and recommended their closure. Likewise,

⁶⁶ Proceedings concerning Barrios y Jáuregui's order for the investigation of French settlement at mouth of Trinity River, 20 Sept 1754, BA, quotation on f7, other testimony throughout; Certified copy of proceedings relative to Blancpain's deposition of his activities at mouth of Trinity River, 19 Feb 1755, BA, ff8v-15v for Blancpain's inventory; Curtis Tunnell and J. Richard Ambler, *Archeological Excavations at Presidio San Agustin De Ahumada*, Archeology Program Report, 1 (Austin: Texas State Building Commission, 1967), p. 5.

⁶⁷ Proceedings against Barrios y Jáuregui, 22 Jan 1761, f17v.

fray Solís choose to overlook the mission during his inspection, simply recommending its suppression. These recommendations were implemented in 1771.⁶⁸

Significant change came to the administration of Texas and Louisiana at the end of the Seven Years' War that resulted from French and British imperial rivalry in North America. Bourbon Spain made a late entry in the war as an ally of Bourbon France, an ill-fated decision that cost it the strategic losses of Florida, Havana, and Manila to the British. In 1762, France covertly ceded New Orleans and the Louisiana territory west of the Mississippi River to Spain. The following year, it ceded Louisiana east of the Mississippi to Great Britain under the Treaty of Paris. The French inhabitants of Louisiana came under Spanish rule, facing the British empire to the east across the Mississippi River.⁶⁹ As a practical matter, the treaty suddenly transformed the defensive role of Texas from an interimperial boundary to an interior province.

Following this geopolitical realignment, Carlos III ordered an inspection of the defenses of New Spain's northern frontier as part of a broader financial and administrative reorganization. To this end, he commissioned *Visitador* José de Gálvez to assess financial and administrative matters, and the Marqués de Rubí to inspect the presidios. Gálvez recommended an administrative reorganization that took Texas out of the jurisdiction of the viceroy of New Spain, making it part of the new administrative unit of the Provincias Internas, under the military rule of a commandant general who answered directly to the king. To guard against corruption, governors were to be

⁶⁸ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 367, 374.

⁶⁹ J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 294-96; Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, pp. 198-203.

appointed based on merit. Given the inherent problems of the overland transport of goods to Texas from the interior of New Spain, Gálvez recommended that trade should be opened between Louisiana and Texas. This was never legally permitted, although most of the Texas governors from then on supported the idea. Because of the port of New Orleans, Louisiana was administered separately from and differently than Texas, as part of the Captaincy General of Havana, which – although a dependency of the viceroy of New Spain – followed a relatively liberal trade policy.⁷⁰ The new administrative border between Texas and Louisiana was to prove as inflexible a barrier to trade as the previous imperial border, yet it remained porous to contraband in defiance of Crown regulations.

Rubí's recommendations, implemented in Texas in 1773, included establishing a defensible frontier along the Rio Grande. This entailed abandoning the presidios, missions and settlements of east Texas. In Texas, only the presidio, villa and missions of San Antonio, and the presidio of La Bahía, would remain north of this line. Since Los Adaes was to be abandoned, San Antonio was designated as the new provincial capital, and the inhabitants of Los Adaes and its surrounding ranches were ordered on short notice to resettle there.⁷¹ While other presidios across the northern frontier were also abandoned or relocated, no other civilian settlements were similarly affected by this regulation.⁷² Los Adaes was singled out in order to end contraband trade in the area.

⁷⁰ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, pp. 204-12, 236-46; Lillian Estelle Fisher, *The Intendant System in Spanish America*, reprint of 1929 ed. (New York: Gordian Press, 1969), pp. 11-16; Katherine Bridges, Winston Deville, and Marjonan de Laperriere, "Natchitoches in 1766," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association*, 4, no. 2 (Spring 1963), p. 149.

⁷¹ Donald Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Notable Men and Women of Spanish Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 179-186.

⁷² Moorhead, *The Presidio*, pp. 58-65.

Instead, it initiated a new period in the growth of extralegal trade and the frontier exchange economy, as the next chapter will discuss.

Chapter 5
“We Have No Other Recourse than to Barter”:¹
Resettlement and the Frontier Exchange Economy of East Texas

The 1773 abandonment and subsequent resettlement of east Texas marked a watershed in the province's economic development, with many Adaeseños taking direct control of their economic fate. Less than a year after the entire population of Los Adaes was ordered to relocate to San Antonio, a majority of the evacuees went back to the region of Los Adaes,² continuing and substantially expanding participation in the extralegal exchange of goods between Louisiana and Texas. Just as Governor Barrios had challenged the Crown's political control over economic behavior, so too did the Adaeseños' rapid resettlement of east Texas. Resettlement was the epitome of the colonial practice of "*obedezco pero no cumplo*,"³ as it manifested vecinos' resistance to a Crown policy that had deprived them of their property and would irreparably harm their long-term self-interest. The Adaeseños' action was an open assertion of decades of economic grievance against local Crown officials, and it underscored the vitality of the frontier exchange economy in east Texas and resilience of the settlers. Their behavior reveals an untold story of subaltern agency in the face of hierarchical social,

¹ Petition of vecinos of Los Adaes to Governor Jacinto Barrios y Jáuregui, 27 Sept 1754, BA.

² Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), pp. 84-86; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 4, *The Mission Era: The Passing of the Missions* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1939), pp. 304-7, 314; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*, Vol. 5, *The Mission Era: The End of the Spanish Regime* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), pp. 38-39.

³ The phrase "I obey but do not execute" evolved in part as a result of the time lag in correspondence between the Council of the Indies in Spain and colonial administrators in Spanish America, and in part because their directives were often unsuited to local conditions. John Leddy Phelan, "Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (June 1960), pp. 47-65.

political, and economic structures designed to support and enrich only those at the top and to oppress settlers as powerless to resist authorities.

In the last decades of the eighteenth century, frontier exchange contested elite control of markets, helped reshape Spanish policy on indigenous trade, and strengthened and extended the extralegal economy in the Texas-Louisiana borderlands. How the Adaeseños accomplished this was rooted not just in the desire for trade, but also in decades of economic marginalization enforced by Crown officials. The experiences of presidio soldiers and civilians in Los Adaes fostered mutual interests within the community, separated from those in authority by their collective economic, political, and social subordination. Political anthropologist James C. Scott describes a “restricted social circle” whose participants “have a shared interest in jointly creating a discourse of dignity, of negation, and of justice.” This ostensible “hidden transcript,” or unrecorded discourse, can be inferred by careful reading of official documents. The “self-disclosure that power relations normally exclude from the official transcript” can reveal complex relationships that otherwise might elude scholars.⁴ The concept of a hidden transcript offers a framework for interpreting official documents that aimed at telling only a small part of the Adaeseños’ story. The official story is not the only story, despite elites’ attempts to make it so.

The Adaeseños’ hidden transcript is revealed in multiple ways. It is initially seen through overt collective defiance expressed in their 1746 and 1754 complaints against Texas governors Francisco García Larios and Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui. The subsequent contrast in their testimony in the *residencias* – the royal reviews of officials

⁴ James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 115-16.

after they departed office – and judicial investigations of settlers’ and presidio soldiers’ allegations of corruption further revealed the limits of their willingness to support individual Crown officials.

Governors of the province came and went, but the presidio soldiers and civilian settlers, together with their families, had to make their livelihoods in east Texas in whatever ways they could. This meant creating their own economic opportunities under restrictive circumstances. Their experiences hardened their view against Crown policies that tolerated economic abuses by elites or officials, but at the same time denied subordinate groups comparable latitude in seeking their own economic gain, advancement, and security of residence and livelihood. The Adaeseños’ return to east Texas was an explicit rejection of Bourbon reforms on the frontier that were designed to streamline governance and to bolster Crown authority. Their decision was based on their unwillingness or inability to begin a new life elsewhere. Although they were subjects of the Crown, they were determined not to be mere pawns.

The soldiers’ formal complaint against Governor García and a later complaint by vecinos in 1754 against Governor Jacinto de Barrios y Jáuregui are striking in their similarities and indicate ongoing abuses by officials in Los Adaes against soldiers and civilians alike.⁵ In revealing some of the ways that officials wielded economic power over the military and civilian residents of their jurisdiction, a close reading of the documents offers insight into these inhabitants’ hidden transcripts. At base, Adaeseños

⁵ Not addressed here is a 1738 complaint of the soldiers against Governor Manuel Sandoval, which nearly resulted in their desertion of Presidio Los Adaes to French Louisiana; see Francis X. Galán, *Los Adaes the First Capital of Spanish Texas* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2020), pp. 101-107. Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), pp. 31-36, 57-58 details similar abuses.

argued that the government failed to recognize local needs and practices, and deliberately sought to suppress them. The persistent economic problems that the soldiers and vecinos of Los Adaes faced are outlined in their respective complaints and provide understanding of their defiant decision to return to east Texas after the Crown ordered them to abandon it.

In 1746, six soldiers from Los Adaes arrived in Mexico City with their presidio company commander's authorization to file a set of grievances against Texas Governor Francisco García Larios. Their case seemed airtight. The abuses they alleged included the governor's use of soldiers' labor for his own profit in activities, ranging from growing his crops and tending his livestock to working as his personal agents, couriers, and transporters of contraband merchandise, which the governor then sold at exorbitant prices in the presidio store. Rather than the governor's providing Crown soldiers with their allocations of gunpowder, he instead illegally sold it to nearby Caddoan groups. He blocked civilians and soldiers from a market for their crops, deliberately underpaid them for what little he purchased, and then charged them inflated prices for goods and provisions at the presidio store.

García did not deny the charges against him, but reframed his behavior in terms of the (lowly) soldiers' and vecinos' tendency toward idleness and vice, and his own altruistic service on behalf of the community of which he was the Crown's governor. After a brief investigation, Viceroy Juan Francisco de Güemes y Horcasitas not only absolved García of all charges, he also took punitive action against the soldiers for deserting their posts, absconding with part of the presidio herd of horses, and traveling

to Mexico City without leave in order to file their complaints. The rest of the presidio company was publicly reminded to remain obedient to Crown authorities.⁶

The vecinos' 1754 complaint against Governor Barrios was precipitated by his decree that compelled all those owning a house or lot (*solar*) in Los Adaes to apply for a new grant from the Crown. In their view, this action was tantamount to depriving them of their property rights that had been vested by the Crown and to cast them as supplicants to the governor's demands. This upended their notions of stability, made explicit the power he held over their fundamental need for shelter, and fueled their outrage over the restrictions he imposed on their local trade.⁷ Barrios was depicted as the opposite of a reliable and benevolent holder of authority, who was due loyalty (such sentiments were echoed later by Father Miguel Hidalgo in his 1810 *Grito de Dolores*, "down with bad government!").

The charges against Barrios echoed those filed earlier against García. For example, in 1746 the soldiers alleged that García used their labor for growing corn and tending livestock for his own profit, yet refused to purchase the crops they cultivated independently. Similarly, the vecinos in 1754 asserted that they were unable to sell produce or livestock to the presidio because Barrios kept them out of the market, in

⁶ Dⁿ Juan Francisco de Guemez y Horcasittas . . . En vista de los autos seguidos . . . contra Dⁿ Francisco Larios, 18 Jan 1747, BA.

⁷ *Autos echos . . . de muchos besinos desta R[ea]l Presidio . . .*, 27 Sept 1754, BA, f1v. The vecinos alleged that Barrios charged a fee to reregister their grants, but the decree itself made no mention of fees. Although Barrios was likely well within the law to require the re-granting, the vecinos' response suggests that the decree violated normal practices. Verbal grants for lots by the governor or presidio commander were common during the eighteenth century. Ygnacio Gonzales e Ynclan held a lot in San Antonio "with the lord governors' permission" (*con lisensia de los Señores Gov[ernado]res desta Provincia*), Bexar County Spanish Archives (BCSA), Land Grants and Sales, LGS704, 10 June 1739. In 1780, María Luisa Guerrero requested title for the San Antonio lot where she had resided for sixteen years by verbal grant (*en voz*) from Captain Luis Antonio Menchaca, BCSA, LGS275, 18 Sept 1780; Jesús F. de la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: A Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1995), p. 40.

part by ordering soldiers to grow corn and herd cattle on common fields.⁸ Soldiers alleged that García held a monopoly on cash, goods, and trade because “he was the only one with money for making purchases” (*a causa de pagarle sus sueldos solamente en generos que tenia estancados, no habiendo para las compras otras rr[ea]les que los suios*), while vecinos claimed that Governor Barrios deliberately and “completely exhausted” their “feeble strength” by the constant imposition of restrictions on their own economic activities. They also contended that García publicly intimidated the soldiers and vecinos. He convened them to threaten severe punishment and to “blow out their brains” (*les quittaria la tapa de los sesos*) should they complain about him to higher authorities.⁹ Clearly, García saw them as a high-level threat to himself as a Crown official and his economic sinecure via self-enrichment.

García stated in testimony to the Crown investigators that he provided the soldiers with seeds and implements to sharecrop in their spare time, giving them half of their harvest up front. He claimed that he stored the remainder to sell later in the year when their supplies were low – and prices were therefore higher. Barrios remarked that the vecinos were unable to produce a surplus of corn to sell at the presidio because they lacked farming implements, oxen, and access to labor other than their own. He ignored their contention that his demands for their labor meant they could not pursue their own economic self-interest. In arguing his prudence and benevolence toward the soldiers, García insisted that if he did not withhold a portion of the soldiers’ crops, they

⁸ Unlike Los Adaes, the Béxar Presidio did not produce its own supplies, but rather purchased them from the missions and contract suppliers. See discussion in previous chapter.

⁹ *Dñ Juan Francisco de Guemez y Horcasittas . . . En vista de los autos seguidos . . . contra Dñ Francisco Larios*, 18 Jan 1747, BA, ff3, 27v for quotations regarding García; *Autos echos . . . de muchos besinos desta R[ea]l Presidio . . .*, 27 Sept 1754, BA, f1v for quotations regarding Barrios.

would have to barter merchandise for food and other items from Hasinai villages in the area, or else purchase corn from French Natchitoches. For the French trade he contended they would need cash. Soldiers were indeed not paid in cash but rather paid in kind through supplies at the presidio store. As a rule they had no cash with which to make purchases. Vecinos complained to Barrios that “we have no other recourse than to barter, [and] this comes down to asking among the Indians for a hide, a deer skin, a buffalo skin, a horse” (*no nos queda d[ic]ha cosa a que apelar mas que a los arbitrios estos se rredusen a solicitar entre los indios un cuero, una gamusa, una piel de Cibola, y un caballo*). Accordingly, they demanded that he “shall cease trading with the Indians and shall decree that only we shall have the right to engage in it, because we have the right to do this” (*VS sese en el comercio de los indios disponiendo el que solo nosotros seamos las acredores al por ser a quienes toca esta acion*).¹⁰

This assertion of their right to trade with indigenous peoples reveals the importance of frontier exchange to the local economy. This trade was the Adaeseños’ strongest motivation to return to east Texas after the orders to abandon it. As discussed below, groups of vecinos traveled to trade with different indigenous groups such as the Hasinai, Bidai, Taovayas, and Lipan Apaches. Likewise, indigenous people frequently visited Spanish settlements in order to trade. Yet in the 1750s, according to testimony in 1761, Barrios aimed to exclude vecinos from this lucrative market in order to develop a monopoly for his own benefit. Their complaint revealed that they viewed such action as an abuse of power. They were not concerned about his own illicit trade per se, but they were deeply troubled that he attempted to exercise his authority to

¹⁰ *Autos echos . . . de muchos besinos desta R[ea]l Presidio . . .*, 27 Sept 1754, BA, ff1v, 2.

prevent them from engaging in it, as well. In other words, they rejected his authority because he failed to recognize and protect their economic interests. After stating their need for barter with the indigenous groups around them, the civilian complainants bitterly summarized their lack of recourse: “Your Lordship is absolute master of all, working out such measures for preventing [these items] from coming to our hands; even this road for which we have so many rights . . . no longer remains a way to repair such a great calamity” (*de todo es VS ausoluto dueño arbitrando quantos medios [?] a fin de no llegen a nuestras manos con que ni un por este camino por tantos titulos nuestro . . . no nos queda recurso para reparar tanta calamidad*).¹¹

Both García and Barrios coerced those who signed the grievances to make public disavowals of their complaints. The soldiers and vecinos could find common cause as recipients of such abusive actions, even as governors pitted their economic interests against one another. The soldiers’ experience in Mexico City revealed to everyone the risks of reporting abuses to higher government officials. Likely their punishment only increased their sense of injustice. It appears that as long as the governors based in Los Adaes¹² permitted local participation in frontier exchange with indigenous villages and French settlers in Natchitoches, the residents reciprocated by supporting each governor during his *residencia*. The complaints against governors García and Barrios reveal instances in which this custom failed. Ironically, however, their complaints resulted in reinforcing both the governors’ positions and the Adaeseños’ sense of outrage and injustice. As the previous chapter’s discussion of the 1761 proceedings against

¹¹ *Autos echos . . . de muchos besinos desta R[e]al Presidio . . .*, 27 Sept 1754, BA, f1v.

¹² Governor Ripperdá was the first to reside full time in the villa of San Antonio, ordered to do so on account of the imminent abandonment of Los Adaes, as well as the defensive needs of the villa. Bucareli to Ripperdá, 31 Oct 1771, BA.

Governor Barrios for contraband showed, witnesses took advantage of the investigation to retaliate against Barrios by providing rich details of his illicit trade. Even had they embellished the truth, they counted on impunity for their own participation in the trade because they had acted under his direct orders. Their testimony not only revealed the hidden transcript of their prior statements in the *residencia*, it also made clear the extent to which the population of Los Adaes had the skills, experience, and linguistic ability to conduct trade across the border in French-speaking Louisiana, with various tribes throughout the area, and as far south as the Gulf coast.

It is impossible to account for all settlers forced to abandon their property in Los Adaes in 1773, although the majority who could still be identified twenty years later had returned to their former locale. No census was conducted, and no documents have been identified listing heads of households or the number of families or individuals who were compelled to forsake their crops and property to make the long trek by foot to San Antonio. Adding to this uncertainty is the fact that some officials during this period estimated numbers of families, while others estimated numbers of individuals. It is clear, however, that despite orders for a complete withdrawal from east Texas, a significant number remained behind, unwilling to abandon their property, livelihoods, or French relatives in Natchitoches. For example, twenty-four people remained at Antonio Gil Ybarbo's El Lobanillo ranch, which by 1770 was the largest ranch in east Texas, described as a pueblo. Two families totaling nine people stayed behind at the former site of Mission Nacogdoches (at least one of these families was still there in 1776). Testimony in a 1774 contraband investigation indicated an unspecified number of people had remained working at the Rancho Vallesillo, just east of Los Adaes. Around

thirty-five people moved to Natchitoches without permission before the order forcing their removal. Post-abandonment, a number of French people moved into east Texas from Natchitoches in order to take over vacated ranchland and fill the void in indigenous trade.¹³ The removal policy had created a frontier vacuum that foreigners were quick to take advantage of.

No doubt the forced evacuation and the human suffering that resulted compounded the Adaeseños' sense of grievance. With only a few days' notice, the Crown order compelled them to abandon homes, tools, crops, and livestock, taking only what they could carry. Most had to travel by foot, since they lacked pack animals. During the three months it took to walk from Los Adaes to San Antonio, ten children and three adults died; more than thirty people died from privation and disease shortly after arriving at San Antonio. If somewhere between four hundred fifty and five hundred people were forced to relocate, then nearly one in ten Adaeseños perished as a result of the sudden evacuation.¹⁴ Bonding with their neighbors through shared trauma and hardships would have strengthened their sense of cohesion, and a desire to recreate their former social environment. It is unlikely that the migrants felt welcome

¹³ Herbert Eugene Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century: Studies in Spanish Colonial History and Administration* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1962), pp. 388-94; Elizabeth John, *Storms Brewed in Other Men's Worlds: The Confrontation of Indians, Spanish, and French in the Southwest, 1540-1795* 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), pp. 449-50; Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), pp. 97, 114; Alicia V. Tjarks, "Comparative Demographic Analysis of Texas, 1777-1793," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 77, no. 3 (Jan. 1974), pp. 330, 335; H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station: Texas A & M Press, 2008), p. 153; testimony of Juan Nepomuceno Travieso, 1 Aug 1774 to 28 Sept 1774, BA; James Christopher Harrison, "The Failure of Spain in East Texas: The Occupation and Abandonment of Nacogdoches, 1779-1821" (PhD diss., University of Nebraska, 1980), pp. 60-63, 77, 81, 103-5; don Juan María Ripperdá . . . proceedings against Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso and Juan Antonio Cuevas for smuggling, 1 Aug 1774, BA.

¹⁴ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 390-94.

in the villa, given that the residents there were themselves engaged in a long-running dispute with the missions over access to land and other resources.¹⁵

Almost immediately after their arrival in San Antonio, the displaced Adaeseños filed more than seventy individual complaints regarding the lack of suitable farmland available to them in San Antonio. These were consolidated into a single proceeding, through which seventy-six men petitioned the governor and the viceroy to allow their return to east Texas. Two of the men – Antonio Gil Ybarbo and Juan Gil Flores – led these efforts. Among the others were at least seven of the forty-five men who admitted in 1761 that they had participated in trade to indigenous villages on behalf of Governor Barrios, as well as another fourteen who had served as witnesses in prior *residencias*.

With Governor Ripperdá's permission, Gil Ybarbo and Flores traveled to Mexico City to present their case directly to the viceroy. Accompanying them was the Hainai *canaha* (sub-chief) Texita, who advocated for continued Spanish presence and trade with Caddoan groups in east Texas, underscoring the significance of the frontier exchange economy in the area.¹⁶ On behalf of the Adaeseño community, Gil Ybarbo and Flores requested permission to settle at the former mission of Nuestra Señora de Dolores de Los Ais. Located on the Camino Real west of the abandoned Presidio of Los Adaes, the Spanish mission of Los Ais had served as a trading site for French and

¹⁵ One example of the ongoing conflict is don Vicente Alvarez Travieso, "Protest of don Vicente Alvarez Travieso and don Juan Andrés Alvarez Travieso against Claims of the missions of San Antonio to lands," 12 Aug 1771, with further notes to 1773, Alvarez Travieso Papers, translated by Mattie Austin Hatcher, Box 2Q236, Barker Texas History Collection, Briscoe Center for American History (CAH), University of Texas, Austin.

¹⁶ Not only was Texita influential in convincing the viceroy to permit a new settlement, his own political status was enhanced when the viceroy bestowed him with a Spanish uniform and cane in recognition of his efforts. Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p. 387; John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 451; F. Todd Smith, *The Caddo Indians: Tribes at the Convergence of Empires, 1542-1854* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1995), pp. 72-73.

indigenous trade (discussed in Chapter Four). At the time of abandonment, the wood structures of the mission, including the church and dwellings, were described as in good condition.¹⁷ With its buildings, garden, orchard, and reliable source of water, it would have served as a stable base for a new settlement. More significantly, Gil Ybarbo's previously-thriving Rancho del Lobanillo lay just to its east. Despite the evacuation orders, a sizeable number of people had remained at El Lobanillo to maintain its operations. Gil Ybarbo and his fellow Adaeseños clearly intended to resume their former trade without the presence of Spanish authorities to hinder them.

The resettlement of east Texas was accomplished in the face of multiple layers of conflicting policy decisions and bureaucratic interests. These layers reached from the Adaeseños at the lowest level to the viceroy and his advisors at the highest. Between them were the successive governors of Texas. In addition, Athanase de Mézières, the lieutenant governor of Natchitoches, now part of the Department of Cuba, was deeply involved in Texas matters through his treaty making with various Norteño groups, working in tribal territories that predated and crossed Spanish jurisdictions. Further complicating the chain of command during these years was the implementation of new levels of military administration called for in the *Reglamento* of 1772, which provided for the immediate appointment of a commandant inspector, and a later appointment of a commandant general. The former post answered to the viceroy, while the latter – first appointed in 1776 – was directly responsible to the king.¹⁸ Thus, two separate channels of authority, one evolving and each with its own priorities, were in effect during the

¹⁷ Fray Gaspar José de Solís, "Diary of a Visit of Inspection of the Texas Missions Made by fray Gaspar José de Solís in the Year 1767-68," trans. Margaret Kenney Kress, intro. Mattie Austin Hatcher, *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (July 1931), pp. 67-68.

¹⁸ Moorhead, *The Presidio*, pp. 68, 75-76.

1770s. The Adaeseños effectively gamed the system through their deliberate choices about from whom – or even whether – to seek permission for their actions as they attempted to recover their homes and livelihoods in east Texas.

At the heart of these conflicting interests were new Bourbon priorities weighed against local views on indigenous trade and diplomacy. Just as restrictive Spanish mercantile policies fostered extralegal trade, so too did Crown policies on indigenous diplomacy. For much of the eighteenth century, with a few notable exceptions, the Bourbon rulers of Spain continued the Hapsburg approach to indigenous relations based on missionization and agrarianism.¹⁹ French and British practices, in contrast, emphasized trade. When France ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1762, it had a long history of trade relations with indigenous peoples not only within its borders, but also with groups throughout the eastern half of Texas. Likewise, as previously discussed, Texas governors and settlers had followed similar practices of petty or wholesale exchange in contravention of official policy. When the missions, presidios, and civilian settlement were withdrawn from east Texas in 1773, so, too, were the opportunities for such trade. It was not until 1786, when Viceroy Bernardo de Gálvez issued his *Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain*, that this policy changed to allow designated traders to provide goods to particular indigenous groups. As historian

¹⁹ José Areche, fiscal of the Audiencia of México, articulated this view to Viceroy Bucareli in response to Governor Ripperdá's request to open trade with the Nations of the North as part of a peace treaty initiative he had undertaken. Areche stated that if trade in firearms were to be permitted with friendly indigenous nations, those same weapons would end up in enemy hands through intertribal trade networks. He argued that providing them with missions and agricultural implements would alleviate both their need for firearms for hunting, and their desire to trade with the French and English. In contrast to the 1753 fiscal's response to Barrios discussed in the previous chapter, Areche's inflexible position left no room for individual discretion in matters of indigenous policy. Areche to Bucareli, 31 July 1772, in Athanase de Mézières, *Athanase de Mézières and the Louisiana-Texas Frontier 1768-1780*, ed. Herbert Eugene Bolton (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1914), Vol. 1, pp. 277-82.

David Weber observed, however, the new policy largely formalized the extralegal trade practices already in place.²⁰ Focused on pragmatism rather than principle, the Adaeseños who returned to east Texas in 1774 were on the leading edge of openly trading with autonomous indigenous peoples. Peaceful relations would break down only when trade supplies did not meet tribal demand.

Outside the Spanish chain of command, many indigenous polities supported the reestablishment of Spanish settlements in east Texas. Indeed, when Governor Ripperdá went to east Texas to implement the evacuation orders, the Hasinai *caddí* (head chief) Sauto, accompanied by a large cohort of tribal delegates from the area, met with the governor to ask that the Spanish settlements remain. Whether sanctioned or not, the economic interests of the Spanish population were intertwined with those of many indigenous groups. Governor Ripperdá opposed the decision to evacuate east Texas. In fact, from the start of his tenure in 1770 he had hoped to expand Spanish presence farther north among the Wichitas and other Norteño groups in the Red River area – peoples with whom French traders had traditionally dealt. Ripperdá supported the Adaeseños' return to east Texas on the grounds that a Spanish settlement there was vital to maintaining peace and trade with indigenous groups friendly to Crown interests, in particular with the hope of securing their alliances with Spain against Apaches and Comanches. He also expected that such alliances would create a barrier to

²⁰ David J. Weber, *Barbaros: Spaniards and Their Savages in the Age of Enlightenment* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2005), p. 193.

British traders, now closer than ever since France had ceded its territory east of the Mississippi River to Great Britain in 1763.²¹

After receiving the Adaeseños' petition, the viceroy fray Antonio María Bucareli y Ursúa consulted first with the *fiscal*, and subsequently with a *junta* of the royal treasury. Persuaded by the argument that the Crown need bear no expense for resettlement, aside from a ten-year stipend for a missionary to minister to the new settlement, the advisors and the viceroy initially approved the request. In agreement with Ripperdá, they hoped to prevent British and other foreign traders from developing trade with Caddoan and Norteño groups.²² Given that European imperial rivalries commonly played out in North America through alliances with local indigenous polities, officials in Mexico City recognized the need to maintain ongoing indigenous relationships despite the Crown's military reorganization of the northern frontier. While it would be years before Spain formalized indigenous trade policy in Texas, here was an early – if implicit – recognition that trade was an indispensable component of peace and therefore of Spain's effective presence on the ground. Unlike the response to Barrios' request to open trade twenty years earlier, however, the current officials gave no sign of willingness to allow either the governor or the Adaeseños to engage in any form of trade, discretely or not.

In the meantime, while Gil Ybarbo, Flores, and Texita were in Mexico City, Commandant Inspector Hugo Oconór learned of the Adaeseños plan to return to east

²¹ John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 421-23; Smith, *The Caddo Indians*, pp. 68-73; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 394-98; ; Galán, *Los Adaes*, pp. 255-57; Areche to Bucareli, 31 July 1772, in Mézières, *Athanase de Mézières*, Vol. 1, pp. 277-82.

²² The fiscal Pedro Galindo Navarro later summarized these actions for the Commandant General Teodoro Francisco de Croix; see Galindo Navarro to Croix, 18 Jan 1780, BA.

Texas. Among his responsibilities as the first commandant inspector of the Provincias Internas, Oconór was tasked with carrying out the realignment of presidios across the northern frontier. Because the military, missionary, and civilian abandonment of east Texas was part of this plan, approval of the civilians' return would directly contravene new Crown policy. Following Rubí's recommendations in the 1772 *Reglamento*, the Crown had determined the east Texas settlements to be both needless and unprofitable. This concern with economic efficiency, however, was focused on the royal treasury, not on the needs of local inhabitants pursuing their livelihoods nor the broader imperial issues of trade and diplomacy. Having served as provisional governor of Texas from 1767 to 1770, Oconór was well-acquainted with the supply problems and extralegal trade opportunities at both Los Adaes and San Antonio. He was also aware that a number of families had defied the evacuation orders and remained at Los Adaes, Nacogdoches, and Gil Ybarbo's Lobanillo ranch in east Texas. As Ripperdá's immediate predecessor, Oconór suspected the governor of deliberately stalling distribution of land in San Antonio to the Adaeseños, then supporting their resettlement proposal in order to profit from continued access to contraband.

After Oconór's belated yet vigorous protest against the Adaeseños' return to east Texas, the viceroy stipulated that the new settlement be at least one hundred leagues (260 miles, or 420 km) distant from Natchitoches. This compromise eliminated the Adaeseños' proposed site of Los Ais as a new settlement and, authorities hoped, the greater distance would prevent contraband trade. The viceroy also rejected Gil Ybarbo and Flores's alternative request to be allowed to move with their families to the Louisiana post at Natchitoches, rather than settle in San Antonio. Yet the allocation of

authority between the offices of the commandant inspector and the Texas governor seemed murky. At the same time the viceroy ordered Oconór to grant final disposition to the Adaeseños' request, with the likely result of rejecting it, he also ordered Ripperdá to assist the vecinos in selecting a site for their new settlement. Given the conflicting opinions of the two men, their decisions were bound to clash. Headquartered in the Villa de Chihuahua and preoccupied with more serious military concerns elsewhere, Oconór failed to follow up on the matter.²³ His default allowed the Adaeseños to circumvent Crown policy and reestablish Spanish presence in east Texas. It would last nearly another half century, until the insurrections of the 1810s (discussed in Chapter 6).

The Adaeseños established the pueblo of Nuestra Señora del Pilar de Bucareli – so named in honor of the viceroy – in August, 1774. Located on the east bank of the Trinity River in southeast Texas, the settlement was roughly fifty leagues (130 miles, or 210 km) upriver from the former site of Presidio San Agustín, and only a scant league or so from the main village of the Bidai. Neighboring to the north and east were Hasinai villages; to the south, Atakapan; and to the west, Tonkawan. Many of these peoples had long-standing trading partnerships for goods from Louisiana, either directly with French traders or through Spanish middlemen. Despite the fact that Louisiana was now officially a Spanish colony, its border with Texas would continue to be maintained as rigidly as when it divided two empires.²⁴ This did nothing to stop the flow of goods through the region, and the Adaeseños wasted little time in reestablishing former links

²³ John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 451-53, 537-38; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 403-404.

²⁴ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 4, pp. 211-13; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 377-80.

and rejoining local trade networks. Within months, the settlement became notorious for extralegal trade, particularly in tobacco.

In fact, travel to Bucareli offered other Spanish residents the opportunity to participate in the frontier exchange economy – particularly for tobacco, which served as one of several forms of informal currency. In April, 1775, for example, Jacinto de Mora, an Adaeseño soldier at Béxar, was arrested at that presidio for selling tobacco from Natchitoches. Mora had been part of an escort to Bucareli, where resident Nicolás Beausoleille happened to owe him five *pesos*. Beausoleille was a trader from Natchitoches to the Bidai villages, and had resided in Bucareli since its establishment. At the time that the escort arrived from San Antonio, Beausoleille and his partner were collecting deer hides from the Bidai in return for tobacco, blankets, shirts, metal and flint strike-a-lights, large knives (*belduques*), vermillion, beads, gunpowder, bullets, rifles, and small pots. Once they had collected the hides, they would take them to Natchitoches.

When Mora asked Beausoleille to give him tobacco to cover the five-*peso* debt, Beausoleille replied that he was not authorized to sell tobacco to Spaniards. Mora then asked a Bidai man whom he knew to claim that he had paid Mora the five *pesos* and in return wished Beausoleille to give him the tobacco. The man subsequently provided the tobacco to Mora, and the debt was settled. Mora testified that, because he had obtained the tobacco from a Bidai, he assumed there was no duty on it, while Beausoleille claimed ignorance of the subterfuge. Both Mora and Beausoleille were adamant that they had not carried out the transaction directly with one another

because it was prohibited. The implication of a middleman for indirect trade became a common plea for those charged with petty contraband.

Upon his return to Béxar, Mora hid the tobacco next to a chapel²⁵ (Figure 1, below) on the other side of the river before entering the presidio and undergoing



Figure 1: Detail from 1764 Luis Antonio Menchaca map of San Antonio river valley, showing the capilla of Mission San Antonio de Valero in the upper right of the image, just on the right side of the road before crossing the river into the Presidio.

This is where Jacinto de Mora stashed his contraband tobacco.²⁶

an obligatory inspection by Governor Ripperdá for contraband. He later retrieved the tobacco and sold it to Marcos Hernández. Hernández was originally from the Río Grande presidio; he served most of his military career in Béxar, then retired to live as a farmer and *arriero*. Hernández gave the bundles of tobacco to his wife for safekeeping

²⁵ “*junto a una Capilla q[u]e ay del otro lado del río*”: this is the Capilla de Santa Cruz, the only building anywhere in the province referred to as a “capilla;” it was administered by Mission San Antonio de Valero. By the time Mora and Hernández hid their contraband there, it had been abandoned for a number of years. Although the capilla was listed on Valero’s 1762 *visita* report, it did not appear on the 1772 inventory, confirming its recent abandonment. The structure is depicted on both Luis Antonio Menchaca’s 1764 map and Joseph Ramón de Urrutia’s 1767 map of the presidio.

²⁶ Captain don Luis Antonio Menchaca, “*Mapa del Presidio de San Antonio de Béxar I sus Misiones de la Provincia de Texas, F[ec]ho en 24 del Mes de Marzo de 1764, Por el Capitan Don Luis Antonio Menchaca que lo es del d[ic]ho Presidio*,” John Carter Brown Library, Brown University, Providence, Rhode Island.

until he could use it in trade with Lipan Apaches who visited San Antonio, for a mule or hides.²⁷

The testimony highlights ordinary petty exchange among individual Spaniards and between them and individual indigenous people, all of whom shared a common understanding of what to expect in their trade. Beausoleille even remarked that the officer with the escort, Corporal Domingo Pérez, also attempted to purchase some tobacco from him, using silver *pesos*, in order to trade for a chamois and something to eat from the Bidai. Although he refused to sell the tobacco to Pérez, the officer likely could have found a way to bend the rules, as had Mora.

The confiscated tobacco in this case was a relatively small amount, weighing a total of seven pounds (*libras*), eleven ounces (*onzas*). Likely grown in Louisiana, it was described as second or third grade quality, in good condition. The regulated price of any grade tobacco within the royal *estanco*, as noted in the proceedings, was two *reales* and one *cuartilla* per net pound. Since the two confiscated bundles were valued at five *pesos*, the case discloses that the black market value of tobacco was significantly higher than the official price. This suggests that legal tobacco was generally unavailable in the province, another indication that supply lines for legitimate goods from the interior remained inadequate.

Viceroy Bucareli's displeasure with such activities was immediate, and he instructed Governor Ripperdá to move the settlement closer to the center of the province in order to provide stricter oversight. Noting the settlement's isolation from

²⁷ *Dilixens[ia]s contra Jacinto de Mora y Marcos Hernandez, Sovre el Decomiso De dos Manoxos De tavaco De Natchitoches*, 9 April 1775, BA. Although his wife had possession of the tobacco, she was not asked to testify.

other Spanish communities, as well as the lack of a priest to administer rites,²⁸ Bucareli warned that its unusual autonomy would attract other settlers, leading to the depopulation of Texas presidios. He stated “it would appear that many people are in this village as much to be free from sudden enemy attacks” as for the liberty to work and trade with other people.²⁹ He tersely ordered Governor Ripperdá to prohibit their trade with the French and indigenous peoples. By referring to Frenchmen as foreigners (*extranjeros*), Bucareli reinforced the fact that, despite Spain’s sovereignty over Louisiana, trade across the border with Louisiana remained officially prohibited. Bucareli further admonished Ripperdá that “it is very desirable to avoid by all means possible the continuation of fraud that because of the short distance of these settlements to Natchitoches is not difficult to commit, and that in view of the penalties that the offenders bear, the residents should leave aside these prohibited trades.”³⁰ The unwritten contract that allowed officials to find ways to profit from their office did not extend to the ordinary residents who made up the general population.

Ripperdá may well have recognized the irony of Viceroy Bucareli’s rejection of a settlement that attracted residents because of its opportunities for trade. No documents have come to light indicating that he made any effort to remove the settlement as instructed. Indeed, he soon encouraged the development of a local cloth

²⁸ The first priest was assigned to the community the following year; *fr[ay] Josef Fran[cis]co Mariano de la Garza, hijo de el Ap[ostoli]co Colegio de Propaganda Fide*, 14 Nov 1787, BA.

²⁹ “. . . muchas gentes aparecerían estar en esta población así por hallarse libres de los ynsultos de los enemigos por comercio que tienen con ellos, como por que gozan de libertad para [manuscript torn] . . .,” Viceroy Antonio María de Bucareli to Governor Juan María Vicencio, the Barón de Ripperdá, 26 July 1775, BA.

³⁰ “es mui conveniente se procure por todos los medios posibles evitar la continuacion de fraude que por la corta distancia de esas Poblaciones a Nachitoches no es difcil se cometen y que los vecinos a vista de las penas que sientan los contraventores se abstraigan de estos prohibidos comercios,” Bucareli to Ripperdá, Sept. 13, 1775, BA.

industry by sending a weaver, together with live sheep, a supply of wool, and cotton seed, which grew well in the area. Additionally, based on the large herds of buffalo and feral cattle in the area, he expected that the settlers could produce tallow and soap to sell to the presidios as an alternative to supplies from Saltillo.³¹ There is no evidence that such industries were ever actually developed. Moreover, Ripperdá stressed to Commandant General Teodoro de Croix, the settlement was of “great importance” due to its proximity to the coast.³² Long a source of concern as a clandestine entry point for French traders, by the 1770s British ships increasingly dropped anchor in the bays and river mouths along the upper Texas coast. There, Akokisas, Atakapas, Bidais, Karankawas, and Cocos exchanged hides, horses and mules with British traders for arms, ammunition, and other merchandise.³³ Gil Ybarbo and his militia members made occasional excursions to reconnoiter the coast, and also received occasional reports on coastal trade from Bidai informants. To prevent their trade with foreigners, the Spaniards would need to provide an alternative – but as yet they were unable to do so, still hampered by the overland distance from the interior and the prohibition on imports from Louisiana.

While Ripperdá emphasized the new settlement of Bucareli’s strategic location with respect to maintaining indigenous alliances, its most vocal proponent was Athanase de Mézières. This official had extensive experience trading with several tribes in northern Texas beginning in the 1740s, when Louisiana was under French

³¹ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 4, p. 317.

³² Ripperdá to Croix, 27 April 1777 in Mézières, *Athanase de Mézières*, Vol. 2, pp. 123-25.

³³ F. Todd Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), p. 22. One of the unintended consequences of the 1772 abandonment of Presidio San Agustín and Mission Nuestra Señora de la Luz, near the mouth of the Trinity River was a southern firearms network in which Akokisas, Atakapas, and Bidais became middlemen in the French trade with Apaches; see John, *Storms Brewed*, p. 438.

sovereignty. After 1763, the Spanish government retained him in his post as commander of Natchitoches on account of his intimate knowledge of and practical experience with these groups. Mézières openly promoted the potential commercial advantages of the settlement of Bucareli, if trade were to be permitted between Texas and Louisiana. He explained to Commandant General Croix – who served as the first commandant general of the Interior Provinces from 1776 to 1783 – that its inhabitants could easily and profitably export wheat and beef to New Orleans, navigating the Trinity River to the coast, then sailing east to the port city. Such trade would both fill a great need in Louisiana and allow Bucareli to grow into a productive and self-sustaining community. Croix was sufficiently convinced to repeat this argument to the viceroy. The following year, Mézières introduced a more ambitious proposal, extending his plan to include the export from a hypothetical port at Bahía del Espíritu Santo to Louisiana, Tampico, and Campeche, of “meats, hides, lard, tallow, wool, flour, grain, mules, salt, and other goods peculiar to rural economy, in which this province abounds to so little profit.”³⁴ In his view, the area’s plentiful natural resources and the enterprises they could sustain merely needed a suitable market.

Such a market, apparently for Mézières, did not include indigenous nations. Like his superiors in Mexico City, Mézières did not support commerce between residents and indigenous peoples, despite evidence that trade was of mutual benefit to the communities engaged in it. For example, vecinos hunted buffalo for their hides, which they used for trade with the neighboring Karankawa, Tejas, Quitsais, Tonkawa, Mayeses, Tawakonis, Jaranames, Bidais, and Orcoquisas. Not only did vecinos travel to

³⁴ Mézières to Croix, 18 March 1778, in Mézières, *Athanase de Mézières*, Vol. 2, pp. 187-90; Croix to Bucareli, 23 Sept 1778, *op. cit.*, pp. 224-25; Mézières to Croix, 7 Oct 1779, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

their villages, they and the French traders who lived among them also visited the new settlement for trade. Yet Mézières disparaged such trade, singling out the neighboring Bidais as an impediment to Bucareli's economic development: "having forsaken the chase as a means of subsistence, [the Bidais] beg constantly for their living in this new pueblo, and thus contribute not to the relief but to the hindrance of its own poverty-stricken and needy inhabitants." Nevertheless, Mézières repeatedly mentioned the importance of Bucareli's accessibility to so many different indigenous groups. While recognizing the strategic significance of their partnerships with the Spanish settlements, he downplayed the role of trade in these relationships. Governor Ripperdá, too, had emphasized the tangible benefits of the alliances: indigenous informants shared information, returned stolen livestock, reported criminal behavior, and identified the locations of foreign traders.³⁵

For five years, as officials exchanged opinions of the settlement's merits, its inhabitants endured failed crops, flooding, and several Comanche attacks (which Mézières observed they had provoked themselves through misunderstandings). By early 1779, the restive inhabitants of Bucareli burned their homes and moved to the abandoned mission site of Nacogdoches – neither seeking nor obtaining official approval for their second migration and settlement. Yet by this time, their rejection of Crown orders to abandon the area seemed of little concern to officials. The new location provoked the ire solely of Mézières, on the basis that the move benefited only the settlers and would damage strategic alliances with tribes in the lower Trinity River

³⁵ Mézières to Croix, 18 March 1778, in Mézières, *Athanase de Mézières*, Vol. 2, pp. 187-89; Ripperdá to Croix, 27 April 1777, *op. cit.*, pp. 124, 127-28.

area. He continued to hope that Bucareli would be resettled, and that permission would be granted for it to set up trade with merchants in New Orleans.³⁶

No official other than Mézières challenged the unauthorized relocation of the settlement, despite the fact that it was less than half the mandated one hundred-league distance from Natchitoches. Significantly, the new site at Nacogdoches had the support of Commandant General Croix, whose position was independent of the viceroy. The office of the viceroy was in transition between April and August 1779, from the tenure of Bucareli to that of Martín de Mayorga. Unlike Bucareli and the former Commandant Inspector Oconór, Croix supported the resettlement of east Texas, particularly for the purpose of restoring and strengthening relationships with Caddoan peoples. While Croix held Mézières in high esteem, as military commander he made clear that Caddoan alliances were more important than those of the smaller coastal and inland groups that Mézières favored. After the Adaeseños abandoned the site of Bucareli, Croix instructed Texas governor Domingo Cabello to report to him regarding whether the new site should remain occupied. Croix himself favored Nacogdoches, which “seems best to me because the withdrawal of those persons into the [nearer region of the] Province would be prejudicial to plans being considered, by failing to cultivate the friendship of the Hasinai Indians and other allied tribes.” He promised what support he could provide the new settlement, while leaving the final decision regarding the matter to Cabello.³⁷

³⁶ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 417, 432-438, 443-44. According to Bolton, it is unclear whether the burning of homes was deliberate, but about half were destroyed. Either way, the conflagration reinforced the residents’ desire to leave the settlement.

³⁷ Croix to Cabello, 14 May 1779, BA.

While these deliberations were underway, Mézières continued to advocate for the settlers' return to Bucareli, as well as for the relaxation of trade restrictions with Louisiana and the opening of a port on the Texas coast. Based on Mézières's past successes in negotiating peace treaties with the Nations of the North, and his current peace overtures with Comanche groups in Texas, Croix had scrutinized his abilities and determined to appoint him to replace Cabello as Texas governor as part of a broader scheme regarding Apache relations. He notified Mézières of his appointment in October, 1779, but Mézières's untimely death the following month, from injuries sustained when thrown from a horse, ended Croix's opportunity to implement his plan. His passing also removed the only effective opposition to the settlement at Nacogdoches; by the end of 1779, Croix swiftly put in place a new series of measures to strengthen Spanish presence in the area.³⁸

In the wake of Mézières's death, this change in policy resulted in the de facto approval of the settlement at Nacogdoches and, within a few years, the shift of the center of regional trade from Natchitoches to Nacogdoches. Croix's greatest support for the new settlement of Nacogdoches was the adoption of the French method of securing and maintaining indigenous alliances through trade. To this end, he approved the establishment of a trading post at Nacogdoches, with Antonio Gil Ybarbo as its head and José María Armant, a merchant and resident of Natchitoches, commissioned as trader. Croix had appointed Gil Ybarbo as militia captain and justice in October, 1779, with an annual salary of five hundred *pesos*; by the end of the year, he had also added the title of

³⁸ Donald E. Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Notable Men and Women of Spanish Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1999), pp. 171-76.

lieutenant governor of Nacogdoches.³⁹ Approval of both licensed trade and a militia to support local priorities in the area, despite their contravention of Crown intentions, was a triumph of Adaeseño initiative. Abandoning Bucareli for Nacogdoches, they chose to reconnect with Caddoan and Norteño trade networks, which were significantly larger than those of the coastal and inland groups in the lower Trinity River area. Bourbon emphasis on frontier-wide economizing was thwarted by local views that peace through trade was both profitable and less expensive than military domination.⁴⁰

The new Bourbon policies had immediate and long-term impacts on the regional economy of Texas and Louisiana. In Louisiana, Bourbon policies shifted economic activity away from indigenous trade to cultivating tobacco, indigo, corn, and cotton; and ranching. In order to encourage the production of tobacco, Crown officials promised to purchase it for New Spain's tobacco monopoly. Moreover, in contrast to the open trade system under French rule, the Spanish Crown restricted trade with indigenous peoples to a small number of licensed traders. Further, due to increasing pressure from the British settlements and traders on the east side of the Mississippi, the Crown encouraged immigration to Louisiana, drawing new settlers first from Europe, and later from the United States. By 1780, increased economic production led to improved roads

³⁹ Smith, *Caddo Indians*, p. 74; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 441-46; Cabello to Croix, 12 Nov 1779, BA; Cabello to Croix, 30 Mar 1779, BA; Croix to Cabello, 15 Oct 1779, BA; Cabello to Croix, 31 Aug 1779, BA.

⁴⁰ Cabello informed Croix that he and Gil Ybarbo had confirmed that the friendly Nations of the North would remain on good terms only if they were able to trade with the Spaniards at Nacogdoches. Cabello to Croix, 7 Feb 1780, BA. The Adaeseños were not the only frontier settlers who sought a thriving commercial environment in which to live. Historian James Brooks described a strong parallel with east Texas when he wrote of New Mexico vecinos in 1778: "who could blame the common citizenry if they wished to join in the rewards of little-regulated interethnic trade? In time, that impulse would lead to Spanish resettlement of the Mount Taylor area, but their love of liberty would put them at odds with their colonial administrators." James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002), p. 115.

and waterways from northwestern Louisiana to New Orleans;⁴¹ these improvements also benefited exchange across the Texas-Louisiana border.

Against this backdrop, officials in Texas initiated a new phase of contraband prosecution. With one exception,⁴² prior to the founding of Bucareli 1774 there are no identified cases involving contraband against anyone in Texas other than the provincial governors. From this time on, the records of contraband investigations reveal a significant departure from earlier trends, involving primarily individuals of lower social status in the military and civilian population, including soldiers, vecinos, muleteers, laborers, and Hispanic or indigenous servants. Many of them worked on behalf of some of the more prominent families of the province, importing goods or exporting livestock, but their employers were rarely prosecuted (some of the exceptions are discussed below). Thus, a wealthier individual may have had a financial stake in the trade, but those they hired to transport the goods were at actual legal jeopardy.

In all likelihood, the number of cases falls far short of the volume of goods clandestinely introduced into Texas through the frontier exchange economy. Most of the prosecutions involved small amounts of goods intended for personal consumption, rather than for widespread distribution. For example, a number of men were arrested for bartering nothing more than small amounts of contraband tobacco, or powder and shot. Regardless of the amount of extralegal goods, pursuit of these cases involved the confiscation, inventory, and appraisal of contraband items; then selling them locally to

⁴¹ Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, pp. 16-18, 127-41; Lawrence Kinnaird, "American Penetration into Spanish Louisiana," in George P. Hammond, *New Spain and the Anglo-American West*, Vol. 1 (1932; reprint ed. New York: Kraus Reprint Co., 1969), pp. 212-217.

⁴² The exception was the unprosecuted 1766 case against fray Francisco Zedano, discussed in the previous chapter.

the highest bidder. In this manner, Spanish authorities incorporated illicit resources into legal trade and thereby legitimized and profited from them. Contraband investigations thus provide important insight into the volume and direction of the trade, which might otherwise remain unknown. As an incentive to identify, seize, and prosecute contraband, informants, apprehenders, and judge were each awarded a portion of the funds derived from the public auction of the goods. The balance was credited to the royal treasury.

The port of New Orleans was the entry point and terminus for much of this trade. Goods that flowed through the frontier exchange economy entered Texas through two principal routes, transported by water from New Orleans to either Natchitoches or Opelousas. The latter two locations served as transition points from water to land transportation into Texas, similar to the gateway communities described in Chapter One.⁴³ Natchitoches served the northern route of contraband trade. In the same way it had earlier supplied Los Adaes, during this later period it supplied first Bucareli, and subsequently Nacogdoches. From these settlements, goods were exchanged to vecinos or taken to the many indigenous villages in the area, where they entered the much larger Caddo-Wichita-Comanche trade network. The southern route linked trade to San Antonio through a network of trails from Opelousas to San Antonio, some by way of La Bahía; Opelousas was also the connecting point for the Atakapa-Bidai-Apache trade network.

⁴³ For descriptions of how goods were moved by water from New Orleans to Natchitoches, see H. Sophie Burton, "Vagabonds along the Spanish Louisiana-Texas Frontier, 1769-1803: 'Men Who are Evil, Lazy, Gluttonous, Drunken, Libertinous, Dishonest, Mutinous, etc. etc. etc - And Those are Their Virtues,'" *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 113, no. 4 (April 2010): 439-467. For probable water routes between New Orleans and Opelousas, see Lyle Givens Williams, "A Water Route from the Opelousas to the Mississippi in 1791," *Attakapas Gazette* 5, no. 1 (1970): 5-10.

The cases against vecinos and soldiers suggest that they used the northern smuggling route more frequently than the southern, but the goods exported and imported through each route were similar. Some cases provide evidence that several of the east Texas ranches remained occupied and in operation following the 1773 evacuation. Other cases reveal that ranches in the Nacogdoches area were important way stations in the transportation and distribution of contraband goods. Regardless of which route was followed, illicit goods often converged at San Antonio – with a direct effect on local trade. Even before Los Adaes was abandoned, the villa of San Fernando's *ayuntamiento* had acknowledged its disruptions: "Those selling without a license will be fined by this municipal council and justices, because they are destroying [the commerce] of this [Villa], creating as well, many discordances and transgressions."⁴⁴

While officials such as Ripperdá and Mézières tried in vain to develop Texas commerce, several merchants and traders illustrate how the frontier exchange networks continued to introduce and distribute contraband goods in Texas. One example is Marcos Vidal, a petty merchant who hired local vecinos and mission residents for his surreptitious journeys to export livestock to Natchitoches and import a range of extralegal goods from there to Los Adaes and San Antonio. Another example is the Menchaca family, based in San Antonio, who traded through the southern route via Opelousas to New Orleans. During the eighteenth century, several generations of this family held contracts to supply the soldiers and military families of the Béxar presidio. Their legitimate trade helped cover broader-based activity in contraband, particularly during the 1770s and '80s. Juan de Ysurrieta, a merchant who held a joint contract with

⁴⁴ Decree of the Municipal Council of San Fernando, 26 Oct 1760, BA.

Antonio Gil Ybarbo to provision the settlement at Bucareli,⁴⁵ was affiliated with the Menchacas through marriage and participated in their trade networks as well as Gil Ybarbo's. Gil Ybarbo himself, having spearheaded the post-abandonment return to east Texas, spent decades as a key player importing goods into Texas via the northern route through Natchitoches. He played a similar role as had the provincial governors previously based in Los Adaes, combining indigenous trade with provisioning local vecinos. Gil Ybarbo and the Menchaca family represent organized, long-term extralegal trade, but there were many others who took advantage of opportunities to participate in commerce with Louisiana.⁴⁶

The webs of traders and travelers sometimes overlapped in east Texas, revealing informal face-to-face economic opportunities that presented themselves to people who often moved freely, and at times clandestinely, through the landscape. One group of contraband cases, although investigated separately, jointly reflects intersecting networks based in San Antonio that extended south into the interior and northeast into Caddoan territory and Louisiana. The proceedings against Marcos Vidal and his associates Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso, Juan Antonio Cuevas, and the brothers Juan Antonio and José Manuel Díaz together offer insight into how frontier petty merchants operated, the ways small-scale connections evolved, and how competition and rivalry affected this lucrative trade.

⁴⁵ Juan Bautista de Ysurrieta and Antonio Gil Ybarbo, contract for sale of goods, 10 Feb 1776, BA.

⁴⁶ Other multigenerational family trading networks in the area are examined in Patricia R. Lemée, "Tios and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (Jan 1998), pp. 340-58; and David La Vere, "Between Kinship and Capitalism: French and Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian Trade," *Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 2 (May 1998), pp. 197-218.

Marcos Vidal was a trader who relocated from Los Adaes to San Antonio in 1773 as part of the general evacuation. He opened a small shop (*puesto*) in San Antonio to continue his business.⁴⁷ He had ties with merchants in both northern Mexico and Louisiana. Local residents could purchase a variety of goods in his shop, including different types of cloth, ribbon, thread, shoes, stockings, aprons, smocks, hats, coral, gun bores, soap, wine, *aguardiente*, *campechana* (an unleavened sweet bread made with wheat flour), *mistela* (fruit liqueur), flowers, chocolate, piloncillo, bananas, figs, fig cake, raisins, garlic, flour, maize, and *colación* (flavored candies). Through the shop, Vidal also provided his customers with small cash loans; most were for one or two *pesos*, but they ranged from as little as a few *reales* to a high of fourteen *pesos*. In the same way that customers could purchase goods on credit, these cash loans accrued to each person's account for later settlement. Vidal's accounts receivable based on credit purchases and loans totaled more than five hundred twenty-five *pesos* in 1773. In 1773, he obtained on credit 885 *pesos* worth of goods from Spain, from the merchant Francisco Antonio de Figueroa y Losada of the mining camp San Carlos del Vallecillo (Nuevo Santander). The following year he repaid nearly six hundred *pesos* to Figueroa, and also obtained a contract to supply maize to the Béxar Presidio.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Later testimony asserted that Vidal had brought his goods from Los Adaes to San Antonio, and buried them in a field to avoid discovery. Some textiles and around one hundred bundles of tobacco were later stolen from this cache. Proceedings against Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso, and Juan Antonio Cuevas, 1 Aug 1774, BA.

⁴⁸ Francisco Antonio de Figueroa y Losada vs. Marcos Vidal, 29 Jan 1779 to 11 June 1783, BA; *Quaderno perteneciente a Dn Marcos Vidal* (Account Book belonging to Marcos Vidal), 1773, BA; "En satisfacción de lo que manifiesta el precedente Decreto" (statement of Barón de Ripperdá), 30 Jan 1779, BA. For descriptions of foods, see Ricardo Muñoz Zurita, *Diccionario Enciclopédico de Gastronomía Mexicana* (México: Editorial Clío, 2000). In comparison, the customer debt to Vidal was about one quarter of the customer debt on Fernando de Beramendi's accounts upon his death in 1783; see above Chapter Three.

Around the time Bucareli was established in 1774, Vidal journeyed to Natchitoches from San Antonio in order to repay a debt with a large herd of mules. Before the journey, Vidal received two letters from a merchant there referred to as Mermellon, from whom he purchased goods and tobacco the previous year. Mermellon wrote that the Lieutenant Governor of Natchitoches, Athanase de Mézières, was absent from Louisiana, and that he had permission for Vidal to come pay his debt.⁴⁹ Vidal hired eleven men to wrangle the mule herd, among them local vecino Nepomuceno Travieso, and Adaeseños Joaquín Benítez, Bartholomé de Sierra and his sons Gregorio and Cristobal. The Adaeseños were experienced smugglers: Benítez and the senior Sierra were among those who had brought the 1754 complaint against Governor Barrios, but were coerced into denying their claims against him. Sierra testified in 1761 that he had been a participant in the extensive contraband trade that Governor Barrios orchestrated.⁵⁰ Matías Guzmán was from Reynosa; his brother was a soldier at the Béxar Presidio. Two other unnamed men were also from outside the area. Although no details of the terms of their employment were recorded, Benítez later stated that Vidal had advanced him a few *pesos* to repay a debt before their departure, but had not paid the twenty-five *pesos* promised for the trip.

Leaving San Antonio, the group traveled southeast along the San Antonio River to the ranch⁵¹ of Ignacio de la Peña, where they picked up seventy-one unbroken mules, and eleven to fifteen pack mules loaded with empty packs and barrels. Benítez stated

⁴⁹ Proceedings against Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso, and Juan Antonio Cuevas, 1 Aug 1774, BA.

⁵⁰ *Autos echos . . . de muchos besinos desta R[ea]l Presidio . . .*, 27 Sept 1754, BA; *En el R[ea]l Pres[idi]o de N[uest]ra S[e]ñor[a] del Pilar de los Adaes*, 22 Jan 1761, BA.

⁵¹ This most likely was Rancho Chayopines, located on the south side of the San Antonio River. One of the roads to La Bahía traversed the ranch. See Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 91, 230.

that initially Vidal told him they were going south to Parras, but as they began driving the herd Vidal said that they were instead en route northeast to Natchitoches. After reaching the Neches River, about four to five days from their destination, Vidal and Gregorio de Sierra left the group with the livestock and proceeded to the Louisiana post, unencumbered by the slower pace of herding.

As the ten remaining men drove the mules eastward, they encountered Juan Antonio Ybarbo at Rancho del Vallesillo, approximately four leagues east of the Sabine River. The son of Antonio Gil Ybarbo, Juan Antonio had remained in residence at El Lobanillo in 1773, rather than follow the orders to evacuate. Now he delivered a letter to them allegedly from Vidal, instructing the group to proceed with all the mules to El Rancho de Los Tres Llanos, just west of the former Los Adaes site. Along the way, however, they met a group of Ais who advised them that Vidal and Sierra had been arrested in Louisiana. Despite Mermellon's letters to the contrary, Mézières was in fact present in Natchitoches when Vidal and Sierra arrived, and he promptly arrested them.

Unaware of this development yet concerned by the news from the Ais, the men asked Ybarbo to take a message to Vidal stating the group would not continue to Natchitoches unless either he or Sierra returned to meet them at Los Tres Llanos. Ybarbo assured the men that nothing was amiss, yet when Sierra appeared at the ranch the next morning, he was accompanied by thirty or forty soldiers from the post at Natchitoches. Sierra confirmed that Vidal was in prison, and encouraged the others to surrender. The soldiers took eight of the hired men into custody and confiscated all of the livestock. Two men, Joaquín Benites and Matías Guzmán, were able to escape apprehension.

In Natchitoches, Mézières kept Vidal in chains but permitted the nine others to walk freely around the fort. Taking advantage of this liberty, Travieso soon fled, alone and on foot, to return to San Antonio. En route, he intended to warn Benítez and Guzmán not to enter Natchitoches, but they were already ahead of him on the road to San Antonio – with his five horses. Left with nothing, Travieso was able to borrow a mule from the owner of El Rancho de los Tres Llanos. Not long after, Gaspard Fiol, the French trader in a Nacogdoches village, asked him to take a young man – Juan Antonio Cuevas – with him back to San Antonio. The trader provided a horse for Cuevas, and together the two men headed south.

Cuevas had his own back story before joining Travieso for the return to San Antonio. He grew up at Mission Dolores de los Ais,⁵² in service to the Reverend Father José María de la Santísima Trinidad Amillano. When Los Adaes and the surrounding missions were abandoned, he was sent to his parents at Mission San Antonio de Valero. From there he was apprenticed to the shoemaker Juan Antonio Díaz. Díaz and his brother, José Manuel Díaz, took Cuevas with them on an extended trading and hunting expedition through the region. While the purpose of the journey was not stated, their experience seemed more casual than Vidal's organized group of hired labor. The men – with one of the Díaz brother's four-year-old son in tow – set out with four mules from the Reverend Father fray Pedro Ramírez of Mission San José, and another four from fray Juan García of Mission Espada. The mules were described as either a loan to be returned or paid for, or as a means for them to earn their living.

⁵² This suggests that at least one east Texas mission, unable to attract local indigenous residents, recruited staff from the San Antonio missions.

Their initial destination was the town of Vallecillo in Nuevo León, where they sold several loads of nuts, buffalo meat and lard, as well as five of the mules. From there they spent a month in the mining camp of San Antonio de la Iguana,⁵³ also in Nuevo León, to allow their animals to pasture. Heading north, they purchased as many as eight horses from a rancher near Laredo, then re-entered Texas near the Presidio of La Bahía, but avoided presenting themselves to the authorities. As they hunted buffalo and feral cattle, they successively crossed the Guadalupe, Colorado, and Brazos rivers. At some point they became lost, but eventually ended up in a Hasinai village on Loco Creek in east Texas where they traded some piloncillo and halters for twenty deer hides. In another village they met the French trader Gaspard Fiol,⁵⁴ on his way to Natchitoches with forty loads of hides from Tonkawa hunters.

Fiol hired the Díaz brothers and Cuevas to assist with taking the hides to Natchitoches and accompany him on his return to the Tonkawa village with more merchandise. The trader promised he would then take them to San Antonio after completing this journey. In Natchitoches, however, Lieutenant Governor Mézières detained the two brothers on suspicion of illegally selling mules – a charge they denied. Cuevas was allowed to return to the Tejas village, where Travieso encountered him after fleeing Natchitoches. On July 30, Travieso and Cuevas presented themselves to soldiers at Fort Cibolo, a small post located between San Antonio and La Bahía.⁵⁵ A detachment escorted them to the Presidio at Béxar on August 1 – the same day that

⁵³ For a brief description of this mining camp, see Peter Gerhard, *The North Frontier of New Spain*, rev. ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1993), p. 355.

⁵⁴ Referred to in the records as Gaspar or el Provanzal, Fiol had immigrated to Louisiana from Toulon, a Mediterranean port city in the Provence region of France; Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, p. 38.

⁵⁵ Testimony of Juan Antonio Cuevas, [1774], BA.

Joaquín Benítez happened to arrive. Guzmán, however, avoided the authorities and continued to his home in Reynosa. After brief interrogations, Governor Ripperdá released Cuevas to his parents at Mission San Antonio de Valero. Benítez and Travieso remained jailed until at least September 17, when Ripperdá declared them guilty of abetting Vidal's contraband activity. To pay his fine, Travieso's animals were confiscated and auctioned (Benítez himself had no property), yet Ripperdá found the two men deserving of leniency since they had surrendered themselves to the authorities. It seems that Travieso did not recover from this financial setback, as he remained without property five years later, according to the 1779 census.

After repeated questioning in Natchitoches, the Díaz brothers left without authorization, taking their remaining mules and horse to return to San Antonio. When they reached the Brazos River, they encountered Juan Antonio Ybarbo, the same man who had misled Vidal's group just weeks earlier. Ybarbo turned them over to Lieutenant Simón de Arocha, who was in the area supervising the Adaeseños in the process of establishing the new settlement of Bucareli. Arocha kept the brothers under guard for traveling without passports, and when his assignment was complete escorted them back to the Presidio of Béxar. They arrived there on October 2, 1774.

Governor Ripperdá imprisoned the two brothers for having traveled to Natchitoches. This alone placed them under suspicion of contraband, although Ripperdá – having confiscated their possessions – acknowledged that they had no illicit items. After languishing for a month in the guardhouse, the men were freed on bail posted by Antonio Salazar. Salazar was a master architect and designer who had worked for years at Mission San José. The collateral he offered for bail consisted of

sixteen mules with their pack frames, straps, and harnesses; and fourteen milk cows.⁵⁶ Given his occupation, Salazar was unlikely to own these livestock.⁵⁷ It seems probable instead that he used mission assets to post the bail on behalf of the Father President of the missions. This would aid the Díaz brothers without directly implicating the missionaries in the men's questionable activities.⁵⁸

In Natchitoches, Vidal managed to win his release and regain his goods. He continued his trading activities for another year, but Antonio Gil Ybarbo arrested him in Bucareli in June, 1775. There are gaps in the documents, including the reason for his arrest, but at some point he was transferred to Béxar and imprisoned in the guardhouse. In March, 1776, Governor Ripperdá reported to Viceroy Bucareli that Vidal had escaped and, fleeing to the south, drowned in the Nueces River. His confiscated goods were sold to the highest bidders at public auction, raising nearly five hundred *pesos*. Among the few purchasers were the merchant Juan de Ysurrieta and an unnamed associate of his from San Antonio. The tobacco was sold separately through the *estanco* in Bucareli.⁵⁹

What goods had Vidal lost his life to import? The inventory of seized goods listed a variety of textiles, including chintz, linen, silk, embroidered velvet, needlepoint, satin and fine muslin, totaling around 140 *varas* (128 yards)⁶⁰ in length; needles; silk

⁵⁶ “*diez y seis mulas aparejadas de tazo y reata, y catorze bacas chichiguas*”

⁵⁷ The 1779 census for San Fernando lists his livestock as a mare, a stallion, a mule, and two cows with their calves.

⁵⁸ Testimony of Juan Antonio Díaz, [1774], BA; Testimony of Juan Antonio Cuevas, 1 Aug 1774, BA.

⁵⁹ Declarations of Joaquín Benites and Nepomuceno Travieso, 1 Aug 1774, BA; Statement of Francisco Antonio de Figueroa y Lossada, 29 Jan 1779, BA; Bucareli to Ripperdá, 15 May 1776, BA; *Memoria de los hefectos que se le han confiscado ha D[on] Marcos Bidal ...*, 31 Oct 1778, BA.

⁶⁰ A *vara* is a unit of measure approximately equal to thirty-three inches; see Thomas Barnes, Thomas Naylor, and Charles Polzer, *Northern New Spain: A Research Guide* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1981), p. 68.

stockings; two hundred packs of playing cards; ten metal door plates; coffee; horn-handled table knives; six crystal salt shakers; six pairs of scissors; four axes; eleven cases of tobacco; and four canisters of snuff. The playing cards, tobacco, and snuff were part of the Crown's monopoly, subject to specific taxes and conditions of sale.

The proceeds of the auction were used first to pay the taxes on the playing cards; the remainder was divided one-third to Antonio Gil Ybarbo as presiding *justicia mayor* and one-third among the members of the militia from Bucareli who apprehended Vidal and confiscated the goods. Another third was typically paid out to informants, but there is conflicting information as to whether there were any in this case. Finally, the money collected from those indebted to Vidal was used toward his own debt to the merchant Figueroa.⁶¹

Testimony from these three cases confirms that in addition to El Lobanillo, at least two other ranches in the area remained occupied despite the 1773 evacuation orders – Los Tres Llanos and El Vallesillo. It also reveals that a lively trade continued between the area's indigenous inhabitants and those of Natchitoches. In addition to the petty exchange the witnesses described, for example, Travieso stated that they met a *Negro* from Natchitoches purchasing deer hides in a Hasinai village, and that one of the families resident at El Lobanillo was in Natchitoches “as was their custom.”

Taken together, the stories of Vidal, Travieso, Benítez, Cuevas, and the Díaz brothers highlight entangled pathways along the well-documented northern route of

⁶¹ “*En el R^l Presso de Sⁿ Antonio de Bexar*” (Ripperdá report) 6 Oct 1776, BA; Croix to Cabello, 2 Aug 1782, BA. Two people, Barzenas and Ysurrieta, together purchased the bulk of the goods. Ysurrieta had a contract with Gil Ybarbo to provide supplies for the town of Bucareli (*Don Juan María Ripperdá . . . En el R[ea]l Press[idi]o de Bexar . . .*, 10 Feb 1776), but was implicated in other contraband cases with the Menchaca brothers (*Num. 242* [Proceedings against Francisco Flores, Lorenzo René, and Julián de Orosco], 14 June 1780, BA).

smuggling in Texas. They suggest that travel and cross-cultural exchange were common, and that trade regulations and political boundaries were largely ignored. While there is no clear evidence that any of these men other than Vidal were involved in contraband, their often vague and conflicting testimony reveals ambiguity along a continuum of activities from bartering for a living while traveling to outright illicit behavior.

Another investigation in which people involved with legitimate trading activities took advantage of incidental opportunities to engage in contraband trade is that of the San Antonio-based Menchaca family. In contrast to Vidal, their business took them along the southern route to the cattle market in Opelousas, Louisiana. In this instance, too, cases investigated separately can be analyzed together to reveal a broader picture of the province's economic foundations. The Menchacas were among the original military families of the Presidio San Antonio de Béxar. Francisco (José Antonio) Menchaca accompanied the 1718 Martín de Alarcón expedition that founded the presidio. He married Antonia Urrutia, the daughter of the presidio's first captain, Joseph Urrutia. Their eldest son, Luís, served in the military, succeeding his uncle, Toribio Urrutia, as captain of the San Antonio Presidio in 1763. As captain, Luís Menchaca was responsible for supplying the troops under his command. At the same time, he developed long-standing extralegal trade relationships with Lipan Apache bands. When he retired from military service in 1773, his brother Félix became the senior ranking officer at Béxar. In 1758, Luís became one of the first residents to obtain a formal land grant – the Rancho San Francisco – in the San Antonio River valley. He and Félix together operated the ranch, which comprised nearly fifty thousand acres

mid-way between San Antonio and La Bahía. In the 1779 census, Luís is shown as the wealthiest resident in San Antonio, owning nearly one-third of all cattle in the area.⁶²

Spain's declaration of war on Great Britain in May 1779⁶³ resulted in a limited and temporary suspension of the prohibition of trade across the Louisiana-Texas border, and opened a potential large new market in Louisiana for Texas cattle to feed Spanish troops. Juan de Ysurrieta, the merchant in Béxar related by marriage to the Menchacas, contracted with the Louisiana trader Nicolás de la Mathe to drive eight hundred head of cattle to the market in Opelousas. Félix Menchaca assembled the herd at his family's ranch and, with a group of herdsmen, guides, and an escort of soldiers, drove them along the *Camino Real* from San Antonio to Nacogdoches, and thence to Opelousas. There, the cattle fetched eleven *pesos* per head, nearly triple the four *pesos* they sold for in San Antonio.⁶⁴

The rest of this journey served to obtain goods to bring into Texas, using the Menchaca's Rancho San Francisco as a staging ground. From Opelousas, at least part of the group traveled on to New Orleans, where they made their purchases before returning to Texas. Without a permit, the goods they brought into Texas were illegal. When several of the men – Francisco Flores, his servant Julián de Orosco, and Lorenzo René – entered La Bahía on the night of April 25, 1780, a suspicious Governor Cabello,

⁶² Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio: Genealogies of the Early Latin, Anglo-American, and German Families* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1937), pp. 103-4; Robert H. Thonoff, *The Texas Connection with the American Revolution* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1981), pp. 13-15, 78; Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 63-64, 189; Julianna Barr, "From Captives to Slaves: Commodifying Indian Women in the Borderlands," *The Journal of American History* 92, no. 1 (June 2005), p. 44; "Extracto de la Revista de Ynspección Egecutada por mi el Coron[e]l de Ynfanteria Don Domingo Cabello . . . 1 July 1779, Ramo Audiencia de Guadalajara, legajo 283; microfilm print reproduced in Jesse O. Villarreal, Sr., *Tejano Patriots of the American Revolution 1776-1783*, ed. Judge Robert H. Thonoff (Austin: author's private publication, 2011), pp. 84-101.

⁶³ This was their late entry into the American Revolution; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 4, pp. 211-13; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 377-80.

⁶⁴ Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 192-96; Thonoff, *The Texas Connection*, pp. 50-61.

who was there from San Antonio on an extended visit to reorganize the cavalry company, interrogated them. The servant Orosco, isolated from the others and intimidated by Cabello, confessed not only that they had hidden their own contraband outside of the fort, but also that Menchaca and Ysurrieta had returned to Rancho San Francisco with seven mules carrying fourteen bundles of goods.⁶⁵

Cabello immediately sent troops out to recover the hidden goods, as well as to intercept Menchaca and Ysurrieta in San Antonio. Approximately half a league from the presidio, in a large ditch or trench near the Colorado River, the troops recovered ninety-eight pounds of tobacco, two chests of clothing, and several bolts of Brittany, Rouen, and calico cloth. Cabello confiscated the goods, as well as personal items and the pack animals that belonged to Flores and René. Following legal proceedings, the confiscated goods were publically auctioned for a total of more than 519 *pesos*; the confiscated tobacco was sold separately through the state monopoly.⁶⁶

Cabello was stymied in his attempts to arrest Menchaca and Ysurrieta. Despite concerted efforts over the next six months, Cabello was unable to procure sufficient evidence to level charges against Félix Menchaca and other members of his family. In early May, Cabello explained to Croix that upon their return, Menchaca and Ysurrieta had gone into the Presidio of Béxar with some loads of goods, but no one was available to inspect them. The following month, Cabello reported that he had arrested a new witness, Pedro Cantún, who testified that he, a young servant, and a young slave had helped Félix Menchaca, his brother Captain Luís Menchaca, and Juan de Ysurrieta to hide fourteen bundles of goods brought from New Orleans, concealing them in one of

⁶⁵ Cabello to Croix, 9 May 1780, BA; Cabello to Croix, 14 June 1780, BA.

⁶⁶ *Dilixen[cia]s Ynstrruhidas por el Coro[ne]l d[o]n Dom[ing]o Cabello*, 1780, BA.

the pastures on the Menchaca ranch. By the time Cabello dispatched troops to the alleged hiding place, the goods had been moved and the young servant and slave were nowhere to be found. A “secret denunciation” by an anonymous person revealed a new hiding place – yet once again, troops arrived only to discover that the goods had already been removed. The new information implicated not only Félix Menchaca and Juan de Ysurrieta; but also Capt. Luís Menchaca, his son José, his mother-in-law María Josefa de Flores y Valdez, several household servants, a *mulatta* slave, and another brother, Joaquín Menchaca.⁶⁷ The number of people accused shows the scope of the family network and resources involved in this trade.

Cabello was eager to muster sufficient legal evidence to prosecute the Menchacas, but the family remained a step ahead of him, as Cabello wrote, with “unnatural skill and cunning” (*la metafísica arte y maña*).⁶⁸ Taking advantage of their family’s long-standing friendship with Commandant General Croix, Félix and Ysurrieta traveled to the headquarters of the Provincias Internas in Arispe to appeal their cause directly to him. They took the servants and slave with them, to avoid Cabello’s interrogations; they also, according to Cabello, took two loads of the most valuable contraband, undoubtedly to finance their travels through the barter of goods.⁶⁹ Throughout that summer and fall, Cabello made increasingly harsh and derogatory statements against the family, in vain threatening their arrest and the confiscation of their property. Nevertheless, by October, he conceded that he had been unsuccessful in his efforts, due to “the many engagements I must attend to, being alone and without

⁶⁷ Cabello to Croix, 14 June 1780, BA.

⁶⁸ Cabello to Croix, 18 July 1780, BA.

⁶⁹ Cabello to Croix, 16 Aug 1780, BA.

anyone that could help me at a minimum with the judicial inquiry that must be carried out" (*respeto a las muchas ocupadas que tenga a q[u]e atender siendo yo solo y sin ninguna persona que me pueda ayudar a la mas minima dilig[enci]a judicial de las que deven executarse*).⁷⁰ In the end, apparently foiled by the Menchaca's political connections, the legal proceedings Cabello executed against their associates at La Bahía made no mention of the Menchacas.⁷¹

The Menchaca family continued their illicit deals for years. Joaquín was investigated – if not imprisoned – for contraband in 1782, although the circumstances are unclear.⁷² Félix and Joaquín were implicated in contraband deals in 1792, and Félix again in 1795. Yet as far as the records show, they remained at liberty and continued to conduct affairs in their usual manner.⁷³ As one of the most prominent ranching and military families in Texas, their status apparently protected them from the kind of punishment that some of their casual employees, such as Flores, Orosco, and René endured.

The majority of contraband investigations took place after the 1780s, a decade that saw few prosecutions, most likely because Antonio Gil Ybarbo effectively held a monopoly on the northern contraband route, as had the governors stationed in the

⁷⁰ Cabello to Croix, 18 October 1780, BA.

⁷¹ *Dilixen[cia]s Ynstruhidas por el Coro[ne]l d[o]n Dom[ing]o Cabello*, 1780, BA.

⁷² *Demanda presentada por el S[e]ño[r b]achille[r d[o]n Pedro de Fuentes*, 1782, BA, in which Fray Pedro Fuentes sued Joaquín Menchaca for a debt of undelivered lumber. The wording of the document suggests that Menchaca may have been in prison pending resolution of a case against him of smuggling; unable to pay the debt, his wife was obliged to settle it through the sale of some land and water rights. I was unable to discover any documents in the Béxar Archives that explain the smuggling charges.

⁷³ Governor Muñoz, who succeeded Cabello, referred to Cabello's arrest and prosecution of José Félix and Joaquín Menchaca in an unrelated proceeding.; see *Sobre efectos conducidos a Nacogdoches à esta Prov[inci]a p[o]r Toribio Duran*, 19 Oct 1792, BA.

earlier years at Los Adaes.⁷⁴ Between him and his son Juan Antonio, for example, they shut down Marcos Vidal's commercial activities as already discussed. To the extent that in the family's interest the younger Ybarbo may have betrayed Vidal and his companions to the authorities in Natchitoches, it was a deliberate effort to defeat their trading competition. Moreover, in his position of authority as *justicia mayor*, and with his 1780 appointment as contraband judge for the jurisdiction of Nacogdoches, Gil Ybarbo gained direct financial benefits from prosecuting cases of contraband.

Not only were the physical routes of contraband trade entangled, so, too, were its political relationships. Community leaders might approve the possession and transport of certain goods when those in higher positions of authority would confiscate them. An official might weaponize the legal system against another to achieve political leverage or personal revenge. They might wield the rule of law to assert privilege or collect bribes, or ignore it to bestow favoritism and status. Those who transported or possessed contraband followed their own hidden transcripts. They argued that they had trusted someone else's word that the items were legitimate, or had merely followed a superior's orders in handling it – absolving themselves of criminal conduct. This spectrum of behaviors made the concept of contraband fluid and negotiable, defined as much by who looked at it as by royal decree. In other words, contraband could be determined by financial and political relationships, as well as by law.

⁷⁴ Archaeologist Casey Hanson analyzed index entries in the Béxar Archives for the number of references to illicit trade. While his graphics suggest there were between perhaps five and ten arrests or cases during the 1780s, I have been unable to identify any in the actual collection of microfilmed documents. See Casey Jeffrey Hanson, "The Materiality of *Tejano* Culture," (PhD diss., University of Texas, 2016), pp. 389-92.

Nowhere is this so evident as with the decades-long partnership, rivalry, and eventual fallout between Antonio Gil Ybarbo and Nicolás de la Mathe. La Mathe was a prominent French merchant based in Pointe Coupee, Louisiana, a tobacco-growing settlement and cattle market on the west bank of the lower Mississippi River. He occasionally resided in San Antonio, and frequently journeyed to Bucareli and later to Nacogdoches. He had supplied goods to Governor Martos y Navarrete, in office at Los Adaes from 1759 to 1766.⁷⁵ La Mathe and Gil Ybarbo's business partnership began long before the abandonment of Los Adaes, exporting livestock and supplying goods for indigenous trade. Reflecting the prosperity of their business dealings, Gil Ybarbo's ranch, El Lobanillo, supported some fourteen families totaling sixty-five people, a number of whom remained in place when east Texas was formally abandoned in 1773.

Gil Ybarbo's first incident of running afoul of Spanish authorities was some time during the late 1760s. Interim Texas governor Hugo Oconór imprisoned him for seven months in New Orleans, where he allegedly sold horses and mules obtained from indigenous sources who raided them from Spanish settlements in Texas.⁷⁶ There seemed to be no other consequence for this infraction, and Gil Ybarbo continued for decades to purchase goods in New Orleans. The fact that he was the spokesman for the Adaeseños after the evacuation suggests that he held considerable status in the community. Spanish authorities recognized this with his 1774 appointment as militia captain and *justicia mayor* of Bucareli, and his later salaried position as lieutenant

⁷⁵ The "goods and assets" that he had on deposit in Béxar with Captain Luís Menchaca on Martos's account were finally returned to him in 1779; Croix to Ripperdá, 13 Sept 1778, BA.

⁷⁶ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 4, p. 296; Daniel H. Usner, Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992), pp. 106, 179; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p. 389; Chipman and Joseph, *Notable Men and Women*, p. 193.

governor at Nacogdoches. His eagerness to return to the area undoubtedly was grounded in his business interests there.

Although little is recorded of their activities, Gil Ybarbo and La Mathe conducted extensive trade from the Gulf coast to the northern tribes, in the process deepening their diplomatic relationships with the indigenous peoples of the region. During the 1770s, apparently in collaboration with Gil Ybarbo, La Mathe pastured herds of livestock at Bucareli as they were driven to market in Louisiana from elsewhere in Texas. The settlement of Bucareli was placed at the crossroads where the *caminos reales* from San Antonio and La Bahía, respectively, joined en route to the former Los Adaes. It was a strategic location for trade. Some idea of the scale of their trade is gleaned from the loss La Mathe suffered of over two hundred horses during an October, 1778 Comanche raid on the settlement. He lost another five hundred horses the following year, some drowned in the February, 1779 flood at Bucareli and the remainder taken by Comanches during the second raid on the settlement, after most of the vecinos abandoned the site and moved to Nacogdoches.⁷⁷

Around this time, Gil Ybarbo claimed a new ranch on the Attoyac River, approximately halfway between Nacogdoches and his El Lobanillo ranch. He named as co-owners his daughter María Antonia Ybarbo y Panto, and her husband Juan Ygnacio Guerrero – a blacksmith – and used the land to pasture horses and cattle for export to Louisiana. Not long afterward, he made the first of several exchanges of livestock for creole (American-born) Black slaves with Athanase Poissot, who held extensive

⁷⁷ Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, pp. 418-33; Cabello to Croix: 30 Mar 1779, 31 Mar 1779, 30 Aug 1779, 17 Dec 1779, BA; Croix to Ripperdá, 13 Sept 1778, BA; Cabello to La Mathe 16 Jan 1779, BA; Fray José Francisco Mariano de la Garza, 14 Nov 1787, BA; Cabello to Croix, 30 Aug 1779, BA.

ranching interests in Bayou Pierre, a French settlement located forty-two miles northwest of Nacogdoches. Gil Ybarbo had long-established relationships with several ranchers there, and the settlement had quickly developed after the abandonment of Los Adaes. His expanding land claims and use of unfree labor indicated a significant growth in his operations; it also reflected ranching practices more common in Louisiana since few in Texas held Black slaves at that time. In addition, he did business with Paul Boüet Lafitte, the most prominent rancher in the Bayou Pierre region, who was related by marriage to several Louisiana trading families of long-standing repute.⁷⁸ Through such connections, Gil Ybarbo and La Mathe became major participants in the frontier exchange network among indigenous peoples and Crown subjects in Texas and Louisiana.

The year 1779 marked a watershed in the area's history, as three changes altered the course of events. The founding of Nacogdoches in April, 1779, came just before Spain's May 8, 1779 declaration of war against Great Britain.⁷⁹ The untimely death of Athanase de Mézières in November, 1779 created a diplomatic vacuum with indigenous groups in Texas that Gil Ybarbo and La Mathe vied to fill, although neither would prove the equal of their predecessor. Both had years of experience trading with indigenous groups in the region. Yet as La Mathe and Gil Ybarbo conducted their diplomacy, the concurrence of several events impeded their aspirations. A major smallpox epidemic in 1777 and 1778 had greatly weakened the Wichita groups of

⁷⁸ Declaration of Antonio Gil Ybarbo, 6 Apr 1779, BA; Burton and Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches*, pp. 153-54. Juan Ygnacio Guerrero was described as an expert gunsmith at the presidio of Béxar in 1774, when he was called upon as an expert to appraise the value of confiscated firearms and ammunition in an alleged contraband case; see proceedings against Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso, and Juan Antonio Cuevas, 1 Aug 1774, BA.

⁷⁹ Thonoff, *Texas Connection*, pp. 54-56.

Tawakoni, Iscani, and Kichai peoples with whom Spain sought to ally with the Comanches against the Lipan Apaches. The war with Great Britain immediately opened new opportunities for the legal export of cattle from Texas to Louisiana, but also disrupted sea-borne supply lines and severely curtailed the availability of trade goods. As a result, neither Texas nor Louisiana traders were able to provide the firearms and ammunition that the Wichita peoples so desperately needed to protect themselves from Osage attacks. Mézières had promised them these goods before his death. The lack of follow-through on these commitments combined with Cabello's failure to inform them of Mézières's death further antagonized the Wichita groups.

La Mathe had already cultivated relationships with provincial and regional authorities. In September, 1778, Commandant General Croix urged Governor Ripperdá to allow La Mathe to visit the Norteños and to "continue encouraging the[ir] friendship" toward the Spanish Crown – that is, to trade with them. In 1779, Governor Cabello gave La Mathe permission to visit the interior nations in an attempt to recover his stolen livestock and to resolve tribal complaints regarding insufficient trade. He continued in this role as emissary for several years, facilitated by Cabello's intervention with the commandant at Natchitoches to provide credit for the necessary goods for gifting and trade.⁸⁰

In the meantime, Gil Ybarbo strengthened his own political influence. In early 1779, Croix wrote directly to Gil Ybarbo, praising him for his work in carrying out his

⁸⁰ Croix to Ripperdá, 13 Sept 1778, BA; Cabello to Croix, 30 August 1779, BA; Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, p. 129; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 523, 536-37, 624, 638; Cabello to Vaugine, 31 October 1780, in *Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1945, Vol. 2: Spain in the Mississippi Valley, 1765-1794*, ed. Lawrence Kinnaid, Part 1: *The Revolutionary Period, 1765-1781* (Washington, D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1949), pp. 389-90; Alfred Barnaby Thomas, ed., *Teodoro de Croix and the Northern Frontier of New Spain, 1776-1783, from the Original Documents in the Archives of the Indies*, (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1941), pp. 80-88.

commissions, and “in particular for the prosperity and development” of the new settlement at Nacogdoches. The previous year, Gil Ybarbo had accompanied Mézières and others on a peace-keeping expedition to several Wichita villages, carrying with them gifts and trade goods; in the winter of 1778-79 he directed the evacuation of Bucareli and the establishment of the settlement at Nacogdoches. Croix specifically acknowledged Gil Ybarbo’s personal investments in achieving these ends, offering implicit permission for Gil Ybarbo to recoup his expenses and losses. Later that year, Croix appointed Gil Ybarbo to serve as lieutenant governor of Nacogdoches, with an annual salary of five hundred *pesos*. The following year, Governor Cabello appointed him contraband judge for the jurisdiction of Nacogdoches, which extended all the way south to the Gulf coast.⁸¹

Gil Ybarbo now maneuvered to position himself as the pivot of frontier trade. The year 1780 saw little trade activity as Cabello sought Croix’s approval to commission Gil Ybarbo and José María Armant to provide gifts and trade to the Nations of the North in order to maintain peace. Cabello expected them to negotiate a new list of set prices, similar to one that Mézières implemented in 1778. Hoping to break from that precedent, Gil Ybarbo bypassed his own chain of command and appealed directly to Governor Bernardo Gálvez of Louisiana. He complained to Gálvez that the price lists Mézières had previously negotiated were now ruinous for traders since the war with Great Britain hindered supplies. Moreover, he argued, indigenous consumers considered the regulated prices too high. Although he provided gifts to the Taguayas at

⁸¹ Croix to Gil Ybarbo, 13 Jan 1779, BA; F. Todd Smith, *The Wichita Indians: Traders of Texas and the Southern Plains, 1540-1845* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2000), pp. 67-68; [Proclamation by Domingo Cabello] 20 April 1780, BA.

his own expense in order to maintain peace, he asked Gálvez's help in gaining Cabello's support for his and Armant's proposed commission. It is unclear whether Gálvez intervened, but Cabello eventually adopted Gil Ybarbo's stance, undermining Croix and La Mathe's plans by insisting that Nacogdoches become the central distribution point for an expanded quantity and range of gifts.⁸²

At this time, Texas was on the brink of implosion due to Comanche-Apache violence, raids on settlements, and intense pressure for trade and military alliances. In November, 1780 the Taovayas threatened Gil Ybarbo over the lack of trade, vowing to attack Spanish settlements if no goods were forthcoming. In response, Governor Cabello sent La Mathe and a group of traders from Louisiana to deliver the gifts that they had expected from Mézières, but en route to the Wichita villages the party was attacked by Comanches who took the goods for themselves. In the meantime, the pressure on the Wichitas to obtain firearms was unrelenting. Their Osage enemies had easy access to weaponry through their British suppliers, while the Lipans had access through trade with the Tonkawas.⁸³

While carrying out their trade during these years, the rivalry between Gil Ybarbo and La Mathe escalated in 1782. Both men were in Béxar when La Mathe filed a lawsuit compelling Gil Ybarbo to repay a debt. Gil Ybarbo attempted to dismiss the lawsuit on a technicality, claiming that since La Mathe lived out of wedlock, he was unable to swear an oath.⁸⁴ Although they were ordered to liquidate the debt, La Mathe requested

⁸² Cabello to Croix, 7 Feb and 17 Sept, 1780, BA; Gil Ybarbo to Gálvez, 1 November 1780, in *Spain in the Mississippi Valley*, Vol. 2 Part 1, pp. 390-91; John, *Storms Brewed*, pp. 638-39.

⁸³ Smith, *Wichita Indians*, pp. 65-66, 72-74.

⁸⁴ "But as for the dispute with Don Nicolas de Lamathe, [Ybarbo] begs the lord commissioner to dispense with it; it cannot take effect because the previously-named Lamathe is an unaccountable man because since residing at this post he is living in cohabitation, and without making confession, [and] with his act

suspension of payment because the commodities in dispute – mules, mares and deer hides – “have one price here and another quite different” in Louisiana. He withdrew the case but reserved the right to refile it in the future. With that setback, La Mathe traveled to Arispe, arriving in February, 1783, to report directly to Croix regarding his diplomatic activities and to propose a multi-pronged strategy for peace. One element of his proposal was a commission for himself to provide annual gifts and trade to even more indigenous groups than Gil Ybarbo and Armant intended. In addition to the Caddoan and Wichita peoples that the latter two suggested, La Mathe proposed including the Akokisas, Bidais, Cocos, and Mayeyes. Croix rejected including the latter groups but commissioned La Mathe to provide annual gifts to the Norteño tribes. La Mathe’s political influence diminished when Croix left the commandancy general in August, 1783.⁸⁵

In the interim, Cabello threw his weight behind Gil Ybarbo while implementing new policies that formalized trade rather than religious evangelization as the means of alliance with favored tribes, and as a diplomatic cudgel for hostile groups. When indigenous trade through Nacogdoches grew, so did Gil Ybarbo’s fortunes and political status. With Cabello’s support, he built a large, two-story stone trading post in

proves he is unable to make an oath that would be credible in any court;” *“Pero que en cuanta a la contextación que sele promueve con Dⁿ Nicolas de Lamathe, suplica al señor comisionado se la Dispenze, no pudiendo haverla efectiva por ser un ombre el Predicho Lamathe Yncontextable Respecto a que Desde que recide en este destino esta viviendo Amanzebado, y sin haberse confesado, con cuyo hecho acredita no ser capaz de poder hacer ningun juramento que haga fe en tribunal alguno;” Año de 1782, Dilig[encias] Practicadas por comision de su señoria de Pedim[ent]o de D[o]n Nicolas de La Mathe sobre lo que Adentro se contienen, 28 June 1782, BA.*

⁸⁵ Nicolás de la Mathe v Antonio Gil Ybarbo for payment of accounts, 26 June 1782, BA; Tim Seiter, “The Karankawa-Spanish War from 1778 to 1789: Attempted Genocide and Karankawa Power,” *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 124, no. 4 (April 2021), p. 402.

Nacogdoches that served as both warehouse and general store.⁸⁶ In addition to his role in the frontier exchange trade, Gil Ybarbo effectively controlled the import of goods from Louisiana into east Texas. He did so not only as a large-scale trader himself, but also through his positions as lieutenant governor and contraband judge to enforce the law.

Gil Ybarbo's contraband empire began to crumble in the early 1790s. He felt the increasing impact of successive changes in higher levels of government organization and administration, which saw the appointment of officials less willing than their predecessors to tolerate illicit operations. Some of his activities were detailed in a 1791 investigation that the recently-appointed Commandant General Ramón Castro initiated by sending Manuel de Verazadi⁸⁷ to secretly review Gil Ybarbo's trade. Verazadi's findings can reasonably be surmised to extend back in time to reflect Gil Ybarbo's dealings to various degrees throughout his career. Verazadi painted a picture of a man who habitually abused his authority and suppressed complaints against him. He observed generally that nothing happened in the area without Gil Ybarbo's knowledge.⁸⁸

Verazadi reported that Gil Ybarbo sold goods in his store from Louisiana, as well as liquor, gunpowder, playing cards, and tobacco – despite the fact that as lieutenant

⁸⁶ *Fr[ay] Josef Fran[cis]co Mariano de la Garza, hijo de el Ap[ostoli]co Colegio de Propaganda Fide*, 14 Nov 1787, BA; Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, p. 129; Bolton, *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century*, p. 427 described La Mathe as “prince of the Indian traders at this time.”

⁸⁷ In 1792, Verazadi was referred to as a clerk (*dependiente*) for the San Fernando parish priest; Governor Muñoz to Viceroy Conde de Revilla Gigedo, 19 Nov 1792, BA. He was listed on the 1793 census of San Fernando as a merchant. De la Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, p. 134, concluded that since nothing is known of Verazadi, “his stay in Béxar was brief and uneventful.” His role in investigating Gil Ybarbo, however, makes him a more significant figure than this assessment would suggest.

⁸⁸ *Expediente promovido por el Capitan D[o]n Antonio Gil Ybarvo pidiendo los ynformes dicttad[o]s contra su conducta ...*, 30 Sept 1795, BA.

governor of the settlement he was responsible for enforcing the Crown monopolies or prohibitions on the very items that he sold. At the same time his partner, the licensed trader Armant, sent men to indigenous villages with crates of gunpowder, bullets, firearms, and other trade items to exchange for deer hides and other products of the hunt, despite the ongoing ban on such trade. In addition, several informants told Verazadi that Gil Ybarbo allowed American and French traders to enter the territory. The Americans came along the coast and up the Trinidad River to trade with the Orcoquizas, Atakapas, and Lipan Apaches – the same trade in which Governor Barrios had earlier displaced the French. Closer to Nacogdoches, witnesses said that Gil Ybarbo permitted French traders among the Adaes.⁸⁹ His complicity likely involved some type of kickback, a practice well-documented for officials in other parts of the Spanish empire.

At the same time that Commandant General Castro sent Verazadi to investigate Gil Ybarbo's contraband activities, he also ordered La Bahía Presidio Captain Juan Cortés and a small escort of officers and soldiers to Nacogdoches to look into Gil Ybarbo's administrative affairs.⁹⁰ By the end of 1791, Castro recommended Gil Ybarbo's arrest; in January, 1792, Muñoz took him into custody and held him in San Antonio. Gil Ybarbo did not go quietly.

Using information from his own network, during his imprisonment, Gil Ybarbo registered formal denunciations against several groups of people. The first was against Captain Cortés and his escort from La Bahía, alleging that they had obtained “many

⁸⁹ *Expediente promovido por el Capitan D[o]n Antonio Gil Ybarvo pidiendo los ynformes dicttad[o]s contra su conducta ...*, 30 Sept 1795, BA.

⁹⁰ This is alluded to in Revillagigedo to Muñoz, 26 Sept 1792, BA.

loads” of contraband from Natchitoches. Acting on this information, the governor sent his own detachment from the Béxar presidio to intercept Cortés and his men on the road “with the utmost stealth possible so that no one discovers its purpose” (*con el mayor sigilo que se pueda para que nadie penetre su destino*). These orders were so effective that even Gil Ybarbo was unaware that the detachment had confiscated their goods and escorted Cortés and his soldiers to San Antonio on June 18; he filed a second denunciation on June 19. Yet if Gil Ybarbo hoped that allegations against others would impede his own legal woes, he was mistaken: Commandant General Castro later ordered Cortés to return Béxar to take Gil Ybarbo’s confession and file charges, remaining there until the proceedings were complete – regardless of whether he himself was under arrest for his own contraband activities.⁹¹

Subsequent investigations revealed that Cortés and his troops had obtained a variety of goods, as well as tobacco and playing cards, during their time in Nacogdoches. Cortés and his brother-in-law José de Jesús Alderete, however, were in possession of goods well beyond personal their personal needs. Between the two, they held most of the tobacco, hides, and merchandise that were confiscated. Furthermore, Cortés prepared contingency plans in the event of a confrontation with soldiers sent to enforce contraband prohibitions. Gil Ybarbo had alleged in his first denunciation that Cortés might “lose or hide everything” (*con el reselo de que pueda este extraviar o esconder quanto llevo*) en route to Béxar. Two soldiers testified they were aware that the captain had previously given orders to Sergeant Antonio Treviño to break off from the party and take the baggage to an alternative location until they could be rejoined and

⁹¹ *Señor Gobernador* [Proceedings against Juan de Cortés et al.], 16 June 1792, BA; Castro to Sierra Gorda, 14 Aug 1792 (contained in correspondence between Castro and Sierra Gorda 7 July to 9 Sept 1792), BA.

complete their return to La Bahía. The other soldiers who were deposed claimed ignorance of such plans, which regardless failed when the secrecy of the escort from Béxar caught them unaware.

The soldiers in the detachment, too, were prepared for barter, both on the road and at their temporary duty station in Nacogdoches. Their small-scale barter and exchange highlights the widespread and opportunistic trade that soldiers engaged in while traveling on duty assignments. Petty exchange covered everything from the soldiers' basic necessities to entertainment. Traveling to and from Nacogdoches, they brought such items as tobacco, belduques, blankets, and horse tack, which they traded for food, chamois, deerskins, and buffalo hides from the Tonkawa and Tawakoni peoples whose territory they traversed along the way. While in Nacogdoches, they traded new and used clothing, shoes, buttons, horses, saddlebags, iron pots, tablecloths, cigars, trinkets, and even a silver cigarette box in return for food, cut fabric, cloth, buttons, iron pots, coffee, used clothing, and hides. They used goods and commodities to hire others to cook and provide their meals. Soldiers gambled with one another and with vecinos in Nacogdoches, winning or losing hides and other objects in card games known as *malillo*.

The initial focus of the investigation against Cortés and his men was whether any of the members of the detachment had traveled outside of the province to obtain goods, as importing them was illegal. Ten of the sixteen officers and soldiers were deposed. Only two had entered Natchitoches, but they denied obtaining goods there. A number of the witnesses focused their testimony on eight merchants in Nacogdoches – most of them French (but including one Englishman who was “of this nation”) – who openly

imported and sold goods from Louisiana. Their testimony reveals robust cross-border and intercultural exchange. For instance, one witness noted that fifty Orcoquisacs had come to Nacogdoches to trade, as well as uncounted numbers from other tribes. While none of the soldiers themselves traded firearms, gunpowder, or bullets with indigenous visitors, several stated that these items were an important part of what merchants traded in exchange for hides. Other imports they witnessed from Natchitoches included *aguardiente*, belduques, beads, vermillion, lard, beans, textiles, blankets, and mirrors.

The testimony indicates that the soldiers from La Bahía used the merchants and vecinos of Nacogdoches as middlemen in obtaining goods from Louisiana. Their statements reflect an awareness that they themselves were prohibited from leaving the province without permission, but their evidence conveys that cross-border trade was routine for the people who lived in the area. All those who testified declared that the items they purchased and had in their confiscated baggage were legitimate because they were obtained either through merchants in Nacogdoches– whom they believed were authorized to import merchandise with the corresponding permits – or were in used condition from the vecinos. They asserted that because they did not personally cross the border to make their purchases, they had not transgressed the law. They were uniformly aware that tobacco, playing cards, and textiles from Louisiana were considered contraband, but they pointed out that the tobacco they possessed was issued them as rations by their captain, and they had purchased cut cloth rather than bolts of uncut fabric.⁹² Cortés – who had eighty *libras* (pounds) of tobacco confiscated from his baggage – plausibly claimed that it was intended for gifts and to barter food

⁹² Such remarks suggest that duties may have been levied on the purchase of bulk fabric, but not pre-cut pieces for making clothing.

from the Nations of the North for the soldiers during their return journey, but that they did not visit most of the villages as he expected because the majority of people were away hunting buffalo.⁹³

Similar arguments were echoed just months later in a contraband investigation against Toribio Durán, suggesting through their openness that such opinions were widespread and commonly held, and demonstrating the shift from a hidden to an open transcript mentioned earlier in this chapter. Durán and five other men obtained a passport from the governor to travel from San Antonio to Nacogdoches in July, 1792, for the purpose of trading piloncillo for hides in a Towakoni village. When Durán returned to San Antonio in November, the goods he possessed were confiscated as “foreign” in origin. Although he had a *guía* (a listing, or waybill) issued by the post commander at Nacogdoches, he held in addition many other items that he claimed were given him by locals at the moment of his departure to deliver to recipients in San Antonio. Governor Muñoz referred the matter to Viceroy the Conde de Revillagigedo to resolve a point of law concerning the disposition of small quantities of confiscated goods. While the question made its way to the appropriate authorities, Durán’s deposition was delayed for more than a year. As had Cortés and the soldiers from La Bahía, Durán claimed that his goods were legal because he had obtained them from a trader (Gaspard Fiol) in Nacogdoches; the four *libras* (pounds) of trade beads he held were for unrealized trade with indigenous groups on his return journey.⁹⁴ The many items in excess of those

⁹³ Up to this point, the discussion has been based on *Año de 1792, Expediente Formado para el remate de los Generos Extranjeros en Publica Subasta Dados por Comiso al capitan Dn Juan Cortés . . .*, 16 June 1792, BA.

⁹⁴ *Sobre efectos conducidos a Nacogdoches à esta Prov[inci]a p[o]r Toribio Duran*, 19 Oct 1792, BA. An earlier contraband case, against Pedro Joseph Leal and Carlos Riojas, both soldiers from Presidio San Juan Bautista de Río Grande, demonstrates that petty trade was a long-standing practice that was a significant

listed on the *guía* indicate that the social networks of exchange were far greater than the number of people who transported goods. This experience is similar to that of San Antonio merchant Fernando Beramendi, discussed in Chapter Three, whose travel to Mexico City included fulfilling specific requests for goods and services from nearly two dozen people.

In the meantime, in the case of Cortés and his detachment, the viceroy ordered that the hides and chamois be returned to the men “since they are customarily treated as currency in those lands” (*por ser de trato corriente, y uso en esas tierras*). He excluded Cortés and Alderete because they were the primary instigators of the contraband scheme. Governor Muñoz complied, ordering Corporal Ylario Maldonado and other men from the detachment to proceed to Béxar and retrieve the hides. The group arrived on November 2, and the items were signed over to them. The next day, Muñoz proceeded with the public auction of the remaining goods.⁹⁵

Although the public auction of confiscated contraband was a routine legal prescription, the case against Cortés and his detachment is unusual in that it details the actual process of selling the goods. The Béxar presidio paymaster (*habilitado*) displayed all of the contraband goods at the door of his office (*habilitación*) beginning November 3. At the same time, the town crier made a public announcement (*a voz de pregonero*) inviting anyone to bid for the goods: “it might happen that any [bid] will be accepted” (*occurra que se le admitira la que hiciese*). The auction lasted two weeks, from

aspect of interactions with indigenous groups. See *Ripperdá* [Investigation of Pedro José Leal and Carlos Riojas for illegal trade], 6 June 1775 and 10 June 1775, BA.

⁹⁵ Revillagigedo to Muñoz, 26 Sept 1792, BA ; Muñoz to Cortés, 26 Oct 1792, in *Año de 1792, Expediente Formado para el remate de los Generos Extranjeros en Publica Subasta Dados por Comiso al capitan Dn Juan Cortés . . .*, 26 Oct 1792, BA.

November 3 until November 17. Records were kept of each item sold, the individual purchaser, and the amount paid. It is unclear if any of the bids were competitive, or whether the purchases were made in cash or on account, although the document states the income was delivered to the *habilitado*. By the time the auction had ended, six women and twenty-one men together had purchased the entire lot of goods formerly owned by Cortés, Alderete, and ten other members of the detachment. The governor reported the total income from the auction – over 958 *pesos* – to the intendant at San Luis Potosí so that the amount could be deducted from the Béxar payroll.⁹⁶ In this manner, the contraband goods were not only incorporated legitimately into the vecinos' material world, but the Crown benefited from their import by the corresponding reduction in expense from the royal treasury.

In December, 1792, the still-imprisoned Gil Ybarbo accused another group of contraband. He reported to Governor Muñoz that several residents from Nacogdoches were en route to San Antonio by way of La Bahía, accompanying the Reverend Padre fray Francisco Gamarra. He warned that the group was taking advantage of the priest's journey and his luggage in order to transport illegally imported goods. He further alleged that they planned to hide the goods at one of the San Antonio missions, possibly in the house of a mission resident. Muñoz therefore ordered Captain Juan Cortés at La Bahía to intercept the group and confiscate their luggage.⁹⁷

The officers at La Bahía did as instructed, confiscating and inventorying the luggage of fray Gamarra and his companions. Each man had a *guía* issued by the

⁹⁶ *Año de 1792, Expediente Formado para el remate de los Generos Extranjeros en Publica Subasta Dados por Comiso al capitan Dn Juan Cortés . . .*, 26 Oct 1792, BA.

⁹⁷ Antonio Gil Ybarbo to Governor Manuel Muñoz, 18 Dec 1792, BA.

commanding officer at Nacogdoches, that matched the items they carried. The items included bolts of linen, calico, and other cloth; cut pieces of different kinds of cloth for petticoats, doublets, and trousers; a variety of tools, hardware, iron pots, and utensils; some tobacco; and gunpowder. As all seemed duly in order, Cortés restored the items to their owners and sent them on their way from La Bahía, advising Muñoz that Gil Ybarbo’s accusation had failed to achieve the result he sought because the situation “is quite opposite to his way of thinking” (*por haversele muí contrario à su modo de pensar*). Nonetheless, Muñoz immediately reprimanded Cortés for returning the goods before conducting a more detailed investigation and referring the case to the viceroy.⁹⁸ This exchange supports the argument that contraband was as much about political relationships as the material objects and their sources.

As an additional result of the investigation against Cortés, the viceroy determined that Nicolás de la Mathe, too, was dealing in contraband. For this reason, he was ordered to leave Nacogdoches and live in San Antonio or another settlement less conducive to such activity. Muñoz was unable to carry out the order immediately, because La Mathe was in Louisiana at the time. A similar fate awaited Gil Ybarbo, as he was exiled from Nacogdoches for nearly a decade, despite having been exonerated of the charges against him.⁹⁹

Whatever Gil Ybarbo may have received from his business dealings and from allowing foreigners the privilege to trade in the area under his jurisdiction, Verazadi believed that his debts far exceeded his assets. Verazadi enumerated these in his report

⁹⁸ Correspondence between Juan Cortés and Manuel de Espadas, 27-28 Dec 1792, BA; Cortés to Muñoz, 11 Jan 1793, BA; Muñoz to Cortés, 18 Jan 1793, BA.

⁹⁹ Revillagigedo to Muñoz, 26 Sept 1792, BA; Muñoz to Revillagigedo, 5 Nov 1792, in *Cuaderno Borrador*, 19 Sept 1792, BA; Chipman and Joseph, *Notable Men and Women*, p. 200.

as including seven hundred head of cattle and twelve herds of mares, in which were counted seven herds for breeding mules. Yet at the time he owed more than twenty thousand *pesos* to various creditors, the chief one being José de la Peña in New Orleans. These debts indicate the scope of Gil Ybarbo's commercial ventures as well as illicit trade, and may also reflect long-term effects of Spain's policies regulating the price of trade goods for indigenous polities.¹⁰⁰

Verazadi's description of Gil Ybarbo's activities reveal not just the types of his dealings, but also some of the risks inherent in the frontier economy. Goods purchased on credit had to bring sufficient return to make up for losses due to a variety of causes. Gil Ybarbo's business was highly diversified and he was able to bend rules to his advantage, yet he still faced challenges in meeting contractual obligations. In the end, however, his will and testament revealed that he was able to pay off not only his own debts, but also a significant debt that his son-in-law had incurred by embezzling well over five thousand *pesos* of tithe funds he was authorized to collect.¹⁰¹ His will also indicates that he took his administrative work seriously, even as he enriched himself through it: his personal library included *La Recopilación de Leyes*, and eight volumes on judicial procedure of the Spanish legal code.¹⁰²

During the last quarter of the eighteenth century, traders such as Marcos Vidal, the Menchaca family, Antonio Gil Ybarbo, and Nicolás de la Mathe greatly expanded the frontier exchange economy in colonial Texas. Inventories of goods confiscated from

¹⁰⁰ *Expediente promovido por el Capitan D[o]n Antonio Gil Ybarvo pidiendo los ynformes dicttad[o]s contra su conducta ...*, 30 Sept 1795, BA.

¹⁰¹ This is also discussed in Chapter Three.

¹⁰² The Verazadi report, dated 15 June 1791, is contained in *Expediente promovido por el Capitan D[o]n Antonio Gil Ybarvo pidiendo los ynformes dicttad[o]s contra su conducta ...*, 30 Sept 1795, BA. Regarding Gil Ybarbo's debts and his payment of Barrera's debt, Bexar County Spanish Archives (BCSA) Wills and Estates: Antonio Gil Ybarbo, WE119 (1800).

merchants, soldiers and vecinos reflect extensive networks of commonplace exchange within the Spanish community and among Spaniards and indigenous peoples, as well as the degree to which the frontier population relied on extralegal channels for basic necessities. Throughout the eighteenth century, contraband items typically included such metal implements as knives, scissors, pots, strike-a-lights, soap, handkerchiefs, hosiery, needles, thread, buttons, clothing, cut textiles, and hundreds of *varas* of various types of cloth. French traders, local middlemen, or hired laborers brought these goods into Texas from Louisiana, in turn receiving mules, horses, cattle, hides, and occasionally even cash payments. Other forms of contraband included tobacco, playing cards and liquor, traded clandestinely not only to avoid paying the required taxes, but also because the *estancos* were unable to supply them. Contraband trade with indigenous peoples generally included guns, powder, shot, vermillion (for body paint), and tobacco, all of which were exchanged for horses, cattle, buffalo and deer hides, other peltry, and even indigenous captives.¹⁰³

Fabrics were the commodities by far in the highest demand. The range of textiles that officials confiscated as contraband represents global trends in textile production and consumption. Consumers in Texas could obtain relatively few fabrics through legal channels; a far greater variety was available through frontier exchange routes. Comparing forty-three different textiles confiscated as contraband from Louisiana with those obtained in legitimate trade from Mexico City, only three overlap

¹⁰³ For inventories of confiscated goods, see, for example, *Don Hugo Oconor* [proceedings concerning contraband money and merchandise belonging to Martos y Navarrete], 22 Aug 1767, BA; *Ripperdá* [Ripperdá vs. Joaquín Benítez, Nepomuceno Travieso, and Juan Antonio Cuevas], 1 Aug 1774, BA; *Diligencias practicadas para yndagar Juan Bousquet*, 1778, BA; *Año de 1795, Expediente instruido sobre Denuncio de contrabando hecho por Josse de los Santos Hernandez alias Miralexos*, 23 Apr 1795, BA.

with both contraband and legitimate sources. These were Rouen and Brittany linen, and wool velvet. In this regard, the frontier exchange and legitimate economies complemented but did not compete with one another. It may be assumed that these differing sources would be obvious to contemporary observers, as well.

Although traders and merchants who imported these goods into Texas may have to some extent determined what was available for consumption, they also responded to the demands and expectations of their markets. For example, French traders in Louisiana ordered certain fabrics in vogue in Spanish society that they sold only in Texas; they did not offer them for local trade in Louisiana.¹⁰⁴ Similarly, the San Antonio merchant Fernando de Beramendi journeyed to Mexico City on a buying trip with dozens of requests for specific items from individual customers, while Toribio Durán transported small amounts of textiles and cut cloth from Nacogdoches to various residents in San Antonio.

Government officials in Texas often distanced themselves from local residents, describing their extreme poverty, lack of proper attire, and even their nakedness. These distinctions mattered to their sense of elite honor, status, and propriety. Yet their descriptions obscure the fact that vecinos had access to a large array of both ordinary and fine fabrics, trimmings, ornamentation, and fashion accessories with which to clothe and adorn themselves. In this regard, the non-elites who comprised nearly the entire frontier population could deploy dress style and fabric quality to assert their own sense of dignity and signal their economic means as well as their social aspirations. By downplaying racial categories and focusing on material assets, they

¹⁰⁴ Sophie White, "Geographies of Slave Consumption: French Colonial Louisiana and a World of Goods," *Winterthur Portfolio* 45, No. 2/3 (Summer/Autumn 2011), p. 237.

created a local society that defied the expectations of their peninsular and American-born Crown officials.

While textiles are amply reflected in the documentation of contraband, they rarely survive in an archaeological context. More durable objects such as fasteners, personal adornment, and especially ceramics provide a more tangible record of the scope of contraband trade in colonial Texas society. In one study, archaeologist Casey Hanson used material objects to examine the formation of a Tejano identity that was both rooted in and distinctive from cultural identity in the interior of New Spain and Mexico. His study focused on artifacts excavated from three sites in San Antonio. The oldest unit was excavated at the Spanish governor's palace and dates from the early to mid-eighteenth century. The findings at this site show a "relatively sparse" material world, according to Hanson. Artifacts from two later sites – a cistern on the property of the Delgado family and middens at the Nuñez-Arocha lot – date from the 1780s to the 1820s. Each of these families immigrated from the Canary Islands in 1731, so the excavations represent their second and third generations. Hanson's evidence indicates that by the turn of the nineteenth century, an increasing inventory of English ceramics, metal, and glass objects was available in San Antonio, although the use of some locally-produced earthen ware and traditional stone tools persisted. Most artifacts from the Delgado and Núñez-Arocha sites reflected new trade opportunities available through Anglo-American markets beginning in the 1790s, and particularly after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase by the United States from France.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Hanson, "The Materiality of *Tejano* Identity," pp. 62-64, 82, 100, 172-73, 190-92, 198, 200, 212-13.

The abandonment and subsequent reoccupation of east Texas, without a formal institution other than the local militia, weakened Spanish authority in the area even as the local economy flourished through contraband trade. The problem for Spanish officials was that, for centuries before European contact, east Texas was a meeting point for different cultures and part of a broad regional crossroads for trade. Crown policies to restrict trade could not undo this history and ongoing practice. Rather, through their own initiative and self interest, the *Adaseños* embraced this history and in the process created Nacogdoches as a center for frontier exchange. Such changes, however, were caught up in conflict and adversarial roles and exposed the vulnerability of Spanish claims in the area. Because local officials either participated in illicit trade or unevenly enforced trade restrictions, the role of the Spanish state was largely ineffective in east Texas. By the end of the century, Spain had no more control over local or regional economic activity than when it had entered the territory a hundred years earlier.

Bourbon Spain ceded Louisiana to Bourbon France in 1801, under political and financial pressure, in exchange for territory in Italy. Two years later, having lost its Caribbean colonies, including Saint-Domingue (now Haiti), and then finding no strategic value for Louisiana, France sold the territory to the United States so that Napoleon had cash to fund his European wars.¹⁰⁶ With its vague boundaries, Texas was ill-prepared to resume its role as a frontier, this time against the aggressive Anglo-Americans. As Anglo-American traders illegally entered Texas in search of horses, or with goods to sell, they offered armed resistance to the Spanish troops attempting to arrest them. Until this time, those responsible for enforcing the law had not encountered violence in

¹⁰⁶ David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 290-91.

carrying out their duties. Now, these traders from the newly-bordering United States themselves used force against Spanish troops and were answered in kind. Spanish troops killed at least two smugglers from the U.S. – Philip Nolan and Pop Yoel – as they resisted arrest with armed violence.¹⁰⁷

Eventually, economic ties between the east Texas settlers and their non-Spanish trading partners contributed to a growing distance between local residents and Crown rule. With the Mexican wars for independence beginning in 1810, Texas became a highly contested area that both royalists and insurgents viewed as strategic to their cause. The strength of the frontier exchange economy, combined with evolving yet ineffective economic policies, had a significant role in creating political tensions and undermining Crown authority in New Spain's far northern frontier. The process contributed to what J. H. Elliott has described as "psychological distancing" between the colonies and the homeland.¹⁰⁸

The growth of complementary legal and frontier exchange economies had long-term consequences for the Texas province. By developing and asserting economic agency largely outside of the control of the Spanish Crown – especially through the reoccupation of east Texas – its inhabitants exercised locally independent thought and behavior. During the eighteenth century, this frontier area transformed from a distant hinterland that could barely be provisioned, to an area with a robust intercultural regional economy. Yet a strong economy firmly tied to Louisiana, combined with the

¹⁰⁷ Nolan was killed March 21, 1801 when Spanish troops attempted to arrest him; Nava to Governor of Texas, 14 Apr 1801, BA; Miguel Francisco Músquiz to Juan Bautista Elguézabal, 22 Apr 1801. Pop Yoel was killed when Spanish soldiers arrested the group he was with; Proceedings against Enrique Kuerke, José Maguí, Juan Macfarson, and José Brenton for smuggling, 20 Oct 1808, BA.

¹⁰⁸ J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), p. 326.

absence of formal social institutions on the Texas-Louisiana border, would prove to be Spain's undoing in the early decades of the nineteenth century. The next chapter will explore how this came about.

Chapter Six
“Our Country was Our Prison”:¹
Sedition and Rebellion in the Province of Texas

This chapter will explore how contraband networks contributed to the spread of sedition and rebellion in Spanish Texas during the early nineteenth century. While trade items were tangible goods that traveled through extensive networks, ideas were the intangibles that flowed through these same routes. The exchange of information was an intrinsic part of the exchange of objects, but ideas went beyond this interaction by informing and transforming people’s views and understandings of their world.

Printed materials became an important medium for spreading ideas about new worldviews. In the early years of the nineteenth century, these ideas rapidly took shape among a significant part of the populace in response first to the militarization of the Texas-Louisiana border after the Louisiana Purchase in 1803 by the U.S. government. Then followed the far-ranging and monumental repercussions of Napoleon’s 1808 invasion of Spain, which precipitated independence movements in much of Spanish America. Just as Texas was a crossroads for markets, it also came to hold strategic significance for revolutionary ideas and action. That the power of ideas figured prominently in these events was reflected in Texas’s first declaration of independence, promulgated in 1813. Listed among its grievances: “We were prohibited the use of books, of speech, and even of thought – our country was our prison.”²

¹ “*Nuestro Pais era nuestra pricion*,” from the declaration of the governing Junta of Béxar, 6 Apr 1813, in Raúl Coronado, *A World Not to Come: A History of Latino Writing and Print Culture* (Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 408.

² For the intellectual roots and basis for the Spanish American civil wars and independence, as well as a Spanish transcription and English translation of the Declaration, see Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 407-15. An English translation of the Declaration can also be found in Ernest Wallace, David M. Vigness, and George B. Ward, eds., *Documents of Texas History*, 2nd ed. (Austin: Texas State Historical Association,

Like the prosecution of contraband, investigations of sedition were undoubtedly small in number compared to the actual circulation of seditious ideas. The narrative of sedition, too, echoed that of contraband. It ranged from expressions of outrage regarding social and economic injustice to the advocacy of self-governance and of revolution. Many of the perpetrators took an active role in challenging political authority, but others were little more than victims of circumstance.

In the politically unstable period of the early 1800s, ideas and knowledge increasingly became a type of commodity. From wild speculation to detailed information, ideas were traded through both chance conversation and intensive debate, through casual social encounters as well as among family networks. They circulated on public streets, in military field camps, and within the private confines of people's homes. Printed materials were read aloud and discussed among gatherings, then passed on to others who could repeat this process.³ Ideas could gain value as political capital, either by the creation of factions through subversive or counter-subversive plots, or through denouncing a perpetrator for political gain. By imagining seditious ideas as commodities, it can also be seen that they often traveled the same routes as smuggled goods: across provincial and national borders, and circulated within specific communities. Through trading their narratives of injustice and their hunger for justice, participants in these networks built the foundations for concrete acts of sedition and revolution.

2002), p. 40. For detailed analysis of the Declaration, see Virginia Guedea, "*La Declaración de Independencia de la Provincia de Texas, 6 de Abril de 1813*," in Alfredo Ávila, Jordana Dym, and Erika Pani, eds., *Las Declaraciones de Independencia: Los Textos Fundamentales de las Independencias de Americas* (Colegio de México, 2013), pp. 329-353.

³ Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 8, 27, 141-43, 215-18, 270-73.

The nature and character of the Texas-Louisiana borderlands changed dramatically with the United States's purchase of the Louisiana territory from France in 1803. France had ceded Louisiana to Spain in 1763, at the end of the Seven Years' War. After joining France in 1796 in a losing war against Great Britain, Spain ceded Louisiana back to France by the Treaty of San Ildefonso in 1800. Having regained this territory, Napoleon intended to use it as a base to reestablish French power in North America, but other priorities redirected French troops away from their journey to Louisiana. Preoccupied with strategic issues elsewhere, Napoleon sold the territory to the United States in 1803, despite Spain's vigorous protests. The transfer led to a prolonged, contested effort to define the new international boundary between Louisiana and Texas. As long as either France or Spain had claimed the territory, the border had never been clearly defined. Now, the U.S. asserted that Louisiana extended east to include most of West Florida, and west to the Rocky Mountains and the Rio Grande. Spain, on the other hand, held that the territory was confined to the area of present-day Louisiana, eastern Arkansas, and eastern Missouri.⁴

The disagreement over the international boundary immediately led to the militarization of both sides of the border. In 1803, at the time of the Louisiana Purchase, Spain had approximately two hundred troops garrisoned in Texas, including soldiers and militiamen, stationed among San Antonio, La Bahía, and Nacogdoches.⁵ As the fairly stable situation on the frontier began to deteriorate, however, the military

⁴ J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), pp. 373, 399; David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992), pp. 291-93.

⁵ It is unclear whether the arrival in San Antonio of the *Compañía Volante del Alamo de San Carlos de Parras* in December, 1802 was related to the negotiations that were then in process between France and the United States for the purchase.

command of the Internal Provinces and of Texas began increasing troop strength. By the end of 1805, there were approximately seven hundred soldiers in Texas, including 141 posted at Nacogdoches. The total number almost doubled the following year, to just under 1,400 troops, including nearly nine hundred in Nacogdoches. At the same time, the United States had placed a huge military force by comparison, somewhere between twelve and fifteen thousand troops at Natchitoches.⁶

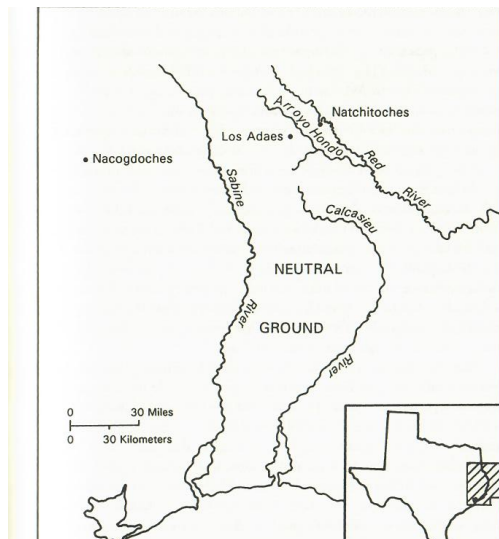


Figure 1: The Neutral Ground, 1806.⁷

As tensions mounted, the two sides came close to combat before reaching an agreement in late 1806 establishing a demilitarized zone that came to be known as the Neutral Ground (Figure 1, above). This agreement, arrived at between U.S. General James Wilkinson and Spanish General Simón de Herrera, stipulated that U.S. troops would withdraw to Natchitoches and remain east of the Arroyo Hondo, and that Spanish troops would withdraw to Nacogdoches and remain west of the Sabine River.

⁶ Odie B. Faulk, "The Penetration of Foreigners and Foreign Ideas into Spanish East Texas, 1793-1810," *East Texas Historical Journal* 2, no. 2 (Oct. 1964), p. 90.

⁷ From Donald E. Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821*, rev. ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1992), p. 239.

The area in between the Arroyo Hondo and the Sabine River, which Wilkinson described as “scarcely worth the blood of one brave man,” soon became a magnet for deserters, smugglers, fugitive slaves and, eventually, filibusterers. Much of the Spanish military garrisons’ time was spent in patrolling portions of this area, apprehending contraband goods and evicting squatters. It remained a no-man’s land until a more precise boundary was defined in 1819 with the Adams-Onís Treaty, which resolved the dispute between Spain and the U.S.⁸

The increase in Spanish troops in Texas fell far short of the numbers that military officials requested. In the five years following the Louisiana Purchase, Acting Governor Antonio Cordero asked Commandant General Nemesio Salcedo for increases to 3,000 infantry, 1,500 cavalry, a field artillery group, and the organization of three new local militias. Salcedo, while approving some increases, argued that these numbers were impossible to achieve. Instead, his strategy was to maintain a sufficient number of troops in Texas to hold San Antonio against an American invasion until reinforcements could arrive from the interior.⁹ In 1809, Brigadier Bernardo Bonavía convened two councils in San Antonio, which he attended together with Cordero, Simón Herrera, and the recently-arrived Texas Governor Manuel de Salcedo, who was Commandant General Nemesio Salcedo’s nephew. Bonavía supported an increase to four thousand troops, but Nemesio Salcedo remained limited in his ability to improve the defense of Texas. He had previously ordered the road between Nacogdoches and San Antonio to be left in

⁸ Weber, *Spanish Frontier*, p. 291-95; Wallace et al., *Documents of Texas History*, pp. 38-39, quotation p. 38.

⁹ Salcedo to Cordero, 8 April 1805, Nacogdoches Archives (NA), Box 004-3, fd. 1; Salcedo to Elguézabal, 1 July 1805, Bexar Archives (BA); Cordero to Salcedo, 15 September 1805 [no. 19], BA; Salcedo to Cordero, 17 January 1806, NA Box 004-3, fd. 1; Serrano, “*Estado q[u]e manifiesta la fuerza total y Destinos de las tropas q[u]e existen en esta Provincia*,” 26 June 1806, BA; Cordero to Salcedo, 29 August 1807, NA Box 004-4, fd. 4; Salcedo to Cordero, 29 September 1807, NA Box 004-3, fd. 2.

a state of disrepair so as to delay an invading army and provide time for reinforcements from other provinces to arrive in San Antonio.¹⁰ The combination of factors that made east Texas so amenable to smuggling – its remoteness from Spanish resources, its proximity to the international border, and topographical and climate conditions that made transportation and communications from the interior unreliable – also made it militarily indefensible. The commandant general was under no illusions that it could withstand an invasion. As it had throughout the eighteenth century, Texas remained underfunded and under-resourced.

Ironically, the actual threat to Texas did not come from U.S. troops massed on the Louisiana border, but rather was triggered by events in Spain itself. The beginnings of large-scale discontent and political instability in New Spain were rooted in Napoleon Bonaparte's 1808 military invasion of Spain. After forcing the abdication of Charles IV and imprisoning the Spanish King Ferdinand VII, Napoleon installed his own brother, Joseph, as King José I of Spain. These actions provoked the Peninsular War in Iberia and soul-searching discussions throughout Spanish America regarding the basis of political authority without a legitimate monarch. Spaniards in Spain rejected the legitimacy of the new regime and formed local and regional governing juntas, soon reorganized into a legislative body known as the Cortes. In a far-reaching decision, representation in the Cortes was extended to the overseas territories, where elections for representatives were held beginning in 1809. In September, 1810, the first national parliament met as the Cortes at the port of Cádiz, still held by Spanish patriots. Napoleon's invasion of

¹⁰ Faulk, "The Penetration of Foreigners and Foreign Ideas," p. 93; Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, Vol. 5: *The Mission Era: The End of the Spanish Regime, 1780-1810* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1942), pp. 366, 368, 373-74; Bonavía to Salcedo, 2 June 1809, BA.

Spain and the subsequent meeting of the Cortes of Cádiz had profound effects on Spanish America, where people became divided over the new issue of popular representation. Essentially, it exacerbated the split between Spaniards born in Iberia (*peninsulares*) and American-born Spaniards, or *criollos*. Under the Bourbon regime, *peninsulares* were systematically appointed to office in Spanish America over *criollos*. American-born elite men's upward mobility and place in governance was blocked by Bourbon policy that viewed *criollos* with suspicion, placing in office *peninsulares* whose ties were firmly to Spain, not divided by loyalty to a local *patria* in the Americas.¹¹

The crisis of political authority touched off by the Napoleonic invasion of Spain tapped into *criollo* elites' discontent about their position within the Spanish Empire, what they called "bad government." For *criollos*, the Napoleonic invasion presented an opportunity to reassert their place in governance. In Mexico City, the *ayuntamiento*, a stronghold of creole power, had the ear of Viceroy José de Iturrigaray. As *criollo* elites voiced the desire for more autonomy within the Spanish empire, the *peninsulares* deposed Iturrigaray. They considered him too sympathetic to *criollos*, and were alarmed that, in the wake of Napoleon's invasion of Spain, he might declare New Spain a sovereign state. Although the unsuccessful 1810 Hidalgo revolt is usually seen as the sparking point of Mexican independence, the *peninsulares'* coup against Iturrigaray is extremely important for understanding the political divide in New Spain. The issue of self-governance would also become one of the grievances listed in the 1813 Texas

¹¹ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, pp. 373-79.

declaration of independence, which asserted that legitimate political authority rested with the people.¹²

Napoleon attempted to incite revolution in the Spanish overseas territories in order to further weaken Spain and to extend French trade to the Americas. In 1808, he sent Octaviano D'Alvimar to the United States, to travel to New Spain via Louisiana and Texas to implement this scheme in the northern region of the viceroyalty.¹³ On the alert, Spanish authorities in Nacogdoches detained D'Alvimar upon entry, eventually sending him to San Antonio where he was arrested and taken to the interior as a prisoner of war. The presence of a supposed Napoleonic agent in the border area gave an immediacy to the threat of French intrigue, fueling rumors that the territory would be handed over to the French and the Catholic religion would be lost.¹⁴ For officials in Texas, French concepts of governance were no more welcome than their Louisiana-based trade items had been in the eighteenth century.

Beginning in 1809, Governor Salcedo initiated the censorship of mail from Louisiana to prevent the introduction of seditious ideas into Texas, expanding the long-standing ban against the importation of tangible commercial goods to abstract intellectual commodities. This new restriction was in response to the intellectual

¹² John Tutino, *From Insurrection to Revolution in Mexico: Social Bases of Agrarian Violence, 1750-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986), pp. 111-12; "and that henceforth all legitimate authority arises from the People in whom this right Only belongs" (*y que en adelante toda autoridad legitima, dimanará del Pueblo a quien Solam[en]te pertenece este derecho*), from the 1813 declaration of the Junta de Béxar, in Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, p. 411, 407.

¹³ Little is known of whether there was such a plot directed by Napoleon, or if the idea was a combination of fear, rumor, and exaggeration. For the assertion that there was such a plot involving D'Alvimar, see Félix D. Almaráz, Jr., *Tragic Cavalier: Governor Manuel Salcedo of Texas, 1808-1813* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2000), p. 25. For a more balanced investigation of D'Alvimar that examines whether he was a Napoleonic emissary or a rogue actor, see Jacques Houdaille, "Gaetan Souchet D'Alvimart, the Alleged Envoy of Napoleon to Mexico, 1807-1809," *The Americas* 16, no. 2 (Oct 1959), pp. 119-25.

¹⁴ See, for example, the reported conversation between José María Valdez and Miguel Liendo, discussed below; "*Declaracion recibida á José Maria Valdez . . .*," 28 November 1812, BA.

turmoil resulting from the political upheaval in Spain. As literary historian Raúl Coronado noted, a number of Spanish American insurgents traveled to Philadelphia on the heels of the invasion, “launch[ing] into a publishing frenzy, producing abundant visions of sovereignty and notions of the common good they thought should develop in the absence of the king.” Salcedo’s precautionary actions increased the climate of collective anxiety in Texas; indeed, the fear of French influence became so pronounced that once rebellion broke out in Texas, both royalists and insurrectionists manipulated attitudes about the French to their advantage.¹⁵

The overthrow of the Spanish monarch provided an opportunity for the renegotiation of governance in New Spain. At the local level, Hispanic Texans began to express their frustrations with Crown officials and give voice to their own political beliefs. In October, 1809, one José Cirilo de la Garza was charged with satire against the Spanish government in Nacogdoches, allegedly having plastered a lampoon on the house of the military commander José María Guadiana. Usually affixed to walls, political lampoons were commonly used in urban areas, particularly during the early years of the rebellion. The lampoon in this case would have been printed or handwritten on a single side of a sheet of paper. Its posting in a prominent public space would have allowed those who were literate to read it aloud to others for dissemination and discussion of its contents.¹⁶ Although the text of the lampoon was not recorded in the

¹⁵ Frederick C. Chabot, ed., *Texas in 1811: The Las Casas and Sambrano Revolution* (San Antonio: Yanaguana Society, 1941), pp. 19-22; Mattie Austin Hatcher, *The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1927), pp. 128-32; quote from Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 26-27. Coronado’s book discusses in detail the printed revolutionary literature that was smuggled into Texas from the U.S.

¹⁶ Peter Guardino discusses “the unofficial discourse” of *pasquines* (lampoons) in *The Time of Liberty: Popular Political Culture in Oaxaca, 1750-1850* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), pp. 126-27, 140-41. In a similar manner, the posting of official proclamations was a common practice at various levels of

documents available, it ridiculed Guadiana and other leaders as villains and thieves who made the nation the laughingstock of foreign countries. Commandant General Nemesio Salcedo, investigating the incident, described the lampoon as indecent, uncouth, and motivated by petty jealousy – elite pejorative characterizations of the local population and their political aspirations and challenges to the established order. From Salcedo's perspective, de la Garza's most serious transgression was that the lampoon explicitly mocked an individual royal official, and broadcast the satire among the population, damaging the Crown's standing in public opinion. De la Garza was sentenced to a year in prison, three years labor at the Presidio, and then banishment from the province.¹⁷

Without further details about this case, it is impossible to say whether the lampoon was related to D'Alvimar's extended detention the previous fall, or to other, local or personal matters. From the time when he was transferred to Nacogdoches as the new post commander in 1797, as Antonio Gil Ybarbo's immediate successor, José María Guadiana was seen as an outsider and had been the target of popular ridicule in song and verse. In turn, he accused or investigated more than two dozen residents for subversive songs in cases that reflected contempt for Bourbon authority and an assertion of local control. Historian Carla Gerona identified the 1797 subversive songs about Guadiana as "the first rumblings of revolutionary activity in Texas," part of "the larger age of revolts that swept over the Atlantic world . . . in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, though these expressions of dissent did not lead to

government; Julia Kathryn Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas: A Story of the Last Years of Spain in Texas* (New York and Dallas: The Cordova Press, 1939), pp. 56-57.

¹⁷ N. Salcedo to Varela, April 6, 1810, BA; Bonavía to N. Salcedo Sept. 12, 1810, BA; N. Salcedo to Bonavía, Sept. 28, 1810, BA; M. de Salcedo to N. Salcedo, Nov. 28, 1810, BA; N. Salcedo to M. de Salcedo, Dec. 29, 1810, BA.

independence at this point.”¹⁸ Gaudiana’s apparent double standards may also have provoked the antipathy of local residents, who saw him engaging in the same illegal behaviors that he prosecuted in others. Several years before de la Garza posted the lampoon, for example, Guadiana had openly had an affair with the daughter of a resident soldier, and had tolerated his second in command living with a married woman. In addition, he was known to have dealt in contraband trade between Natchitoches, Nacogdoches, and La Bahía.¹⁹ Just as their eighteenth-century predecessors had lost the respect of the east Texas populace, those in the early nineteenth century similarly flouted the laws they were sworn to uphold, both distancing themselves and provoking ire from local residents through their impunity.

In September 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla’s “*Grito de Dolores*” sparked a huge and bloody popular uprising against “bad government” in the Bajío, New Spain’s breadbasket. The Hidalgo revolt terrified many creole patriots about the dangers of undoing the social order and unleashing racial violence. Governor Salcedo responded to the internal threat that the revolt posed by attempting to isolate the province and to restrict movement within it. Salcedo expanded censorship to cover all communications from central New Spain into Texas, and required passports for all travel. In November 1810, he appointed a special guard for his own protection, and in vain requested additional troops and officers for the province.²⁰ That his efforts only intensified

¹⁸ Carla Gerona, “With a Song in Their Hands: Incendiary Décimas from the Texas and Louisiana Borderlands during a Revolutionary Age,” *Early American Studies* (Winter 2014), pp. 97-98.

¹⁹ Nava to Elguézabal, July 21, 1801, BA; *Autos Criminales formados contra varios Yndividuos . . . Num[er]o 106*, 4-28 Dec, 1797, BA.

²⁰ Carlos E. Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519-1936*, Vol. 6: *Transition Period: The Fight for Freedom, 1810-1836* (Austin: Von Boeckmann-Jones, 1950), p. 4; Elizabeth May Morey, “Attitude of the Citizens of San Fernando toward Independence in New Spain, 1811-1813” (master’s thesis, University of Texas, 1930), pp. 58-60, 99.

widespread disaffection with the social order in Texas became evident the following month, in a case alleging public advocacy of revolution.

Investigation of a seemingly minor incident exposed officials' fear of rebellion. This case not only foreshadowed the divisions between European- and American-born Spaniards that were soon to be played out in revolt, but also reflected that these social divisions were present in Texas. In this particular case, the peninsular Spaniards are the governor and the complainant, while the creoles are the defendants and witnesses. The incident occurred on December 12, 1810, as the harvest season was coming to a close. Governor Salcedo personally took the accusation from the complainant, Antonio Bilano, a peninsular Spaniard from Málaga.²¹ The case involved eight field hands, who Bilano reported were singing songs with revolutionary slogans. Bilano testified that as he passed through the barrio of Valero, he heard them singing "*viva los peones, muerte a los gachupines*"²² as they came in from the fields with the last of the corn harvest, riding a cart carrying flags or banners. All eight men worked in the fields of Francisco Pereira, a captain in the Presidio.²³ Bilano stated that after hearing the field hands shouting these verses, he spoke to their supervisor Vicente Flores, who in turn had a conversation with the group of men about the complaint.

Salcedo took the eight men into custody for interrogation. In addition, he interviewed the supervisor Vicente Flores, the *ayudante* Juan José Mamolo, and three

²¹ The complainant signed his name Bilano, but was variously referred to as Vilano and Milano throughout the documents.

²² "Long live the workers, death to the *gachupines*!" *Gachupín* (plural *gachupines*) was a derogatory term used in the Americas for a peninsular Spaniard. The change of the popular revolutionary slogan "Death to bad government, long live the king" to "Death to the *gachupines* . . ." is discussed in Jaime E. Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), pp. 161-62.

²³ Pereira was a loyalist who would later be assassinated along with Governor Salcedo and fifteen other officers during the Gutiérrez rebellion. His field supervisor Vicente Flores positioned himself on both sides of the various local rebellions, depending on opportunity and circumstance.

other witnesses. All of the defendants swore that Bilano had been mistaken, that they were singing *El Jarabe* (a popular folk dance) and shouting “*viva nuestro ayudante José Mamolo*” in celebration of the end of the harvest, and asserted that the flags on the cart were simply shades to rest under during the day’s work. Flores and Mamolo corroborated their testimony. None of the other three witnesses were able to contribute further information, as they each stated they had been at a distance from the cart and unable to hear anything. The charges were dismissed, and all of the men released.²⁴

The testimony presents several ambiguities. Was it a harmless instance of joyful celebration that the harvest work was done, with peninsular Spaniards so on edge that they mistook the verse as inflammatory? Or was it an openly seditious performance among a group of people who shared anti-peninsular sentiments? If the participants altered their performance and perjured themselves before a Crown official, they shared their defiance of authority among themselves and compounded their original expressions of disrespect – another example of hidden transcripts discussed in the previous chapter. Either this fact would have been opaque to Governor Salcedo as their interrogator, or he was otherwise powerless to reveal and punish their deception. Because their sentiments had been expressed verbally, they were able to outwit Bilano and Salcedo by colluding with one another to disavow their actions. By presenting a united, if deceptive, front the group was able to subvert the law and render it powerless against their behavior.

²⁴ *Diligencias seguidas en averiguación de unas voces que oyeron, como principio de Revolución*, 12 Dec 1810, BA.

Given subsequent events, however, there was more to this story than initially appeared, and considerably less ambiguity. One of the witnesses summoned in the investigation was Juan Bautista de las Casas, a retired captain of the auxiliary militia. Within six weeks of this investigation, Casas led a coup that ousted provincial Spanish authorities and proclaimed Texas in support of the Hidalgo revolt. Vicente Flores was among his principal allies, and would serve in the newly-founded revolutionary Texas government. Despite having questioned the very people who were soon to commit treason, the Spanish officials were strangely deceived and misled. It seems plausible that following Bilano's words with him, Flores spoke to the field hands in order to coordinate their stories and avoid trouble. The case suggests that by the end of 1810, anti-peninsular or pro-Hidalgo sentiment had spread throughout both the civilian and military population of Béxar. This fact was already apparent to U.S. observers across the border. In November, 1810, U.S. Indian Agent John Sibley wrote to Secretary of War William Eustis that prominent citizens and clerics in San Antonio were ready to revolt.²⁵ Events moved quickly to bear out his observation.

Because of their proximity to the United States, the northern provinces of New Spain – particularly Texas – were an important part of the Hidalgo forces' strategy to obtain foreign assistance for the insurrection. Under the revolutionary Lieutenant General Mariano Jiménez, between November 1810 and early January 1811 the insurgents rapidly took over Nueva Galicia, Zacatecas, San Luis Potosí, Nuevo Santander, Coahuila, and Nuevo León. As one revolutionary proclamation disseminated

²⁵ Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, pp. 40-41.

throughout the area boasted, "Conquest travels with fast steps."²⁶ Local troops in these provinces abandoned their royal officers and joined the insurgency. Rumor spread among the populace in Texas that royalist control was nearing its end, and that no one would defend the government.²⁷

Rumor acted as a form of intellectual contraband, circulating in opposition to orders as quickly as they were announced, and undermining Crown officials' efforts to monitor and defend the province against insurgency. Even before receiving the news of the insurgents' success to the south, Governor Salcedo had quietly sent his wife and children to New Orleans. This action not surprisingly inspired rumors that he himself planned to abandon the province. By orders from the commandant general, he announced to the troops that they were to march south to the Río Grande to help fight the insurgents. In response, rumor spread through San Antonio that officials planned to forsake the province, leaving the inhabitants and their property unprotected. In addition, Salcedo prepared plans to reinforce local defenses, including conscripting militiamen and commandeering horses.

On January 15, 1811, Salcedo learned of a conspiracy that soldiers and vecinos planned to overthrow him, establish a provisional independent government, and turn the province over to the insurgents. These concerns echoed those in Mexico City that resulted in the *peninsulares'* ouster of viceroy Iturrigaray in 1808. Salcedo imprisoned two of the conspirators – Antonio Sáenz and Francisco Ignacio Escamilla, militia lieutenants from Nuevo Santander who were among the troops stationed at San

²⁶ José Antonio Gutiérrez de Lara, "*Americanos*," English translation in Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 397-99; quotation on p. 399, also see pp. 62-63.

²⁷ Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, pp. 33-35; Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 116-18.

Antonio as part of the military buildup during the previous decade. Also jailed, possibly at the same time, were local community leaders José Antonio Saucedo, Francisco Arocha, Francisco Travieso, Alexandro de Uro, the Frenchman Labarra, and “a certain Farías” (who may have been either José Antonio Farías or Francisco Farías; these individuals were noted as being freed by Casas at the time of the coup). Salcedo then countermanded his orders to march to the south, and convened a junta of members of the *cabildo* (the local governing body, usually in the hands of criollo elites), church, and military to swear their allegiance to Spain. Similar oaths were required from the troops in La Bahía and Nacogdoches.²⁸

On January 21, 1811 Salcedo announced a revised plan for the garrison to march east to the Colorado River for field maneuvers and military instruction, and to hunt wild cattle to replenish food supplies. New rumors spread among the troops that the presidio would be burned before their departure, leaving the town and their families undefended, and that after the troops’ departure Sáenz and Escamilla would be beheaded for treason. The origin of these rumors is unknown, but they were effective in subverting government decisions and moving people to revolt. The soldiers were determined not to follow their orders. Throughout that night, Juan Bautista de las Casas met with military officers and members of the *cabildo*. At dawn the next morning, with Casas at their head, the troops at San Antonio turned against their leaders, arresting Governor Salcedo and his officers in the name of God and king, and declaring

²⁸ Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 23-25; Hugh M. Hamill, Jr., *The Hidalgo Revolt: Prelude to Mexican Independence* (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1966), p. 204; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage* Vol. 6, pp. 5-8; transcript of testimony of the Casas trial for high treason in Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 37-65.

themselves against “bad government.”²⁹ The phrase was frequently invoked during the insurgency, signaling that those in rebellion were not opposed to (good) order and government, but were against officials of a regime that ruled unfairly.

The evidence indicates that the Casas revolt was well planned, and that only certain troops were involved. It also appears to have had the support of at least some bureaucrats in the royalist government.³⁰ Prominent local men, including Tomás de Arocha, Gabino Delgado, José Antonio Saucedo, Francisco Travieso, and Vicente Flores also took an active role in the revolt. Several of these men were descendants of the original Canary Island settlers, or Isleños, and all of them wielded political authority in the community. Casas and his cohort clearly had put considerable effort into negotiating with these and other local leaders to win their support and that of their troops. The aims of the local conspirators in San Antonio were, at least in part, to retain local political and economic control. Strikingly, however, the apparent ringleaders in spreading revolutionary ideas among the troops in Texas – Casas, Sáenz, and Escamilla – were each from outside the province. Casas and Sáenz had been in Texas since at least 1808, and Escamilla since 1809.³¹ Casas had been transferred to Monclova in July, 1810

²⁹ Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 6, pp. 6-8; testimony of witnesses Miguel de Reyna, militia sergeant from Nuevo León, Vicente Flores, ensign in the Texas militia, Francisco Travieso, alcalde of the first chamber, and Tomás Penedo, militia corporal from Nuevo Santander, in trial of Casas for high treason, transcripts in Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 51, 55, 59, 64-65.

³⁰ Based on a review of material in the Béxar Archives for the period January through March, 1811, for example, the documents reveal a seamless transition from royalist to “rebel” government: there are no interruptions in communications, and the subordinates who signed documents before the revolt continued to do so afterward, in the same official capacity they had held under the royalist regime.

³¹ Casas, together with Tomás de Arocha, had been selling mules illegally in Louisiana through the trader Samuel Davenport in 1808 (25 Dec 1808, BA), and was with troops near Béxar in January, 1809 (5 Jan 1809, BA). Sáenz had interim command of troops at Trinidad de Salcedo in east Texas in December, 1808 (25 Dec 1808, BA). Escamilla received his military appointment at Béxar in September, 1809 (21 Sept 1809, BA).

as an accomplice to seditionists, but had returned to San Antonio by the end of the year.³²

When their conspiracy with local leaders was exposed and Sáenz and Escamilla were arrested, Casas was forced to quickly develop a new plan. Although it is doubtful that he could have effected the coup without the involvement of locals, it seems that outsiders were the primary force behind his strategy, since most of the militia troops involved were from other provinces. During Casas's later trial for high treason, nearly all of the other men mentioned as important to the revolt were from the militias of Nuevo León and Nuevo Santander. The majority of troops who supported the revolt were also from those two provinces. The local militia, under the command of Vicente Flores, and the Presidio troops, also supported the coup. The *Compañía Volante del Alamo de Parras* – the regular cavalry troops that were moved from Coahuila to Texas in 1802 as part of a defensive reorganization – were conspicuously absent from mention in the testimonies during the Casas trial. In fact, rumors had been quite specific that Governor Salcedo had ordered the *Compañía Volante* to set fire to all of the barracks.³³ For reasons that are unclear, these rumors ensured the strategic isolation of the *Compañía Volante* from the rest of the troops. The extended mobilization of troops from the northern provinces along the Texas-Louisiana frontier, rather than strengthening Spain's hegemony in the area, instead helped to erode it from the inside.

³² Herrera to Bonavía, 4 January 1810, BA. There is no information in the Béxar Archives regarding the earlier incident, and no issue was made of it when Casas was called as a witness during the investigation of the seditious harvest song in December, 1810. "*Diligencias seguidas en averiguación de unas voces que oyeron, como principio de Revolucion*," 12 Dec 1810, BA.

³³ Transcript of testimony in the Casas trial for high treason in Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 37-62.

Casas and his supporters had both political and economic agendas. To legitimize his actions, Casas claimed to support the interest of Ferdinand VII, rightful ruler of Spain, in opposition to those officials he claimed betrayed the king's interests by abandoning the province. Such discourse of loyalty to the legitimate monarch was an important part of the insurgent leaders' justification for their actions elsewhere. Casas and his junta carried through this rhetoric with action. Once in power, the new junta quickly declared Texas independent from French-occupied Spain, and appointed Casas governor in the name of the Revolution.³⁴ The junta immediately imprisoned all European Spaniards residing in Texas and confiscated their property.³⁵ On the premise that the revolt was in support of the Bourbon King Ferdinand, the military officers who remained loyal to Governor Salcedo were charged with treason. Casas's public decrees, as well as his correspondence with the revolutionary leaders Miguel Hidalgo and José Mariano Jiménez, all employed the rhetoric of conflicting interests between European- and American-born Spaniards, a theme that historian Peter Guardino has argued grew from the anti-French propaganda the Spanish Crown had promoted before its capitulation to Napoleon.

³⁴ While no specific documentation has been identified regarding Casas's appointment, his correspondence with Hidalgo states "without other authority than that which the troops themselves of this town conferred upon me, placing me at their head to command them . . . I took control and authority as the senior captain, being elected by the officials and the troops as their chief governor *ad interim* and commander of the arms of the entire province;" Juan Bautista de las Casas to Miguel Hidalgo, 23 Jan 1811. Casas also issued a proclamation stating that "D[on] Pedro de Aranda, Brigadier of America, has appointed me political and military Governor *ad interim* of this province with all the powers that my judgment merits in an affair of such consequences;" Proclamation of Juan Bautista de las Casas, 9 Feb 1811. Both documents are given in English translation in Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 76-86.

³⁵ *Ynventario de los muebles que se encontrareon en la casa del Governador Don Manuel Salcedo*, 23 Jan 1811, BA; *Prov[inci]a de Texas, Ynventario echo p[or] el Alcalde de segundo voto . . . casa de Comercio de D[on] Apolinar de Masmelo*, 23 Jan 1811, BA; *D[on] Manuel Barrera . . . en la casa del Europeo D[on] Jose Benito Outon*, 23 Jan 1811, BA; *Ynventario que manifiesta lo envargado a los Europeos que han sido aprehendidos . . .*, 23 Jan 1811, BA.

Equally as important as his political maneuvers, Casas declared free trade³⁶ between Texas and the United States, a move that would not only undermine the monopoly that European Spaniards held on official trade, but also would attract broad popular support. In other words, they wished to reorient lawful trade from its prohibitively expensive sources in the interior of New Spain to the more efficient and affordable goods from what was now United States territory. Moreover, the insurgents in the interior hoped to secure arms and financial support from the U.S. through Texas, essentially expanding and redirecting the well-used contraband routes.³⁷

In fact, Generalísimo Ignacio Allende already had sent two envoys to the United States to negotiate for munitions and mercenary soldiers. The envoys, Ignacio de Aldama and fray Juan de Salazar, arrived in San Antonio on their way to the U.S. on February 27, 1811, within weeks of Casas's takeover of the government.³⁸ At the same time, a covert movement against Casas solidified under the leadership of the local subdeacon Juan Manuel Sambrano. This anti-Casas group attempted to gain the endorsement of the two envoys. Failing to win their support to remove Casas from power, Sambrano then skillfully manipulated popular antipathy against France by spreading rumors among both military and civilian groups that Aldama and Salazar were agents of Napoleon. He claimed they were colluding with Casas in a broader plan

³⁶ This was not "*comercio libre*," the Bourbon phrase for trade within the Spanish sphere, but free trade between different nations.

³⁷ Peter F. Guardino, *Peasants, Politics, and the Formation of Mexico's National State: Guerrero, 1800-1857* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), pp. 61-63; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 6, pp. 7-17; Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 75-87.

³⁸ J. Villasana Haggard, "The Counter-Revolution of Béxar, 1811," *Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 2 (Oct 1939), pp. 228-33; Chabot, "Texas in 1811," p. 25.

to cede Texas to the United States in exchange for its material support of the revolution. With this subterfuge, he quickly turned opinion against Casas and in his own favor.³⁹

On March 1, 1811, Sambrano and his followers formed a junta of townsmen and corps officers, with Sambrano as its president. With the authority it claimed, the junta immediately created a new *cabildo* with expanded local powers; following this, they arrested Casas and then made their actions public. Few, if any, were initially aware that the change was to constitute a counter-revolution and that Sambrano intended to restore Crown authority. In fact, on March 2, a group of residents presented Sambrano with a signed petition representing a consensus in favor of establishing Texas as a republic. In Sambrano's own words, "the majority of voters, . . . unwittingly thinking perhaps that the purpose of the movement was directed to extinguish forever the legitimate authorities. Under this erroneous impression they continued for some time as did some members of the junta."⁴⁰ Aldama and Salazar extended their stay in San Antonio in an attempt to restore the revolution after the overthrow of Casas. Sambrano soon arrested not only them, but also José Clemente de Arocha, a leading local opponent of the new junta.

Sambrano's motives for counter-revolt and deceit are unclear. They may have been as simple as wresting power from an outsider in order to keep it under local control. For years, however, he had been in conflict with Crown authorities in San Antonio, as well as some of its residents. He had been exiled from Texas in 1809, and managed to have Governor Manuel Salcedo excommunicated from the Church when

³⁹ Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, p. 54.

⁴⁰ Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 120-21; Jack Jackson, *Los Mesteños: Spanish Ranching in Texas, 1721-1821* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1986), pp. 528-29; Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 110-13; Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, p. 57.

Salcedo protested his return in 1810.⁴¹ Nevertheless, as a result of his leadership in restoring the royalist government, Sambrano eventually garnered considerable personal recognition and a military promotion.⁴² With so many local residents in favor of the insurgency, it is little wonder that he took time to consolidate his power before revealing his counter-revolutionary goals. He appointed members to the re-established *cabildo* from several prominent local families, no doubt to win their support.

Two weeks after his counter coup, Sambrano was able to get two of his own agents through to Governor Manuel Salcedo, whom the insurgents had imprisoned in northern Coahuila. Guarding Salcedo was Francisco Ignacio Elizondo, the first royalist officer to turn against Governor Cordero at the battle of Aguanueva two months earlier, delivering his entire corps to the insurgency. Despite initial commendation for his action from Jiménez, Ignacio Allende refused further promotions for Elizondo. Between this perceived snub and Salcedo's constant efforts to reconvert him to the royalist cause, Elizondo secretly began to recruit support for the Crown in northern Coahuila. Within four days of the arrival of Sambrano's agents with news that Texas was no

⁴¹ Ironically – although perhaps this was a point on which Sambrano wished to prove him wrong – Salcedo complained to the Audiencia that Sambrano's return to the province would have a negative effect on its residents, who were prone to the seduction of his ideas; Salcedo to Audiencia, 7 Nov 1810, BA.

⁴² Sambrano's wealth prior to these occurrences was substantial. After the counter-revolution, he was also able to purchase at bargain prices a considerable amount of land confiscated from local rebels. For example, in the deposition of Francisco Antonio Rivas, 15 September 1813, Rivas testified that Sambrano hated Antonio de la Garza for having in the past refused to sell his farmland. Sambrano petitioned to purchase not only these prime lands and water rights, but also those of several other rebels that had been confiscated following the Gutiérrez-Magee rebellion, described below. De la Garza was eventually exonerated and his lands restored to him; Decree Restoring Confiscated lands of José Antonio de la Garza, 1813, Bexar County Spanish Archives (BCSA) Rebel Property Files. On the census of January 1, 1811, Sambrano was listed as having a ranch with 32 servants, 2 slaves, 80 horses, 24 mares, 1 stallion jackass, 2 burros, 24 mules, 450 cows, 220 steers, 110 bulls, 230 yearlings, 4,600 sheep & goats, 15 yoke of oxen, and 3 carts. By 1812, however, he had at least 77,000 head of sheep; his plans to sell the wool to traders in Louisiana were disrupted by threats to his life from the revolutionaries gathering in the Neutral Ground; Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, p. 121; Frederick C. Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio* (San Antonio: Artes Graficas, 1937), p. 196; Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 97-98; Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 114-19.

longer under rebel control, Elizondo and Salcedo completed a counter-revolution in northern and central Coahuila. The counter-insurgents were able to conceal their actions, and Elizondo convinced Allende and Jiménez, who were retreating toward the United States after a major defeat near Guadalajara, that their passage would be safe. He arranged to meet them at the Wells of Baján, between Saltillo and Monclova. There, Elizondo and his now-royalist troops ambushed the rebel army and captured Allende, Jiménez, and Hidalgo on March 21, 1811, resulting in the final defeat of the Hidalgo revolt.⁴³ Because of its geographic location, Texas had represented a key element of the revolutionaries' strategy for victory. While a victory in the north would not necessarily have meant victory for the insurgency in all of New Spain, it seems ironic that local factionalism in the Texas frontier played a role in ending the first phase of what became the wars for independence.

Several scholars have suggested that discontent with Casas's rule took root as Isleños and military officers were excluded from the new government. In their analyses of the Casas Revolt, historians Julia Kathryn Garrett, Carlos Castañeda, and Félix Almaráz each portray Casas as an opportunist who took last-minute advantage of local unrest and, overnight, staged a coup d'état with the support of the entire military garrison.⁴⁴ The evidence presented here, however, suggests a much more complicated scenario in which multiple groups adjusted their strategic plans in reaction to unanticipated events. Looked at closely, it becomes clear that the revolt was part of a

⁴³ Hamill, *The Hidalgo Revolt*, pp. 205-10; Haggard, "The Counter-Revolution of Béxar," p. 235; Julia Kathryn Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, pp. 67-70; Charles H. Harris, III, *A Mexican Family Empire: The Latifundio of the Sánchez Navarros, 1765-1867* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1975), pp. 126-35; Rodríguez O., *The Independence of Spanish America*, pp. 163-64.

⁴⁴ See, for example, Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas*, pp. 50-51; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 6, pp. 17-18; and Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 120-21.

broader strategy set in motion by forces outside the province of Texas, and that local support for it was divided over issues of political and economic control.

Hidalgo's call for revolt resonated with people in Texas in different ways. Broadly speaking, one group consisted of military officers and troops from outside of the province who had been in Texas as part of its strategic military build-up at the border with the United States for periods ranging from months to years. The soldiers, militiamen, and their families, whose numbers swelled the population of Texas after the 1803 Louisiana Purchase, had been ordered there from neighboring provinces, primarily from Coahuila, Nuevo León, and Nuevo Santander. Local groups included civilian and military leaders, militiamen, and residents. For some of the leaders, the revolt likely represented new political and economic opportunities. For troops and militiamen, revolt provided the means to remain in place to protect their homes and families from potential threats.⁴⁵ Although these groups were animated by different goals, they were able to work in tandem to achieve them. For one faction of local leaders, including Sambrano, retaining local control was paramount over any political affiliation behind it.⁴⁶

If Casas actually was part of a larger, deliberate strategy of insurgency to take the northern provinces, it is important to understand why the movement in Texas failed. Whether because he did not implement reforms that the locals desired, or because Sambrano's political faction acted so quickly on their own motives, Casas was

⁴⁵ Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, pp. 48, 51, 55, 59, 64-65.

⁴⁶ This is analogous to events a decade later, when Mexicans came together in 1821 for independence despite their previous differences. Insurgents and then-royalists determined that far-off Spanish politics should no longer dictate their political course. Independence was the immediate, practical result and the politics of the insurgency between conservatives and liberals played out in the Mexican theater, not Spain's.

removed through a counter-revolution and Texas was lost to the insurgency as a result of local factionalism. Casas – an outsider – was executed for treason, but none of the other participants – whether local or from other provinces – faced significant punishment for their roles in the revolt. The Crown often meted out severe punishment solely to rebel leadership rather than more broadly to participants. Punishment was a warning to those who would lead a rebellion, and the prudence and mercy shown to their followers was intended to reinstate loyalty to benevolent rulers.⁴⁷ Aside from the execution of Casas, no blood was shed in either the Casas revolt or the Sambrano counter-revolt. While there were indeed individuals who felt strongly either for or against independence, it seems that what united them was disaffection based on the issue of local control in governing and the desire for more liberal trade policies. The presence of so many outsiders in the province, with their ties to other areas and different networks of information, may have brought insurgency to Texas more quickly than otherwise, but it had broad support in the local community.

The experience of Texas during the Hidalgo revolt echoed that in other areas of New Spain. Historian Eric Van Young examined the role of rumor in the spread of seditious ideas during the struggle for Mexico's independence, as well as its reflection of collective anxiety. He notes that it was unusual for insurgent leaders to deliberately foster rumor in order to mobilize local populations.⁴⁸ The Casas revolt, however, is an exception to this – as indeed were all of the movements in Texas. Many of the reasons

⁴⁷ William B. Taylor, *Drinking, Homicide, and Rebellion in Colonial Mexican Villages* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1979), pp. 120-23.

⁴⁸ While Van Young's study focuses on rural areas in the interior, the elements he identified in oral culture, such as rumor, sedition, and propaganda, and their role in rebellions, apply equally to Texas; Eric Van Young, *The Other Rebellion: Popular Violence, Ideology, and the Mexican Struggle for Independence, 1810-1821* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 311-33.

that people gave in testimony regarding their support for Casas were based on distortions of the truth that had been seeded by officers and civilian leaders. As mentioned above, for example, the fact that Salcedo had sent his family to Louisiana was made to appear as evidence that the royal officials themselves planned to abandon the province. Likewise, there are no documents that support the rumor that Sáenz and Escamilla were to be beheaded, even though execution was a potential punishment for treason. Each time Salcedo gave orders regarding troop movements, it appears that Casas or others in his cohort spread rumors distorting his motives. As Corporal Tomás Penedo testified, “he could not indicate any [person] in particular because it was being said generally by all the troops.”⁴⁹ Rumor and misinformation played on immediate local issues and the militia men’s concerns for the safety of their families, to the extent that many became willing to turn against their commanders. Their broad support handed the government of Texas to Casas without resistance.

Unlike rumor, seditious remarks or behaviors could be identified as originating from a specific person or group. Sedition could cover a range of behaviors, from verbal expressions that might undermine government authority or the social structure, to open advocacy of rebellion. Often at issue in investigations was not so much the truth of any given statements as the extent to which it undermined authority. Despite the success of the Sambrano counter-revolution, sedition was still a potent threat. Although Crown officials made frequent accusations of sedition, there were few actual convictions.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Chabot, *Texas in 1811*, p. 65.

⁵⁰ Van Young, *The Other Rebellion*, pp. 328-29, 345, offers a detailed discussion of the characteristics of sedition and its distinction from rumor. Further analyses are in Guardino, *Time of Liberty*, pp. 123, 126,

Because Manuel Salcedo did not resume his authority as provincial governor until December, 1811, the Sambrano junta exercised authority on behalf of the Crown until that time. It oversaw several investigations of sedition during this period. The cases reflect not only the lines of authority the junta observed, but also its political weakness and tenuous hold on power. For example, the junta suspended investigation of some residents who played a prominent role in the Casas revolt out of concern that such action would provoke further unrest.

As in Bilano's 1810 complaint against the field hands, even casual conversations that revealed collective anxieties, hopes, and beliefs about what might be possible could be construed as sedition. An April, 1811 case involved an accusation of seditious conversation among [José] Francisco Xavier Morán (an orderly in the military hospital at Valero), Rafael Cortés (*comerciante*), and Luís de Castañeda (*comerciante*). The documents are unclear about the connections between the men. Nineteen-year-old Manuel Hernández, (*comerciante*) denounced Morán for saying that news of what had happened to Hidalgo's forces was false, that the insurgent army had slit the throat of Commandant General Nemesio Salcedo, that Jiménez had been seen [he was not executed until June], and that the European Spaniards were demoralized. Morán denied the discussion, claiming only that he had heard of this news from Castañeda. He was asked if he knew about Hidalgo and Jiménez but said that he did not. Castañeda testified that at the time of the conversation, he had been hurrying through the streets when he encountered Cortés, who told him the story. He did not discuss it, however, because he was in a rush to go to Sunday mass. Cortés testified that he had heard

154-55; and James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), pp. 137-45.

rumors to this effect and had repeated them to Castañeda. Upon further questioning, he stated that he had dreamed it, next he denied that he had heard it from anyone, and then finally he claimed that indigenous spies among the insurgents had given him the information.⁵¹ The question concerning spies reflects the fact that, although many tribes remained unaligned and largely uninterested in the conflict, there was little support for royalists among the indigenous community on account of prolonged insufficiencies in trade goods.⁵²

The testimony in these proceedings indicates that rumors continued to proliferate regarding the insurgency and its demise. For sympathizers who were malcontent with the stalling of the revolution, rumors offered hope that the situation was not as bleak as it appeared. The conversations between the men involved in this case happened by chance, and little accurate information about broader events seemed readily available to them. Communication through personal networks played an important part in influencing opinions and events in this frontier community, but could be disrupted easily if information was shared with the wrong person. While no punitive action was taken against the men, the investigation itself was a form of public intimidation meant to warn not only the defendants, but also the community at large against criticism of authority or sympathizing with the revolution.

Also in April, 1811, Captain José de Agabo de Ayala was arrested for treason – only weeks after the junta had elected him as commander of the troops of Nuevo León

⁵¹ “*En el calabazo de la guardia principal . . .*,” 4 April 1811, BA.

⁵² In 1813, after the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition captured the presidio at La Bahía, several hundred Tonkawa, Lipan, and Tawakoni fighters joined with them to defeat the royalists at the Battle of Rosillo. Not long after, when General Joaquín de Arredondo defeated the insurgents at the Battle of the Medina, these fighters were among the first to desert. F. Todd Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2005), pp. 98-99.

and Nuevo Santander. He was a captain at Presidio La Bahía, and together with many of his troops, supported the coup. Casas had appointed him to replace Captain Luciano García at La Bahía, as García was reluctant to carry out Casas's orders to depose the commander and arrest all peninsular Spaniards in the community. Despite the fact that Agabo's incriminating correspondence with Casas had been entered as evidence in Casas's trial for treason, there is no information regarding the outcome of Agabo's case. It may have been that he was included in a general pardon extended to Texas following the Sambrano counter-revolution. Like the investigation of Morán, Cortés, and Castañeda, the outcome of the case against Agabo suggests that the Sambrano junta carried out little more than pro forma indictments. Lingering disaffection with the counter-revolution likely dictated the lenient outcomes.⁵³

In July, 1811, Commandant General Salcedo informed the junta that Tomás de Arocha, N[epomuceno] Ricardo Contreras, and Vicente Flores – all of whom had participated in the Casas revolt – were to be included in the general pardon. To prove to the courts that they qualified for the pardon, however, the junta was required to enumerate their crimes and circumstances. The junta responded that because it did not engage in judicial actions to determine crimes, it could only offer information that was commonly known or rumored about the three men. They reported that Flores, a fifty-four-year-old ensign in the militia, was “at the right hand” of Casas when he usurped authority, and Casas immediately made him a lieutenant. Flores commanded the escort that conducted Governor Salcedo and the other deposed Spanish officials to the Río

⁵³ Junta to N. Salcedo, 3 April 1811 [no. 6], BA; N. Salcedo to Junta, 19 April 1811 [no. 7], BA; Junta to N. Salcedo, 27 April 1811, BA; N. Salcedo to Junta, 18 May 1811, BA; N. Salcedo to Governor of Texas, 4 April 1811, BA.

Grande, freed the envoys Aldama and Salazar from prison in Monclova, and led three hundred men to the insurgent army. Regarding Arocha and Contreras, the junta wrote that they were part of the group that Arocha's brother, the curate José Clemente Arocha, had convened at his house to plot Sambrano's overthrow after his counter-revolutionary intent became clear. Tellingly, the junta informed Salcedo that not only was it unable to hold anyone securely in prison, it was also unable to publicly conduct investigations against any insurgents for fear that their supporters would conspire once more against them. Although Arocha and Flores were both pardoned in September, 1811, there is no record of how the case against Contreras was disposed.⁵⁴

Cautious handling of these prosecutions demonstrates that officials at both the local and commandancy level were wary of dealing with the rebels, and remained doubtful about local allegiances. The documents reflect not only the weakness of the restored Spanish government in San Antonio at this time, but also continued widespread opposition among residents. Given his deceit in overthrowing Casas, Sambrano's position among many of his fellow residents was compromised from the outset, yet the junta's recognition of its inability to prosecute known traitors suggests continued strong pro-independence or pro-Hidalgo sympathies among influential residents. Through his service on the *cabildo*, Tomás de Arocha had a long history of conflict with Crown authorities in Texas dating back to the 1790s; now, he had opposed Sambrano's counter-revolution. More recently, Vicente Flores had been implicated in the sedition case against the field hands he supervised who sang the harvest song. The junta, and Governor Salcedo upon his return, believed that the majority of troops and

⁵⁴ N. Salcedo to Junta, 9 July 1811, BA; Junta to N. Salcedo, 7 August 1811, BA.

residents could not be trusted, and tried not to antagonize them. Yet Commandant General Salcedo went to great lengths to praise and reward those who participated in the counter-revolution.

The commandant general also encouraged people to inform on their neighbors, an action that perpetuated mistrust within the community by bringing private or semi-public venues into the open for authorities to review. In one such case, Gaspar Flores, son of the just-pardoned rebel Vicente Flores, accused José Antonio Ramírez of seditious remarks. In a deposition dated November 13, 1811, Flores informed the interim governor Simón de Herrera that he had visited Ramírez's ranch in September, and that the two had discussed the insurgency. Ramírez inquired after Vicente Flores, telling Gaspar the time might come that things would improve for him (although the senior Flores had just been pardoned, he was also demoted in the military and had "fallen from favor"). To Gaspar's professed annoyance, Ramírez continued to discuss the Hidalgo revolt and became irritated with Gaspar's position against it. As they argued over the effects of the movement, their conversation reflected detailed knowledge of events, including the number of insurgents Elizondo took as prisoner, and whether men should be compensated for horses the army commandeered from them. On the following morning they had a similar conversation and Ramírez told Flores that the words they had spoken were confidential. Flores, however, expressed concern in his deposition that ranch hands may have overheard their remarks.⁵⁵

In contrast to the previous case against Morán, Cortés, and Castañeda, whose conversations were rife with inaccuracies, this discussion reveals that detailed

⁵⁵ "*Denuncia contra D[on] Jo[sé Antonio Ra]mirez . . .*," 13-18 November 1811, BA.

information about the insurgency circulated among the general population, even at ranches located far from town. It also reflects an atmosphere of generalized anxiety and suspicion, in which anyone engaged in or overhearing a discussion might report it to the authorities, else risk being reported themselves. By informing authorities of this particular incident, Flores himself violated Ramírez's request for confidentiality. Yet because his wife, Petra Sambrano, was Juan Manuel Sambrano's niece,⁵⁶ Flores had good reason to keep himself above reproach, and seemed troubled that someone who overheard his conversation might denounce him.

Sambrano's provisional government remained in effect from March until September, 1811. The junta restored the confiscated property of the European Spaniards and enacted a number of laws favorable to its members' interests, including liberalizing certain trade restrictions with Louisiana. Sambrano exiled José Clemente de Arocha and other members of his family to Monterey in April. By fall, royalists had regained effective control of Texas, and Simón de Herrera was appointed interim governor. Manuel de Salcedo returned to Texas as governor in December, 1811, after presiding over the treason trials and executions of Hidalgo and his officers in Monclova.⁵⁷

Once again, Salcedo focused his attention on the province's internal and external conflicts. In February, 1812, he announced the formation of a new junta for military purposes and public security. Its primary responsibility was to investigate traitors and determine the disposition of their cases. In May, Lieutenant Colonel Macario Vásques Borrego and Presbiter José Miguel Ponce Borrego were accused of attempting to incite a

⁵⁶ Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio*, p. 197.

⁵⁷ Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 123, 128.

new uprising in the province, but they were able to provide documents in their defense that resulted in the charges being dropped. The decree for their pardon noted that their arrest was a precautionary measure as a result of the government's exile from the province under difficult and perilous circumstances. The two were absolved of wrongdoing and their merit restored as faithful subjects of the king.⁵⁸ In July, an investigation of sedition was begun in Nacogdoches against Juan Agustín Martínez and José Damián Arocha, a Nacogdoches resident and brother of the insurgent Tomás de Arocha.⁵⁹ While no other documents regarding this case were located, it indicates that Crown officials asserted their authority by pursuing allegations of sedition throughout the province. The lack of convictions, however, makes it appear that such efforts were little more than show.

In fact, not only was insurgency in Texas far from over, but its next stage marked a distinctive divergence of experience from the revolution in other parts of New Spain. Following the executions of Hidalgo and his chief officers, the insurgency continued in the southern part of New Spain under José María Morelos. José Bernardo Gutiérrez de Lara, a revolutionary from Nuevo León, had been involved in the insurgency since its beginning and was instrumental in helping Jiménez to win that province. After Aldama and Salazar were arrested in San Antonio – and subsequently executed in Monclova with the other insurgent leaders – Gutiérrez took over their mission and traveled to the United States to secure arms and mercenary soldiers for the independence movement. Allowing the U.S. to believe that its support for the military defeat of Texas would

⁵⁸ N. Salcedo to M. Salcedo, 4 May 1812, BA; Cordero to M. Salcedo, 22 May 1812, BA; circular from M. Salcedo to commanders of Texas presidios, 6 June 1812, BA; M. Salcedo to N. Salcedo, 10 June 1812, BA.

⁵⁹ M. Salcedo to N. Salcedo, 14 July 1812, BA.

ultimately result in an independent Mexico under the guidance of the United States, Gutiérrez and his U.S. associates recruited and outfitted a mercenary group of mostly Anglo-Americans and some French in Natchitoches. Inhabitants of the areas they passed through, primarily vecinos from Nacogdoches and some Tonkawa, Lipan, and Tawakoni warriors further augmented their forces.⁶⁰ The participation of an international group of mercenary fighters and of independent indigenous allies was the first set of characteristics that made the Texas revolutionary experience unique from other areas.

While Gutiérrez was openly recruiting new forces in Louisiana, the stakes for revolutionaries in Texas began to escalate. José Francisco Vanegas, a soldier from the militia corps of Nuevo Santander, deserted his post in Nacogdoches and traveled to Louisiana to import printed materials supporting the revolution. He returned to Texas with what the charges against him described as “heretical and revolutionary papers.”⁶¹ These materials had been written and printed by José Álvarez de Toledo, a revolutionary from Cuba who became involved with Gutiérrez’s efforts in Texas. Vanegas and several companions distributed the pamphlets and broadsides along their route through Texas to the town of Revilla, on the south side of the Río Grande in Nuevo Santander. Vanegas was taken into custody in late June, 1812. Together with two

⁶⁰ Odie B. Faulk, *The Last Years of Spanish Texas, 1778-1821* (London: Mouton & Co., 1964), p. 134; Chipman and Joseph, *Spanish Texas*, pp. 247-50. See Richard W. Gronet, “United States and the Invasion of Texas, 1810-1814,” *The Americas: A Quarterly Review of Inter-American Cultural History* 25, no. 3 (January 1969), pp. 281-306, for a discussion that distinguishes the Gutiérrez-Magee expedition as the first official, albeit secret, U.S. foreign policy toward Mexico, rather than as a filibustering expedition.

⁶¹ The materials are described in detail in Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 200-24. In the late colonial period, the Inquisition’s portfolio expanded to include not just questions of religious doctrine and practice, but also charges of political sedition against the monarch.

unnamed men who were also described as traitors, Vanegas was executed by firing squad in Nacogdoches in July.⁶²

Although this incident was a precursor to the fate that would befall many in the coming years, it is puzzling why such punishment was meted to Vanegas and the two unidentified men, but not to others who engaged in similar activities. At the same time that Vanegas was accused of spreading printed materials, his traveling companions Juan Galván, Miguel Menchaca, and Félix Arispe were similarly charged with desertion and distributing seditious pamphlets from east Texas to the town of Revilla. Warrants for their arrests were issued in March and June of 1812, and Galván and Menchaca were captured in early August. There is no record of a trial or punishment for either Galván or Menchaca, however, and they were subsequently able to carry on with their lives. Since the documentary trail for Arispe begins and ends with his arrest warrant, he seems likely to have eluded arrest.⁶³ The introduction from Louisiana of printed documents endorsing banned ideas paralleled similar routes for contraband goods.

In August, 1812, the newly-created Republican Army of the North, jointly led by Gutiérrez and former U.S. Army Lieutenant Augustus William Magee, set forth from Natchitoches to invade Texas and once again procure its independence. Sources vary, but initially their forces numbered between one hundred thirty to five hundred Anglo-Americans, French, indigenous, and Spanish insurgents. By the time they defeated Salcedo and took control of the Texas province after the Battle of Salado in March, 1813,

⁶² M. Salcedo to Herrera, 27 July 1812, BA; Guadiana to M. Salcedo, 1 Aug 1812, BA; N. Salcedo to M. Salcedo, 4 Aug 1812, BA. In October, 1810, Commandant General Salcedo issued a decree making the spreading of propaganda to promote revolution a capital crime. The measure ordered the execution of traitors within twenty-four hours of sentencing.

⁶³ Arrest warrants for Galván and Arispe, 6 June 1812, BA; arrest of Galván and Menchaca, 5 Aug and 27 Aug 1812, BA.

their numbers had reached well over one thousand. Governor Salcedo was deposed for the second time, and Gutiérrez was named general and governor of the new, independent Republic of Texas. Following a brief trial for treason against the Hidalgo movement, Gutiérrez ordered Governor Salcedo and his officers⁶⁴ to be imprisoned outside of Texas. Instead, they were assassinated by their escort of rebel Spanish and American soldiers, led by Antonio Delgado, a brother of Casas supporter Gabino Delgado. While historians have presented these killings as wanton, it well could be that they were in revenge for the executions of Casas, Hidalgo, and other leaders of the insurrection – particularly because Governor Salcedo had been instrumental in their capture, and had presided over the trial against them.⁶⁵

The most singular accomplishment of the Gutiérrez-Magee rebellion was the promulgation, in April, 1813, of a Declaration of Independence and a Constitution for the Republic of Texas. Historian Virginia Guedea has described these two documents as a blend of ideas from both the U.S. and Spanish America, crafted specifically to reflect the Texas experience.⁶⁶ The documents embodied a set of concepts that not only echoed Texas's position as a cultural, economic, and geopolitical crossroads, but also that repudiated the isolationist social and economic policies the Crown had imposed on its colony. Salcedo's efforts at censorship were blasted apart by the Declaration. Citing the Crown's inability to protect either its sovereign realm on the European continent or its American empire, the Declaration justified independence with the desire for self-

⁶⁴ One of these officers was Francisco Pereira, whose workers were investigated for sedition in 1810; see earlier discussion.

⁶⁵ Frank Lawrence Owsley, Jr., and Gene A. Smith, *Filibusters and Expansionists: Jeffersonian Manifest Destiny, 1800-1821* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1997), pp. 50-59; Ted Schwarz, *Forgotten Battlefield of the First Texas Revolution: The Battle of Medina, August 18, 1813*, ed. Robert H. Thonoff (Austin: Eakin Press, 1985), pp. 14-29.

⁶⁶ Guedea, "La Declaración de Independencia", pp. 345-46.

governance, the free exchange of thought, and unrestricted economic development. The document singled out the Crown's economic restrictions, drily noting that as a result of these policies "all commerce was reduced to a system of contraband."⁶⁷ Peculiar to Texas, the prohibition against communications with other nations violated local practices based on generations of close kinship, religious, and economic ties with their neighbors across the border in Louisiana.

The Constitution declared that Texas would remain inseparable from the Mexican republic, a keen blow to U.S. ambitions to at least guide and perhaps eventually incorporate the territory. Despite a constitutional provision to reward grants of land to the Anglo-American forces, the Texans' unwavering allegiance to Mexico alienated their U.S. counterparts. Based on the interest and financing of the United States, historians have treated the Gutiérrez rebellion as a filibustering expedition.⁶⁸ Gutiérrez himself exploited U.S. interests, obtaining support by leading officials to believe that he was a figurehead for their own aims and policies. In the context of Mexican history, however, the rebellion can be understood as part of the larger pattern of insurgent strategy to control the northern provinces. Following the unexpected Sambrano counter-revolution, and the loss not only of Texas but of most of the key leaders of the Hidalgo

⁶⁷ "Todo el Trafico se reducía á un Sistema de Contrabando," from the declaration of the governing Junta of Béxar, April 6, 1813; Spanish transcription and English translation in Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 407-415; quotation p. 408.

⁶⁸ A filibustering expedition was an unsanctioned private military operation formed to invade a country with which its own government was at peace; Robert E. May, "Manifest Destiny's Filibusters," in *Manifest Destiny and Empire: American Antebellum Expansionism*, ed. Sam W. Haynes and Christopher Morris (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 1997), pp. 148-49. Examples of such interpretations range from the classic Harris Gaylord Warren, *The Sword Was Their Passport: A History of American Filibustering in the Mexican Revolution* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), to the recent Ed Bradley, *"We Never Retreat": Filibustering Expeditions into Spanish Texas, 1812-1822* (College Station: Texas A&M Press, 2015).

movement as well, the Gutiérrez rebellion was a response to the emerging dynamics of complex battles fought across multiple regions.

After a brief rule marked by bitter internal conflict between the Spanish and Anglo-American factions of the Republican Army, his fellow officers exiled Gutiérrez and appointed José Álvarez de Toledo as their new commander. Spain redoubled its efforts to take back Texas just as a number of Anglo-American officers and fighters returned to Louisiana, disappointed that Texas had turned away from the U.S. Under the leadership of General Joaquín de Arredondo, the royalist army ambushed and quickly defeated the remaining troops of the Republican Army at the Battle of Medina in August, 1813. Hundreds of Texans fled to Louisiana, including several prominent families from San Antonio, their lands confiscated by Crown officials.⁶⁹ Although the Republic of Texas was short-lived politically, it aroused strong sentiments. Thousands of troops had been involved in the armed conflicts during its brief existence, and both sides suffered many casualties.

In contrast to the Sambrano junta's and Governor Salcedo's unwillingness to impose harsh penalties on insurgents, Arredondo restored royal authority in a blood bath. Rebel casualties from the Battle of Medina had numbered approximately one thousand. Over one hundred others who fled the battlefield were apprehended and shot on sight. Following the battle, en route to and once in San Antonio, Arredondo captured and summarily executed more than two hundred soldiers who had earlier deserted their units to join the revolution. He arrested more than seven hundred men and women around San Antonio suspected of sympathizing with the rebels. Hundreds

⁶⁹ Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, pp. 168-72; Chipman and Joseph, *Spanish Texas*, pp. 249-51; Castañeda, *Our Catholic Heritage*, Vol. 6, pp. 8-10, 17-21; Jackson, *Los Mesteños*, pp. 526-39.

of women were forced to work to feed Arredondo's army under grueling and sometimes lethal conditions, their children taken away from them, and subject to the abuse of Arredondo and some of his soldiers. He commanded Ignacio Elizondo to march with his forces to Nacogdoches, capturing and executing any insurgents he encountered along the way.⁷⁰ The brutal aftermath of the royalist victory could only have reinforced disaffection with Crown authority at the same time that its far-reaching effects created even more fear and distrust within the community.

Even before the promulgation of the Texas declaration of independence, the presence of Anglo-American soldiers in the Republican Army of the North provoked opposing views among the creole militia who were fighting against them. Shortly after Manuel de Salcedo and Simón de Herrera began what was to be a futile, four-month siege to retake Presidio La Bahía from Gutiérrez's Republican Army, a case arose that demonstrates the level of political understanding and discussion that occurred in the field camp. The presence of Anglo-Americans in the Gutiérrez-Magee rebellion added a new dimension to ideas and discourse about political values, and how people responded to them. In fact, these issues reflected more broadly the meaning of the revolution for each side of the battle.

One view was that the revolution offered opportunities for political and economic freedom; another was that Spanish rule offered the security of the Catholic religion, with a divine connection between God, king, and *patria*. Put differently, it was

⁷⁰ Mattie Austin Hatcher, trans., "Joaquin de Arredondo's Report of the Battle of the Medina, August 18, 1813" *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 11, no. 3 (Jan 1908), pp. 225, 233; Gronet, "United States and the Invasion of Texas," p. 304; Almaráz, *Tragic Cavalier*, p. 179; Schwarz, *Forgotten Battlefield*, pp. 127-28; Anonymous, "Memoria de la cosas más notables que acaecieron en Bexar el año de 13 mandando el Tirano Arredondo, 1813," in Coronado, *A World Not to Come*, pp. 417-433.

the same set of influences that historian Andrés Reséndez identified as determinants of national identity later in the nineteenth century:⁷¹ the desire for sufficient local and regional autonomy to follow the pull of market forces from the United States was pitted against the centralizing policies of Bourbon reforms intended to strengthen the power of the state. Yet without a legitimate king on the Spanish throne, the question of whether the authority to govern was derived from the people or through divine consecration had come to underpin a wide range of concerns, and even entered into casual conversations among strangers.

On November 29, 1812, twenty-five-year-old José María Valdez, a cavalry soldier of the company of Nuevo León, gave a deposition regarding a seditious conversation about disaffection with the Spanish government that he had with Miguel Liendo.⁷² The report referred to Liendo, a soldier of La Bahía company, as a spy – presumably for the revolutionaries. Two days previously, Liendo served as a guide for a foraging party that included Valdez. The two began discussing the Anglo-Americans, with Valdez mentioning they had taken him prisoner. When Liendo asked his impression of the Anglo-Americans, Valdez replied that “they were thieves . . . and savages, and that the freedom [they offered] would leave [the Spaniards] without anyone to govern them” (*heran unos ladrones . . . heran unos barbaros y q[u]e la libertad los dejaria sin sacerdotes y Papas, y En fin sin quien lo Governase*). Liendo argued that they came offering free trade and liberty. Fearing that Liendo wished to subvert him, Valdez reasserted that they were barbarians and that freedom would leave Texans without

⁷¹ Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), pp. 4-5, 116-23, 265-68.

⁷² The deposition also referred to Liendo with the first name Martín and surname Leandro, the scribe noting that his exact name was unknown.

priests, pope, or government. Liendo remarked that they had neither king nor anywhere to get one, and that creoles were dying fighting one another on account of two Europeans (presumably referring to Napoleon and Ferdinand VII). Valdez answered that it was Europeans killing creoles, that for the great benevolence of God they had introduced Christianity in the realm, and that he himself would die for God, for king, and for the Europeans. At this point, others of his company arrived and the conversation came to an end. That evening, Valdez reported the conversation to his captain. Because the company that Liendo served in departed the next day, the *juez fiscal* was unable to interrogate him and no further action was taken in the case.⁷³ Liendo's disappearance made him a convenient scapegoat for the trade of seditious ideas.

The disruptive effects of insurrection in Texas lingered for years. One family's plight reveals some of the strategies that people employed to cope with their displacement. In June, 1814, authorities investigated sedition charges against Félix Herrera, a seventy-year-old farm hand originally from Coahuila; Vicente Herrera, his twenty-three-year-old son from La Bahía; and Juan Sosa, his nineteen-year-old son-in-law. A detachment of troops encountered the family in company with several men involved in contraband trade and arrested the entire group. Also taken into custody with the three men were the wives of the two younger men, as well as an infant (their names were not provided in the documents, nor were the women summoned as deponents). The sedition proceedings form a minor part of the larger case file for contraband against the other men. Despite political turmoil and military conflict, the

⁷³ "Declaracion recibida á José Maria Valdez . . .," 28 November 1812, BA.

trade in contraband goods was undeterred. The Herrera's story, however, reveals the instability and suffering that many families endured in the aftermath of Arredondo's defeat of the Gutiérrez rebellion.

The members of the extended Herrera family left La Bahía around the time that the royalists lifted their siege and retreated to San Antonio, with the Republican Army in pursuit. Vicente stated that he (and presumably his wife) left in February or March [1813], fleeing the rebels because a certain soldier had threatened him over the collection of household goods that the soldier had stolen from Herrera's home. Sosa also stated that he had left in February. Having regrouped, the family lived first on the banks of the Guadalupe River, then moved to the Colorado River. Finally, they met a group of Bidai and lived at their *ranchería* for a number of months before deciding to return to La Bahía under the general pardon. Although they denied that they themselves were rebels, they each stated that they had fled due to rumors in the community that all residents would be bound and deported to Veracruz. Before the Herreras left the Bidais, however, several smugglers (one of whom had just murdered another in alleged self-defense) happened to join their numbers at the *ranchería*. They decided to travel to La Bahía together, but just before reaching the town a military patrol took the entire group into custody. During the proceedings, the Herreras were each questioned more closely about the smugglers and their contraband goods than about their own actions. In the end, they were pardoned with the comment that the

time they had spent in custody was sufficient punishment for being fugitives from their own community.⁷⁴

The capture and execution of rebels continued to take place in east Texas, suggesting perhaps that many who fled to Louisiana maintained relationships rooted in Texas. In August, 1814, Apolinario García, José Santiago Tijerina, and José Nasario Navarro were captured and tried for treason. Referred to as rebel spies, they were sentenced to execution – “the remedy so necessary to cut the root of the harm that could follow” (*el remedio de que tanto se necesitan p[ar]a cortar de raiz los perjuicios que podian subseguirse*). Navarro’s life was spared after his mother intervened on his behalf. Gómez and Tijerina were shot and their bodies publicly displayed on the road from Nacogdoches to San Antonio.⁷⁵ In October of the same year, Juan Ceballos, who was described as a ringleader of the rebels, was killed while resisting arrest by an officer and a civilian resident of Nacogdoches. Ceballos had fled to Louisiana in 1812. Another rebel, Juan Guerra, was seriously wounded during the confrontation, but there is no other information regarding him.⁷⁶

While a few autonomous tribes, including Lipan Apaches, Tawakonis, and Tonkawas, had participated in battles against royalist forces, indigenous mission residents, too, became caught up in the struggles. Although the stakes of treason were high, both of the following defendants seem to have been treated with forbearance.

Ermenegildo Fuentes, an acculturated indigenous resident of Mission Espada, was

⁷⁴ “*Provincia de Tejas N. 21 Criminal Contra el Paisano Vicente Rodrig[ue]z y sus Compañeros . . .*,” 6 May 1814, BA.

⁷⁵ Armiñan to Arredondo, 1 Aug 1814 [no. 9], BA; Arredondo to Armiñan, 11 Sept 1814 [no. 2], BA. Bodies of other, unidentified rebels were left hanging in the San Antonio plaza; José Dario Sambrano to [Benito Armiñan], 9 Mar 1814, BA.

⁷⁶ M. Salcedo to Commandant of La Bahía, 13 Aug 1812, BA; Alanís to M. Salcedo, 14 Sept 1812, BA; Arredondo to Armiñan, 30 Nov 1814 [no. 5], BA.

investigated for treason in September, 1814. He had left the mission a year before his arrest, accompanying Musio Rechan (likely Mordecai Richard) and his wife to Nacogdoches as their servant. Although no date was given, it would appear that this was about the time of the August, 1813 Battle of Medina, when the defeated republicans attempted to flee San Antonio toward east Texas and Louisiana. After two months in Nacogdoches, Fuentes went alone to Natchitoches and worked there for a month. He then moved on to the Sabine River, which formed the western boundary of the Neutral Ground, where he stayed several months with José Álvarez de Toledo, Gutiérrez's successor who had been defeated at the Battle of Medina. Eventually, Fuentes returned to San Antonio with a group of Toledo's followers, with the objective of stealing horses from the Presidio. Successful only in taking a single mule, the group separated as troops pursued them. Fearful of punishment, Fuentes managed to escape and make his way toward Mission Espada. Two other mission residents encountered him and escorted him to the mission, where he was handed over to authorities. The case seems to have lapsed with the finding that Fuentes was unarmed.⁷⁷ Another resident of Mission Espada, Mariano Yupie, was also arrested for treason. Although he was imprisoned at Valero and orders were given for a trial, the documentary trail ends without other action.⁷⁸

The legal proceedings examined in this chapter expose the ill-defined process by which the expression of local grievances evolved into political acts of sedition and revolution.

⁷⁷ "Ciudad de Bexar Año de 1814, N 4, Sumaria Ynformacion formada Contra el Paysano Ermenegildo Fuentes . . .," 2-8 September 1814, BA.

⁷⁸ Armiñan to Bustillos, 14 May 1814, BA; Armiñan to Basave, 14 May 1814, BA.

Rumor and sedition played important roles in influencing collective behavior and events during the early years of the insurrection. Although most of the cases unfortunately do not disclose their outcomes, it is likely that many of the defendants were pardoned and released. The prosecution of these cases was an effort to reinforce state authority during a period of widespread unrest, when Crown control of Texas was tenuous and prone to disruption. At times, it was maintained only through tacit compromise with local leaders. But the aftermath of the royalist victory and wanton vengeance against insurgent soldiers exposed the iron fist of authority.

Texas was always financially marginal to the Spanish Crown, yet important as a defensive buffer. This ambivalent relationship even permeated economic life on the frontier. Largely left to themselves, generations of east Texas residents and bureaucrats forged economic ties across ethnic, imperial, and national borders through a steady exchange of goods and commodities. Although on a comparatively small scale, this system of trade incorporated the province into the broader trans-Atlantic economy. That the Casas revolt, the Sambrano counter-revolt, and the Republican Army's Declaration of Independence all called for open trade with the United States is a clear indication that the frontier exchange economy developed in east Texas during the eighteenth century offered the best strategy for economic development in the province as a whole during the nineteenth. The Hispanic inhabitants of Texas were not interested in political closeness with the United States; it was simply the case that comparable economic opportunities were not available through New Spain. While Crown officials had always wished to quell this traffic, insurrectionists hoped to exploit

it. Insurrectionists and local royalists alike viewed open trade as strategic to their cause. The resulting prosperity they envisioned, however, would not materialize.

In the bloody aftermath of Arredondo's victory over the insurrectionists, the Hispanic population of Texas was reduced by nearly half. Most lived in San Antonio or its river valley, with the remainder at La Bahía. Arredondo withdrew his forces from the province in 1814. The Spanish Crown abandoned east Texas for the second time, returning only to burn the military post at Nacogdoches in 1819. The dual economies of Texas were shattered by the heavy loss of life, the destruction of property and infrastructure, and the inability to produce food as a result of frequent indigenous raids. A province that had, for much of its existence, found ways to prosper on the margins of political control, would soon find itself the focus of new geopolitical rivalries between Mexico and the United States. The political revolutions of the 1810s in Texas were followed by market revolutions in the 1820s and '30s. Texas's secession from Mexico in 1836 would reveal anew the power of economic networks to sway the course of history.

Conclusion

“The interest in commerce binds and narrows the desires of man”¹

The documents recording colonial Texas history were largely created as officials carried out their administrative responsibilities. They are inherently skewed toward the concerns of these functions. Historians have, until recently, taken official documents at face value without exploring other possible meanings behind them. In a sense, it is unsurprising that the resulting interpretive focus on administrative and institutional affairs in colonial Texas echoes that of Bourbon officials and ignores activities outside of these parameters. Viewed from this perspective, Texas appears as a chronically underfunded province on the northern frontier of the viceroyalty of New Spain. Governed by a succession of royal local officials who enriched themselves at the expense of the soldiers and vecinos under their jurisdiction, the local population suffered endemic poverty while Crown appointees did little to improve their condition. Military forces were chronically short staffed and lacked sufficient arms and horses to effectively carry out their duties to patrol and defend the province. On a broader level, autonomous indigenous groups played Spanish authorities off against their French counterparts for access to merchandise and firearms. When their needs were unmet by trade, they raided the Spanish settlements. Writing in 1779, the Franciscan fray Juan Agustín Morfí noted in his history that the province of Texas had so declined during its

¹ Bernardo de Gálvez, *Instructions for Governing the Interior Provinces of New Spain, 1786*, ed. and trans. Donald E. Worcester (Berkeley: Quivira Society, 1951), p. 42.

existence “that though we still call ourselves its masters we do not exercise dominion over a foot of land beyond San Antonio.”²

Morfi’s appraisal seemed to foreshadow an incident that occurred two decades later. In 1799, a large coalition of traders entered east Texas from Louisiana to meet with a number of local Caddoan, Wichita, and Comanche groups. The traders themselves comprised Louisianans of French heritage, British, Anglo-Americans, Cherokees, Chickasaws and Arkansas from east of the Mississippi River. Confronted by a small detachment of soldiers and vecinos from the nearby Spanish military post of Nacogdoches, the entire group took up arms to protect their commercial engagement, forcing the vastly outnumbered Spaniards to withdraw immediately. Upon learning of the incident, Commandant General Pedro de Nava rebuked Governor Juan Bautista de Elguézabal, stating that “because our forces command little respect from the Indians” (*por q[u]e nuestras fuerzas impongan poca consideración a los propios Yndios*), such a confrontation served merely to demonstrate Spain's weakness to their allies, their enemies, and to themselves. Instead, he admonished, “it is more honorable to discreetly pretend not to know than to begin a fight that provokes the enmity of the traders” (*es mas decoroso desentenderse con prudencia, q[u]e empeñar lances de q[u]e resulte animosidad en los tratantes*). Because they had neither the power to enforce their policies nor the ability to supply their allies with quality goods as inexpensive as those from Louisiana, Nava suggested that Elguézabal ignore the trade around him, as it was impossible to prevent.³ Nava’s blunt assessment appears to be a striking admission of

² Fray Juan Agustín Morfi, *History of Texas 1673-1779*, trans. Carlos Eduardo Castañeda, Part 2 (Albuquerque: The Quivira Society, 1935), p. 273.

³ Nava to Elguézabal, 18 Sept 1799, BA.

Spain's inability to impose its authority in the region, despite nearly a century of assertion of sovereignty and presence on the ground.

Overlooked in the administrative perspective of colonial Texas history is the very strength and scope of the trade that Elguézabal sought to prevent. This frontier exchange was, in fact, the economic engine of the Texas-Louisiana borderlands. The Crown had only a narrow set of economic concerns for the province – namely the royal treasury's expenses for its official presence, and the revenues that it generated. The Crown did not want to expend resources on a remote region whose value it viewed in the narrowest of terms, and sought to spend as little as possible for maintaining it. Yet the robust frontier exchange that was all around them offered many Hispanic settlers a livelihood and made the Spanish occupation of east Texas viable – even when the Crown decided to abandon that area. This economic base contrasted sharply with, but also complemented, the mostly Crown-approved trade that formed the basis of the economy in San Antonio. Together, this dual economy maintained and extended the Spanish presence in Texas and enabled the Crown to meet its defensive goals on the most meager of budgets.

By interrogating the narratives in official documents from a different perspective and going beyond their literal content, this dissertation has explored a range of economic activity in Spanish colonial Texas. My analysis lays bare the insufficiencies of the legitimate financial structure that was supposed to support the settlers, and reveals and highlights the importance of the alternative frontier exchange based on indigenous trade and contraband goods that sustained its existence. By close reading of previously unexamined official documentation, I have demonstrated that there was a far greater

range and dynamism in the local and regional economies than has been previously recognized. Colonial Texas had strong economic ties not just with the interior of New Spain, but also with many of the autonomous indigenous groups and the peoples who lived in neighboring Louisiana. Frontier exchange incorporated the province into the dynamic Atlantic economy, allowing its residents access to a broad range of affordable, high quality consumer goods that would not otherwise have been available to them.

At the same time that this thriving economy sustained the province, however, its underground, illicit nature also undermined it. The very nature of illicit trade, regardless of its necessity for survival, accustomed generations of Crown subjects in Texas to circumvent official policies. They exercised a degree of independence that those living in more regulated areas could not. Crown attempts to repress this trade with the outright abandonment of east Texas met with the settlers' active resistance through unsanctioned resettlement of the area. This act of open defiance began the politicization of the frontier exchange economy, eventually influencing settlers' rebellions against the Crown. During this period, Bourbon reforms in New Mexico created a thriving (legal) economy that led to the formation of a distinctive and "coherent society that took root as a vigorous cultural variant of Spanish colonial life elsewhere in New Spain."⁴ In contrast, the frontier exchange economy in Texas exposed the weakness of Spanish rule, as Nava so eloquently pointed out. This economic trajectory was an important factor in the Texas revolts of the early 1810s, when political instability in Spain became amplified in its overseas empire. Rebellions and their aftermath resulted in the near collapse of vecino society in Texas.

⁴ Ross Frank, *From Settler to Citizen: New Mexican Economic Development and the Creation of Vecino Society, 1750-1820* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), p. 228.

Combined with studies of contraband and extralegal trade in other parts of Spanish America, this work contributes to a fuller understanding of the political economy of the Spanish empire. The commonalities between these disparate parts of Spanish America – a lack of legal sources of goods, corrupt officials, the presence of indigenous groups outside of Spanish rule who were important producers of commodities that entered the exchanges, and the participation of all sectors of the community in extralegal trade – place Texas in a much broader colonial context than as simply New Spain's northeastern frontier.

This study also demonstrates that contraband was an integral part of the colonial experience. As the extent of extralegal trade in the colonies becomes apparent, scholars are increasingly able to recognize the magnitude of its contribution to the Atlantic economy as a whole. Shifting our reading of the past allows us to see well beyond the often deliberately limited view of colonial administrators, and to further recognize that settlers and indigenous inhabitants played as important a role in the development of the frontier as did Crown policy. The dual economies of colonial Texas profoundly shaped how its inhabitants saw themselves and the possibilities in their world, well beyond those envisioned by their distant monarch.

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Appendix
San Antonio Mission Temporalities, 1745-93

The tables below are compiled from the mission *visita* reports created for the Querétaro apostolic college, and from reports at the time of secularization. The individual sources are listed at the end of the tables. Mission San José is not included because it was operated by the Zacatecas college; its *visita* reports served a different purpose and do not provide comparable information on the temporalities. Although the format in which the temporalities were reported changed over the decades, the available evidence reveals that each of the missions produced sufficient agricultural and ranching products to support its population. Mission Valero made its report at the time of its secularization in 1793, while the other three missions submitted their reports in 1794.

Mission Valero temporalities:

Year:		1745	1756	1762	1772	1793
Population:		311	328	275	53	39
Agriculture:	corn (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 8-9 harvest 1,200	sufficient seed	for sustenance	1 sitio to yield over 400 fanegas	
	beans (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 2 harvest 60	sufficient seed	for sustenance		
	cotton	plant 2 <i>tablas</i> harvest 40 <i>arrobas</i>	sufficient seed	for clothing		
	gardens or other fields	2-3 gardens planted with water- melon, melon, squash	watermelon, melon, other plants	field planted with chile	3 farms, each 1 sitio or square league	
Ranching:	cattle	>2,300- 2,800	1,000	1,115	4,000-5,000 at Rancho La Mora, plus a large number of others pastured closer to the mission	14 cows and their calves
	sheep for wool	1,317	2,500	2,300		
	sheep for skin	325				
	horses	40	150	315		10
	burros			15		
	mules			18		
	oxen		48			28

Mission San Juan temporalities:

Year:		1745	1756	1762	1772	1794
San Juan		173	265	203	202	36
Agriculture:	corn (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 4.5 harvest 800			plant 11	
	beans (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 1.5 harvest 40				
	cotton					
	gardens or other fields	watermelon, melon				
Ranching:	cattle	>865-930		1,000	>1,871	55
	sheep for wool	325		3,500	2,047	
	sheep for skin	230+?			70 goats for skin	
	horses	36		500	273	3
	burros				8	
	mules				30	1
	oxen				>130	8

Mission Espada temporalities:

Year:		1745	1756	1762	1772	1794
Population:		204	200	207		45
Agriculture:	corn (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 5 harvest 1,000	planted			
	beans (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 2 harvest 40	planted			
	cotton		planted			
	gardens or other fields	watermelon, melon, squash	watermelon, melon			
Ranching:	cattle	>1,150	700	1,262		1 cow and its calf
	sheep for wool	740	1,900	4,000		1,150
	sheep for skin	90				
	horses	81	102	145		4
	burros			9		
	mules					3
	oxen					16

Mission Concepción temporalities:

Year:		1745	1756	1762	1772	1794
Population:		207	247	207		38
Agriculture:	corn (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 5 harvest 1,000			harvest 600	
	beans (<i>fanegas</i>)	plant 1 harvest 30				
	cotton		planted			
	gardens or other fields	watermelon, melon, squash, sweet potato	fruit trees			
Ranching:	cattle			610		128 cows and their calves
	sheep for wool			2,200		
	sheep for skin					
	horses			310		24
	burros					
	mules					
	oxen					36

Sources for tables: Fray Francisco Xavier Ortíz, "Visita de las Misiones hecha de orden de H. M. P[adre] Comm[isari]o G[ene]ral Fr[ay] Juan Fogueras, por el P[adre] Fr[ay] Fran[cis]co Xavier Ortiz, en el año de 1745," October 11, 1745, OSMHRC, ACZ9:1265-1268; fray Francisco Xavier Ortíz, "Vissita de la Mission de S[a]n Antonio de Valero," June 9, 1756, vol. 3, pp. 7-21, in Fray Francisco Xavier Ortíz, *Razon de la Viss[i]ta de las Misiones de San Xavier y de las de S[a]n Antonio de Valero en la Provincia y Governación de Texas, Maio de 1756*, ed. Vargas Rea (México D.F.: Biblioteca de Historiadores Mexicanes, 1955); fray Mariano Francisco de los Dolores y Biana, "Relación del Estado en que se hallan todas y cada una de las Misiones, en el año de 1762, dirigido al Mui Reverendo Padre Guardian Fray Francisco Xavier Ortíz," March 6, 1762, in *Documentos para la Historia Eclesiastica y Civil de la Provincia de Texas O Nueva Philipinas, 1720-1779*, vol. 12, ed. José Porrúa Turanzas (Madrid: Colección Chimalistic de Libros y Documentos Acerca de la Nueva Espana, 1961), pp. 248-252; fray Mariano de los Dolores y Biana, *Informe de los misioneros de Texas, acerca del estado de sus misiones, su decadencia, etc.*, March 6, 1762, Mexico, Archivo General de la Nacion (AGN), Historia, vol. 28, expediente 7, ff. 164-167; fray Juan José Sáenz de Gumiel, *Inventory of the Mission San Antonio de Valero: 1772*, trans. Benedict Leutenegger, Office of the State Archeologist Special Report no. 23 (Austin: Texas Historical Commission, 1977); fray Juan José Sáenz de Gumiel, "Certificación, e Ymbentario de la Mision de la Espada," December 15, 1772, OSMHRC, 10:4193-4229; fray José Francisco López and fray Joseph Mariano Garza, "Ymbentario de las existencias q[u]e hay hoy dia 23 de Abril de 1793, en la Mis[i]on de San Antonio Valero," April 23, 1793, OSMHRC, 4:5808-5816; Habig, *Alamo Chain of Missions*, pp. 66-67.