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THE JOURNEY OF PEDRO DE RIVERA, 1724-1728

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This paper is partly a summary of and partly a series of selections from a longer study on the subject of the inspection of military posts in New Spain by Pedro de Rivera in the third decade of the eighteenth century. The facts selected from the longer study, for the main parts of this paper, relate to his travels in Texas and in three other provinces of New Spain which were nearest to Texas: namely, New Mexico, Coahuila, and Nuevo León. Preceding these facts is an introductory explanation of the origin and the general nature of his entire journey of inspection. The explanation is derived from official papers written in Madrid and in the City of Mexico. The description of the selected portions of his journey is based upon, and quoted from, his own diary of that event. This paper was read at the meeting of the Texas State Historical Association in Austin, Texas, on April 24, 1937.

RIVERA'S JOURNEY

Intent upon recovering in Europe a position for Spain that was commensurate with its past glories, King Philip V (1700-1746) tried to readjust several of his assets in their relative costs and efficiency. As early as 1721 he was considering the needs and possibilities of military reforms in New Spain. He directed preliminary orders on this subject to the viceroy of New Spain, Baltasar de Zúñiga, the Marquis of Valero. The marquis replied that he was compelled, through no fault of his own, to postpone the fulfill-

ment of these.¹ The king therefore repeated them to the incoming viceroy, Juan de Acuña, the Marquis of Casafuerte, directing him to acquire as much information as possible concerning the presidios of New Spain and to propose for them the suitable measures of reform.²

The aims of the new viceroy, who entered office in October, 1722, were to serve the king faithfully, to improve the whole kingdom of New Spain, and, in particular, to rid it of the financial dishonesty and wastefulness of officials which were, in his estimation, not only a useless but also a humiliating burden to the royal treasury. Already long experienced in positions of high responsibility, he began at once to make his plans. In his mind was considerable suspicion concerning the garrisons of the northern frontier. It seemed to him that they were more costly than their usefulness warranted and that their administration was full of defects and abuses, both military and financial. The recent conquest of the province of Nayarit, on the western coast, and the equally recent establishment of protection for the province of Texas against French encroachment from the east, increased the number, and therefore the costs and the possible evils, of the presidios which guarded the frontiers of New Spain. The need of reforms, especially economies, seemed to increase steadily. Bent upon these, as well as upon obedience to royal orders, Viceroy Casafuerte decided, almost immediately after assuming his office, to direct a thorough survey of the presidios. For this work he chose Colonel Don Pedro de Rivera, governor of the province of Tlaxcala in New Spain, esteeming the soldier and administrator efficient, trustworthy, and interested, like Casafuerte himself, in the rescuing of royal funds from needless waste.³

Two years of preparation indicated the range and the importance of the approaching survey. The viceroy had to acquaint the king with presidial conditions in general and with the reasons for the appointment of Colonel Rivera as inspector general. Official cor-

¹Philip V to Casafuerte, Aranjuez, May 12, 1722, Archivo General de Mexico, Provincias Internas, XXIX, University of Texas transcript.

²Casafuerte, *Obedezimiento*, Mexico, November 9, 1722, Archivo General de Mexico, Provincias Internas, XXIX, University of Texas transcript.

³Casafuerte to Philip V, Mexico, May 25, 1723, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 62-1-41, University of Texas transcript (Dunn, 1723-1729).

respondence on these matters between Madrid and the City of Mexico began in November, 1722, and reached formal completion in July, 1724.⁴ In that summer Rivera left his post as governor of Tlaxcala and went to the City of Mexico to begin final preparations. He received military promotion from the rank of colonel to that of brigadier. He received from the viceroy, the *auditor de guerra*, and the *fiscal*, large quantities of records, letters, instructions, and advice. The treasury-council appropriated money for the purchase of necessary equipment and supplies, and fixed a salary of twelve pesos per day for Rivera, with a much smaller rate of pay for his assistants and employees. The commission signed by the viceroy and given to Rivera empowered him to inspect every military station, make any corrections therein which he saw fit, subject to viceregal confirmation, and to recommend specific regulations for the future administration of these posts. In short he was to be the agent of reform and to produce beneficial results for the presidios, for New Spain, and for the royal treasury.⁵

The field which he was to cover was extensive, but irregular. Twenty-three posts marked the frontiers of settlement. Three of the garrisons were classified as flying, or quickly movable, companies, and the other twenty as presidial, although customary usage applied the term presidio to all twenty-three. Eight of these were in the important province of Nueva Vizcaya, one was in the city of Durango, and the other seven were located diagonally across the northern half of the province. Three guarded the western coast and were located in the respective provinces of Sonora, Sinaloa, and Nayarit. Two were in the province of New Mexico, at El Paso and Santa Fé. Four were in the province of Texas, at San Antonio and La Bahía in the western end, and Dolores and

⁴Royal Cedula, Madrid, February 19, 1724; Casafuerte, *Obedezimiento*, Mexico, July 28, 1724, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 62-1-41, University of Texas transcripts (Dunn, 1723-1729). See also notes 1, 2, and 3.

⁵Casafuerte, *Instrucciones . . . a Dn. Pedro de Rivera*, Mexico, September 15, 1724; Prudenzió de Palacios, *Respuesta Fiscal*, Mexico, September 22, 1724; Juan de Oliván Rebollo, *Opinion del Auditor*, Mexico, October 2, 1724; Casafuerte, *Discretos*, Mexico, October 3, 10, and 18, 1724; La Junta de Hacienda, *Opinion*, Mexico, October 6, 1724; Ygnacio José de Miranda and Alejo López de Cotilla, *Consulta de Ofiziones Reales*, Mexico, October 16, 1724; Pedro de Rivera, *Razon de documentos recibidos*, Mexico, October 30, 1724,—Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 62-1-41, University of Texas transcripts (Dunn, 1723-1729).

Adaes in the eastern end. Three were in Coahuila, at Bautista on the Rio Grande, Monclova, and Saltillo. Saltillo, however, was also considered as a boundary post of Nueva Vizcaya. Two were in Nuevo León, at Cerralvo and Cadereyta, east and northeast of Monterrey. The remaining garrison was in the province of Guasteca, between San Luis Potosí and Tampico.⁶

Equipped with some 3,500 folios of information and instructions, and with 6,000 pesos from the viceregal treasury, Brigadier Rivera soon completed his preparations for his long tour. With a few servants, pack animals, and supplies, he left the City of Mexico, November 21, 1724, on his way to the northwest. He kept careful accounts of his journey, day by day, almost league by league, for purposes of subsequent publication. In forty-three months he covered 3,082 leagues and visited nearly 300 places, including twenty-three military posts and several important cities. His average daily distance was about eight leagues, although on the first day he traveled only one league, and he strongly implied, in his record published later, that he rode seventeen leagues, December 6, 1725, from the presidio of Mapimi to that of Gallo. Rarely did he travel the same distances on consecutive days. As he patiently rode horseback over a vast section of the continent, from the City of Mexico to Santa Fé, from Sinaloa to the western border of Louisiana, he saw not only a military frontier that called for economy but also an imperial domain that challenged his powers of description.⁷

Throughout this journey the brigadier gave much attention to distances, directions, and locations. Each day he measured his travel in leagues and noted its every change of direction. In all cities that he visited and in twenty of the twenty-three military posts he carefully "observed the sun" to determine their latitude and longitude. Some portions of his route he immediately retraced, between Zacatecas and Nayarit, Fresnillo and Zacatecas, Gallo and Mapimi, El Paso and Santa Fé, Onavas and Sinaloa, Béjar and

⁶Casafuerte, *Instrucciones . . . a Dn. Pedro de Rivera*, Mexico, September 15, 1724, Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 62-1-41, University of Texas transcript (Dunn, 1723-1729).

⁷The description of this journey is derived from Pedro de Rivera, *Diario y Derretero de lo Caminado, visto y observado en el discurso de la visita general de Presidios situados en las Provincias ynternas de Nueva España*. Guatemala, 1736.

Adaes, Béjar and Bahía, and San Luis Potosí and Los Valles. Other portions he ultimately re-traveled, between Pasage and Laguna de San Martín, near Phelipe de Chihuahua, between Janos and the neighboring village of San Antonio, and between Monclova and Béjar. Once, at Saltillo, he touched his own trail again without re-traveling any of it. Because of these necessary retracings he was three times in Fresnillo, in Gallo, and in San Antonio de Béjar, twice in Zacatecas, in San Phelipe de Chihuahua, and in San Luis Potosí, and twice in each of the presidios of El Paso, Janos, Pasage, Saltillo, Monclova, Bautista, and Dolores. Carefully he noted the name of every place in which he lodged, important or unimportant, city or village, private estate or uninhabited spot.

With equal regularity this careful traveler observed daily the weather, topography, vegetation, and available water and minerals. When he completed the tour of a province, beginning with Nayarit, he summed up these daily observations in a description of the province. Accompanying him was Lieutenant Colonel Francisco Barreyro, engineer of the province of Texas, who made explorations and maps of the provinces, adding his descriptions to those of Rivera. In observing the country as these officers traversed it, they were interested mainly in its possibilities of economic development and its defense. It is likely that their personal knowledge of a vast portion of the continent, as yet largely undeveloped, impelled them to consider the military functions of New Spain as more properly defensive than expansive.

The inspector traveled northwest from the City of Mexico to Zacatecas, where he turned aside to the west, to visit Nayarit. Again in Zacatecas he turned northward. Through Durango he went and thence across the province of Nueva Vizcaya to the city of San Phelipe de Chihuahua. The total time of his travels and sojourns when he left that city, since he left the City of Mexico, was about seventeen months; the distance, 591 leagues. His road from Chihuahua City towards El Paso led through pasture lands green with the grass of spring and among some water holes and low hills until, at the waterless and deserted Las Boquillas, May 5, 1726, he passed out of the province of Nueva Vizcaya. Las Boquillas was forty-one leagues below El Paso, and Rivera, con-

curring in belief with some citizens of New Mexico, named Las Boquillas instead of El Paso as a southern boundary point of New Mexico.⁸

From Las Boquillas, Rivera traveled alternately northeast and northwest to El Paso, a distance of forty-one leagues, in six days. He said of Ojo Caliente, his first stop after leaving Las Boquillas, that it was the first Spanish town that he encountered in New Mexico. In that town he met seven Indians, a *cacique* among them, who lived at Carrizal, and loyally urged them, for they could understand Spanish, to have no further dealings with rebels. These Indians seemed pleased, either with his advice or with the food and tobacco with which he regaled them. The road to El Paso was level, but very sandy and somewhat difficult. Thickets of rosemary and other shrubs, and occasional woods of mesquites and huisaches relieved the monotony of the scene. The few springs, two of them hot, and the lakes near Candelaria looked attractive in comparison with the sand dunes, which seemed to extend from the Gila region in the northwest down the valley of the Rio Grande to La Junta de los Ríos. The presidio of El Paso was on the south bank of the Rio Grande, in the present city of Juárez, adjoining a Spanish town and an Indian pueblo which was divided into two wards, inhabited by the Mansos and the Piros, and directed by a Franciscan. Within four leagues east of the town were the small pueblos of Socorro, Isleta, Senecú, and San Lorenzo, ministered to by Franciscans and inhabited by Tiguas, Sumas and Piros Indians. Near them were spacious farms, producing wheat, corn, vegetables, and grapes. The wine made there was superior even to the famous wines of Parras in Nueva Vizcaya. Fertile soil and irrigation from the river made the region of El Paso independent of the weather. Rivera seemingly gathered this information, along with necessary supplies, in about a week.

There was nothing uninteresting to him in his journey of sixteen days from El Paso to Santa Fé, a distance of one hundred thirty-two leagues. His party spent one-half day in crossing the Rio Grande at El Paso, in canoes. The route then followed the left bank of that river for the entire distance north to Santa Fé, with

⁸C. W. Hackett, *Historical Documents relating to New Mexico, Nueva Vizcaya, and the Approaches Thereto, to 1773*, I, 208, 210; II, 3, 389. Washington, 1923, 1926.

the exceptions of two days' travel across the territory within the most westward angle of the river and two days' travel eastward from the Rio Grande up its small tributary, the Santa Fé River, to the city of that name. East of and parallel to the road, as far up as a few leagues above Albuquerque, he saw daily the mountain range which he called Sierra de los Mansos. Along the way were some long, low hills and mesas, a few very sandy areas, several dry creeks, and, more to his liking, large tracts of level pasture land. He admired the mesquite trees and thickets of aromatic rosemary, and most of all the cottonwoods and some cypresses which grew along the river banks. For his two days' march across arid, saline land that was more than ten leagues away from the river he had to carry supplies of water and firewood. His stopping places were Indian pueblos or else deserted villages, and he did not tarry in passing through the town of Albuquerque. He found that most of the citizens of that town lived scattered among ranches. He was especially interested, like a tourist, in the ruins of former pueblos along the way. These were the pueblos of San Pasqual, Senecú, Socorro, Sevilleta, Sandía, "and many others," which, like many ranch houses, had been destroyed during the "general rebellion." At the pueblo of Santo Domingo, twelve leagues north of Albuquerque, he met the governor of New Mexico, who was expecting him, having been told of his coming by Indians who had seen him leave El Paso. At Santa Fé, as at Albuquerque, Rivera encountered a mixed population of Spaniards, *mestizos*, and mulattoes.

On his return to El Paso in September, 1726, he collected his notes and impressions of New Mexico into a clear description. The northernmost province of New Spain, New Mexico, extended seventeen degrees in latitude and six in longitude. Las Boquillas, he declared again, was the southern point of entry. On every side except the south New Mexico faced non-Christian Indian nations. Its fertile lands, aided by the rivers and creeks, afforded abundant wheat, corn, vegetables, grapes and other fruits, and "the liquors of El Paso," as well as horses and cattle. A great asset to the

⁹This was the Pueblo revolt, 1680-1698, which almost destroyed the Spanish possession of New Mexico. C. W. Hackett (ed.), *Pichardo's Treatise on the Limits of Louisiana and Texas*, I, 523-524. C. W. Hackett, "The Revolt of the Pueblo Indians of New Mexico in 1680," in *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, XV, 93-147.

farmers was the Rio Grande, rising fifty leagues northwest of Santa Fé, entering the province three leagues north of the pueblo of San Gerónimo de los Thaos, watering the farms of the valley and beautifying both banks with cottonwood trees, and containing a variety of excellent fish. Partly of cold, partly of temperate climate, the country produced forests of pines, oaks, cypresses, live oaks, and many other kinds of trees, affording considerable wood. The pines ranged in size from very large to merely as tall as a man, but the medium sized pines bore no fruit. The principal animals were bear, wolves, coyotes, mountain sheep, and deer, one variety of which was sorrel in color, horned, as fat as a mule, and two *varas* in length. Birds abounded too, especially partridges, which were caught alive most of the time, particularly in the winter. Copper and several other mineral resources existed but were not exploited, because the cost of working them was greater than their value.

The Christian Indians inhabiting the twenty-four pueblos of New Mexico were 9,747 in number, comprising the nations of Piros, Tiguas, Mansos, Querez, Zuñis, Alonas, Xemes, Xeres, Picuries, Thanos, Pecos, Teguas, Thaos, and Sumas. Rivera considered them all very virtuous. They were of good appearance, wore clothing and sheepskin shoes, and were industrious, the women in weaving blankets of wool and cotton, and the men in farming and implement making. Consequently they were prosperous. All of them rode horseback. Drunkenness among them was unknown. One of their old customs, taught to them by early missionaries and still kept inviolate, was the salutation of all comers, Spanish or Indian, with the "sweetest name of Ave Maria." These Indians' houses were different from those of all other provincial pueblos. Well constructed, flat-roofed, three or four stories in height, the houses had no doors in the lower stories, but hand ladders instead, reaching up to the second stories. The inmates pulled the ladders indoors at night, for safety against enemies. Houses faced one another, so that enemies attacking could be more easily repulsed. The pueblos were under Franciscan administration, and their inhabitants loyally and promptly responded to every call by the governor for military service, completely equipping themselves at no cost to the treasury.

The enemy Indians of the province were the Apaches, Pharaones, Natajees, Gilas, Mescaleros, Coninas, Quartelextos, Palomas, Jicarillas, Yutas, Moquiños, and others. They engaged in war and sought peace as their inclinations suggested. Every year the wandering Comanches, never fewer than 1,500 and from nowhere in particular, invaded New Mexico to fight any or all other nations. The invaders brought field tents, made of buffalo hides, and some large dogs, bred for war purposes. The men's clothing was waist high, the women's of knee length. After securing the desired number of animal hides and captive children, and killing the adult prisoners, the Comanches usually retired from the province until "another time."

Lieutenant Colonel Barreyro shared his chief's favorable views concerning New Mexico, and described it similarly.¹⁰ The engineer too named Las Boquillas, south of El Paso, as a boundary point common to Nueva Vizcaya and New Mexico. In his opinion, the Indians of New Mexico excelled all others of New Spain in appearance and achievement. The lands were more nearly level, fertile, and pleasant than any others that he had seen during this tour, and more nearly like those of Europe. In Santa Fé and in the northern pueblos of Taos, Picuries, and Pecos, the climate was very cold in winter, and the brief summers were far from hot. The pueblos of Santo Domingo and Galisteo marked the region of former mining, abandoned because of the poor quality of the minerals. His list of Christian Indian nations in New Mexico was the same as Rivera's with the omission of the Xeres and the addition of the Apaches and Navajos. Rivera named the Apaches among the enemy nations.

When Rivera left El Paso the second time he went southwest to visit one presidio in northwestern Nueva Vizcaya, one in Sonora, and one in Sinaloa. From there he returned to Nueva Vizcaya and crossed it to Saltillo, which was then the eastern limit of Nueva Vizcaya but is now in Coahuila. His two visits to Nueva Vizcaya were a year apart. He left the province in the summer of 1727.

From mid-July to mid-August, 1727, Rivera traveled north and

¹⁰Francisco Alvarez Barreyro, *Descripcion de las Provincias Internas de esta Nueva España*, Mexico, February 10, 1730 (San Phelipe y Santiago de Sinaloa, January 12, 1727), Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 61-2-12, University of Texas transcript (Dunn, 1723-1729).

northeast, occasionally turning briefly to the northwest in the first week of this journey, from Saltillo to San Antonio de Béjar, a distance of 164 leagues. Too far east for the great mountains, he saw rocky hills and level fields, the prickly pear and mesquites becoming more numerous and the water holes more noticeable as he neared the Rio Grande del Norte. A few rainstorms contributed to his water supply. Most of his camp sites were in uninhabited places, although he saw some pueblos and missions, and visited the town of Monclova, the capital of the province of Coahuila. Of this town, which was under the ministrations of a parish priest, Rivera formed a poor opinion, calling it one of the most *tenués* towns of his acquaintance. Between Monclova and the Rio Grande he followed the little Coahuila River, which ran into the Nadadores River. Crossing that river, the small Sabinas River, and two creeks, tributaries all to the Rio Grande, he found that he could get water in seemingly dry places between these streams by digging in the sand. Near the south bank of the Rio Grande he found the presidio of San Juan Bautista. Two leagues away were the pueblos of San Juan Bautista and San Bernardo, ministered to by a Franciscan and inhabited by Indians of various tribes, mostly wanderers. At two leagues northeast of the presidio Rivera crossed the Rio Grande and continued to observe with pleasure the absence of high hills and the vast areas of pasturage and mesquite trees. His second night north of the river was a miserable experience because of an "intolerable plague of venomous mosquitoes." On three successive days thereafter he crossed, respectively, "with fatiguing labor," the Nueces River, the Frio River, and a deep creek. Delayed by stormy weather, he required three more days to reach and cross the Medina River, the boundary of the province of Texas. Eight leagues beyond that river he reached the presidio of San Antonio de Béjar. By that time he was finding even more pleasingly "spacious meadows," and not only mesquites, but oaks as well, some of which were in dense groves.

The journey of Rivera through the province of Texas, including his visits to the four presidios therein, lasted from August 16 to December 13, 1727, and covered 554 leagues, quite long enough to give him vivid impressions of the country. At Béjar he learned that a small pueblo, one-half league northeast of the presidio, was

ministered to by a Querétaran Franciscan, while a Zacatecan brother ministered to the still smaller pueblos on the southwest side, inhabited by Mezquites, Payayas, and Aguastayas. Equally interested was the visitor in the cottonwoods, the plum trees, and the blackberry bushes near the banks of the San Antonio River. He admired San Antonio more than any other place, among the three hundred places which he visited. He said that some day it would support a large city. He particularly admired the ample springs of water, the good grazing lands, and the beautiful surroundings of the presidio. Going northeast from the presidio he crossed, within a week, the San Antonio, Salado, Cíbolo, Comal, Guadalupe, San Marcos, Blanco, and Colorado rivers, as well as the intermediate creeks. In the manner of his day, however, he mentioned three of these rivers by names that they later ceased to bear. He called the Comal the Guadalupe, the San Marcos the Ynocentes, and the Colorado the San Marcos. The Blanco he also called San Raphael Creek. He described the Comal as a "spring of water equavilent to a considerable river," but considered it as a branch of the Guadalupe. He crossed the present San Marcos "twenty-three leagues" above its junction with the Guadalupe. He instructively mentioned that the Colorado River, which he called the San Marcos, emptied into San Bernardo [Matagorda] Bay.¹¹ Distant hills along the west side of his course emphasized his satisfaction in the level grazing lands across which he traveled. Herds of buffaloes were another source of satisfaction. Truly this was a good province of New Spain. The water supply, however, was uncertain. In the Colorado River the water was copious, but between there and the Brazos, which he said was also called the Colorado, the land was dry, the creeks were empty, or nearly so, and water holes were somewhat scarce, making the watering of the horses an almost daily problem. About halfway between the two rivers he spent two days riding through wide forests of oak, walnut, and many other kinds of timber. This was the *Monte Grande*. Two days later he crossed the Brazos "at the place where both [*brazos*, arms] join into one, making one river, which in time

¹¹For identification of each of the rivers of Texas as Rivera knew them, see C. W. Hackett (ed.), *Pichardo's . . . Limits of Louisiana and Texas*, I, 485-486.

of flood will be formidable, as its channel shows.¹² This was the junction of Little River and the Brazos, near Cameron. On its banks the growth of timber and brush was so thick that it made "travel difficult." Between the Brazos and the Trinity rivers he found more water in the creeks, among which he classified the Navasota, and also more frequent forests, in which were not only oak and walnut trees but also an increasing number of pines. Some of the creeks were almost too boggy to cross.

Beyond the Trinity River the brigadier found East Texas a land of considerable sand, wonderful timber, dense undergrowths, numerous creeks, some of which were dry, and at least four rivers, the Neches, the Aynays, the Atoyaque, and the Sabine. Within seven leagues of the Trinity he found chestnut trees, which he did not see west of there. Five leagues west of the Neches he met fifty Indians of the Neches nation, who were equipped, "like the most expert troops," with French muskets, powder, and bullets. Somewhat more than a league east of the Neches River he came to a group of huts, called San Francisco de los Neches, where a "Querétaran religious resides, to minister to the Indians when they wish to be Christians." Such was Rivera's opinion of the first Spanish residence of any kind that he found east of San Antonio de Béjar. After spending one night at this mission he turned southeast, and rode ten leagues to the mission and the presidio of Dolores de los Texas. This mission, like San Francisco de los Neches, was, he considered, merely a reception post for possible Aynays Christians and a waiting post for another Querétaran Franciscan. Within the next three days the inspector found two more Franciscan outposts of Christianity, for the "Nacodoches" and the Aes Indians, both in charge of Zacatecans, but neither of them busy. At thirteen leagues east of Nacodoches and six west of Los Aes, he crossed the Atoyaque River. Crossing the Sabine River four days later, fourteen leagues northeast of Los Aes, he turned eastward for the last nineteen leagues of this crossing of the province of Texas. For two more days he rode through dense forests and across San Miguel Creek, turning

¹²From the Guadalupe River to the Trinity River the route of Rivera was more southerly than that of Aguayo, who crossed Texas seven years earlier to protect it from French aggression. See *ibid.*; also Eleanor Buckley, "The Aguayo Expedition Into Texas and Louisiana, 1719-1722," in *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association*, XV, 1-65.

slightly north and then slightly south again, arriving on September 15, 1727, at the capital of Texas, the presidio of Los Adaes.

Seven weeks later the energetic Rivera, once more in Béjar after his inspection of the eastern frontier, began his six days' journey of fifty-four leagues to La Bahía. This time his course was southeast, across the Salado and Cíbolo rivers again but considerably farther downstream than his first crossings were, eleven weeks earlier. When he reached the Guadalupe River, thirty-nine leagues from Béjar, he followed that stream the remaining distance to his goal, crossing at a point three leagues below the mouth of the tributary Robalo Creek. On this journey he saw numerous but scanty growths of mesquite and oak, but delighted, as usual, in the level pastures, some of which appeared liable to inundation.

Upon the completion of his work at La Bahía, and then at San Antonio de Béjar, Rivera returned to San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande, where, according to his custom, he compiled his general thoughts about Texas. That province extended across eight degrees of latitude, from the mouth of the Medina River to the northern hill country of the Apaches, and twelve degrees of longitude, from the Medina River to the Río de San Andrés de Caudachos, "which the French call the Red River, the boundary of Louisiana." The climate of Texas resembled that of Europe, cold enough in winter, and hot in summer, in proportion to altitude, the hottest portion being along the Gulf Coast. The fertile soil of Texas, cultivated by the still pagan Indians, produced vegetables, corn, and other grains, even without the benefit of irrigation. Nowhere along the road across the province were there any mountains or even any hills that a man could not climb on horseback, and pasturage was plentiful. Timber was abundant, with some clearings therein which were not very difficult to cross. Many of the trees were of "unknown species," but there were a great many pines, oaks, live oaks, and mesquites, besides wild fruit trees which produced food for the Indians. Among such productive trees were the medlars, which, like those of Spain, afforded some fruit for winter use, and also the nut trees, which were very plentiful. There were many medicinal herbs, "good for conserving health." Since several of his servants fell ill and died during the return journey from Adaes to Béjar, Rivera felt

especial interest in the medicinal resources of Texas. Among the animals used for food were buffaloes, which were a "kind of dark cattle," deer, which were very numerous, bears, the grease from which was a seasoning for food, young rabbits, and even mice which the Indians ate. Birds were abundant, especially turkeys. There were some nocturnal birds called *texolotes*, of which the song was so dismal as to bring melancholy to the hearer. The rivers supplied abundant fish for food during most of the year, especially the large catfish. The only settlements in Texas were at the three presidios of Adaes, Béjar, and Bahía. At San Antonio de Béjar were the two small pueblos, inhabited by not more than 250 Payayas, Mezquites, and Aguastayas, and administered by Querétaran and Zacatecan Franciscans. All Indian nations of Texas were pagan, most of them continual wanderers. Their clothing was usually the unadorned hides of deer or buffaloes.¹³ In religious affairs the province was under the episcopal jurisdiction of Guadalajara, and, in political, directly under the government of the viceroy.

Engineer Barreyro likewise described Texas favorably. Implying that the province was but in its beginning he noted that in it were presidios but neither Spanish towns nor Indian vassals. Although most of it was "continuous timber," yet this was usually light enough to permit easy traveling, even without roads or paths. The trees were much like those of Europe except that Texas had no beeches. The two pueblos in Texas, adjacent to San Antonio de Béjar, contained not over 243 persons. In only these minor items did Barreyro's description of Texas differ from the one which he probably helped his chief to compile.¹⁴

Completing his work at Bautista on the first day of 1728, Inspector General Rivera returned by his former road to Monclova, where similar work detained him three weeks. From that pro-

¹³These nations were the Adaes, Aes, Aynays, Nacodoches, Neches, Nazones, Nabidachos, Naconomes, Yojuanes, Anames, Ervapiames, Cusanes, Malleyes, Pampopas, Pastias, Cocos, Coapites, Copanes, Carancaguazes, Tacames, Aranames, Atastagonies, Pelones, Salinas, Parchinas, Annas, Pacaos, Pajalat, Pitalas, and others whose names Rivera confessed that he forgot.

¹⁴Francisco Alvarez Barreyro, *Descripcion de las Provincias Internas de esta Nueva España*, Mexico, February 10, 1730 (Bautista, December 28, 1727), Archivo General de Indias, Audiencia de Mexico, 61-2-12, University of Texas transcript (Dunn, 1723-1729), VII. Incomplete.

vincial capital he traveled seventy-eight leagues east and southeast to the town of San Gregorio, headquarters of the presidial company of Cerralvo. On this journey into the province of Nuevo León he saw mesquites, huisaches, and underbrush as in Texas, but he also found hills as well as prairies, and no fewer than four organized settlements. On the third day he entered the pueblo and mission of San Bernardino de la Candela, administered by a Franciscan and inhabited by "fragments of the Indian nations" SÍbolos, Canoscatujanes, Pacoches, and Apes. Fifteen leagues farther he came to the mining town and parish of San Pedro de Boca de Leones. The population of that town was smaller than formerly, because of the ravages of hostile Indians. A prolonged storm kept the brigadier there three nights. On the day that he resumed his journey he crossed several times the little river from which the town derived its name, and at seven leagues he reached another mining town of mixed population, San Pedro de las Sabinas. Two days later death deprived Rivera of another servant, whose burial occurred in the chapel of a private estate on Alamò Creek. On the following day the expedition halted in the pueblo of San Nicolás de Gualeguas. Leaving this pueblo, in which no Indians dwelt, Rivera made a right angle turn to the southwest, and soon covered nine leagues, the distance to San Gregorio.

At this point the inspector decided to conduct his investigations of both of the Nuevo León garrisons, not in their stations, but in the provincial capital, Monterrey. Ordering the Cerralvo squad of San Gregorio to proceed thither, he betook himself twenty-four leagues farther southwest, across the Salinas River, to the town of San Juan de Cadereyta, to the garrison of which he issued the same order. On the following day he rode slightly northwestward into the city of Monterrey. On that ride he crossed the Santa Catharina River, encountered a great many mesquites, huisaches, and other thorny growths, and visited the Tlaxcaltecan pueblo of Neustra Señora de Guadalupe, which was only one league south-east of Monterrey.

In that city he expressed his observations of the provinces of Coahuila and Nuevo León. Extending over nine degrees of latitude and five of longitude, the two provinces were not alike in climate, Coahuila being temperate because of its better latitude

and comparative levelness of surface, and Nuevo León hot because of its nearness to the coast, hilly surface, and mountain range, which extended from north to south and blocked the Gulf breezes. Coahuila was more fertile than Nuevo León, producing more fruits and grains. Nuevo León, like Sinaloa, raised no wheat. Coahuila enjoyed better pasturage than Nuevo León, and supported far larger numbers of horses, mules, sheep, and goats. Both provinces, however, contained prairies as well as hills, and produced considerable timber for building, and many kinds of animals and birds. The scarcity of rivers, however, meant the comparative lack of fish. Mineral wealth was evident in the hills, and silver was their best yield. Some 815 Indians inhabited the pueblos of Coahuila, representing twenty-one nations. In the pueblos of Nuevo León were 700 Indians, of thirteen nations. Some of these were pagans who spent certain times at the missions and retired at will to their own locations. There these Indians mingled with other pagan nations. The most celebrated center of hostile Indians was Tamaulipa Hill. Both provinces were under the bishop of Guadalajara in religious affairs and under the viceroy in military and political matters. The description of Coahuila and Nuevo León by Engineer Barreyro differed not at all from that of Rivera, except to point out that Nuevo León extended thirty minutes of latitude into the zone of the tropics.¹⁵

During the first week of March, 1728, Rivera moved southwest from Monterrey in Nuevo León to Saltillo in Coahuila, a distance of twenty-one leagues. He saw no towns or pueblos, but he found several farms and ranches, some of which seemed as fertile and desirable as the lands in Texas. He crossed numerous hills and high ridges, nothing among these the names of Live Oak Pass and Dead Men's Hill, which got its name from "hostile Indian excesses" there.

The brigadier turned south from Saltillo in April, 1728, and on June 21 he re-entered the City of Mexico. His entire journey was indeed full of revelations. He went through an almost complete variety of scenes and climates, seeing some portions of this continent which are even now scarcely traveled, and realized dimly

¹⁵*Ibid.* (San Luis Potosí, June 4, 1728).

the vastness of the opportunities for royal and private exploitation. Effective defense and efficient development of the already enormous New Spain might well be preferable, temporarily at least, to further expansion either of territory or of military administration. It seemed to Inspector Rivera that the crown was spending more upon than it was receiving from this magnificent country.

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