

MEXICAN AMERICANS FARED WELL UNDER PARR'S DUVAL COUNTY
MACHINE

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to Genie, my wife of more than forty years, for her love, patience, support, and encouragement.

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INTRODUCTION

This study examines the dynamics of political boss rule over a racial or ethnic minority group to determine the impact, positive and negative, on the political, social, and economic development of the affected group. Historians have generally ignored this area of study because prior research concludes that political boss rule is always corrosive and abusive and never positive. Anecdotal experience, supported by the historical record, suggests that the Parr political machine of Duval County, Texas, while corrupt, provided its Mexican American constituents with a more favorable environment. Neighboring counties such as Jim Wells, Brooks, Kleberg, and Nueces did not have this environment. This environment resulted in much earlier and greater successes for Mexican Americans from Duval County than from these other similarly situated counties.

From the array of references available—Hispanic, Tejano, Mexican, Latino, Chicano—the term Mexican American is used in this paper to refer to the people of Duval County with ancestral roots in Mexico. The author’s experience is that this is what others generally called them and how they related to themselves. Likewise, “similarly situated counties” applies to counties whose population consists of a majority of Mexican Americans and are located in the hinterland, away from border influences and remote to the more economically developed communities.

The prevailing view of machine politics, whether in the form of Tammany Hall, Spanish oligarchs, or Mexican caciques, is the same; they are corrupt and serve only the bosses by using and abusing immigrants and the poor. The question and focus of this paper are: “What effect did the political *patrón* system in Duval County have on its

Mexican American constituents?” Perhaps the answer to this question can provide other minorities, similarly situated, with tools to help them deal with their present and future.

The Parr machine provided Mexican Americans a positive outlook on life by reinforcing their success in all fields of endeavor, from public life to education to business. Thus, the society, *la Gente*, raised under this system enjoyed more success than those who lived under a system that belittled, denigrated and suppressed them and their culture. This belittling attitude was generally present in surrounding counties in the Coastal Bend, where Mexican Americans had no elected or appointed representation in public offices, where they experienced open and hostile discrimination in schools and public places such as restaurants, and where the Anglo Americans relegated them to the most menial and low paying jobs available.

Why did Mexican Americans from Duval County exhibit greater success than Mexican Americans from elsewhere in South Texas? The history of Duval County offers some explanation.

The political boss in history

The history of the Spanish-speaking countries in the New World is replete with political domination by *caciques*. The textbook definition of a *cacique* is a local political boss in areas predominantly of Spanish origin. The word also referred to the Spanish appointed chief over local indigenous tribes who counted and exacted taxes and tribute, usually in land. The scheme of political boss rule spread throughout Latin America, including the American Southwest. In some areas, such as South Texas, the word *patrón* took the place of *cacique* in the lexicon, but it means the same thing—a boss.

The definition of *patrón* is similar to the English word patron, which means “a person chosen, named, or honored as a special guardian, protector, or supporter.” It is from this root word that patronage comes from, which is “the power to make appointments to government jobs especially for political advantage.” The Latin American concept of *caciquismo* wedded itself with the very American concept of political patronage in the brush country of South Texas including Duval County and came to symbolize the *patrón* system.¹

In his 1987 article, “*Caciquismo and Coronelismo: Contextual Dimensions of Patrón Brokerage in Mexico and Brazil*,” Luis Roniger points out that the effects of control exerted by *caciques* “may be disrupted by concomitant processes of development, and especially by a reformulation of alliances and coalitions.” The arrival of American and foreign immigrants after the end of the Mexican-American War and the introduction of the railroad impacted the political process in Duval County. This impact, however, was not a determinative change but instead led to a transformative political alliance. Mexican Americans in Duval County aligned themselves to a different *patrón*, who spoke a different language. In “*Modernidad y Prácticas Políticas: Democracia, Eslabonamientos y Mediaciones en la Sociedad Civil*,” Fernando I. Salmerón Castro concludes that *caciquismo* and its attendant social and political structures “constitute severe obstacles”

¹ “Caciquism | Spanish-Latin American History,” *Encyclopedia Britannica*, accessed November 10, 2018, <https://www.britannica.com/topic/caciquism>; “Definition of PATRON,” accessed November 10, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patron>; “Definition of PATRONAGE,” accessed November 10, 2018, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/patronage>; “Patron in Spanish | English to Spanish Translation - SpanishDict,” accessed November 10, 2018, <http://www.spanishdict.com/translate/patron>.

to progress in a democratic society. Castro's conclusion is the argument embraced by many who have seen South Texas boss-controlled voting as an aberration to the American system of governance, but it fails to acknowledge that people can overcome even these "severe obstacles," especially when the boss embraces his constituents as partners.²

Boss rule, of course, has been part of the American political scene since the early days of the Republic. Starting with Tammany Hall in New York and spreading westward to Philadelphia, Chicago, St. Louis, Kansas City, and San Francisco hardly an American city has escaped the influences of boss rule. The literature is plentiful regarding the American experience of political machines. Most of this literature, however, focuses on the efforts of "good government" adherents to curb the excesses of the boss and his crowd. The good government advocates, however, did not offer solutions to the poverty and despair of their constituents but instead focused on systems of governance. They have most times been associated with white Anglo Saxon Protestants, while the bosses have been tied to poor non-English-speaking immigrants who most often were Catholic but sometimes Jews. To these poor immigrants, bosses could do no wrong as opposed to the good government crowd, who Plunkitt points out in *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall*, "goes down and out on the first or second round, while the politician answers the gong every

² Luis Roniger, "Caciquismo and Coronelismo: Contextual Dimensions of Patron Brokerage in Mexico and Brazil," *Latin American Research Review* 22, no. 2 (1987): 93; Fernando I. Salmerón Castro, "Modernidad y Prácticas Políticas: Democracia, Eslabonamientos y Mediaciones En La Sociedad Civil (Modernity and Political Practices: Democracy, Links and Mediations in the Civil Society)," *Revista Mexicana de Sociología* 64, no. 1 (2002): 31.

time.” The political bosses provided, as Moisei Ostrogorski explains in *Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties*, welfare benefits which endeared them to their followers. And J. T. Salter adds in *Boss Rule: Portraits in City Politics* that it made no difference whether the machine committed graft; the bottom line was that they provided what their constituents needed. Such was the case in Duval County.³

One of the earliest works on South Texas *patrón* politics came in 1930 with “The Texas-Mexican and the Politics of South Texas” by O. Douglas Weeks. Relying primarily on oral interviews, Weeks expressed the belief that Mexican Americans were not ready for Jacksonian democracy. The focus of this paper is the Parr Machine’s founding and its relationship with Mexican Americans in Duval County. Several books are available on his relationship with state and national politicians, his place in the Progressive movement, his election controversies, etc. The reader should consult these books for a fuller picture of Parr. The landmark work in this field is Evan Anders’ 1982 book, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era*, in which he reviews the political history of South Texas, south of the Nueces. There have been several other works that deal with the South Texas bosses, including *Border Boss, Manuel B. Bravo, and Zapata County; The Duke of Duval, the Life and Times of George B. Parr; The Fall of the Duke*

³ George Washington Plunkitt, William L. Riordon, and Terrence J. McDonald, *Plunkitt of Tammany Hall: A Series of Very Plain Talks on Very Practical Politics*, Bedford books in American history (Boston: Bedford Books of St. Martin’s Press, 1994), 59.

of Duval; and *The Dukes of Duval County*. They all provide operational details and history of South Texas political bosses in predominantly Mexican American counties.⁴

The Montejano model

James E. Crisp and David R. Maciel suggest that David Montejano's *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* provides a "framework" and "useful approaches" for others to study "other regions." Montejano believes that other historians can use his study as an outline of how other Mexican American communities developed in a dominant Anglo society. He notes that his work is a personal intellectual journey, as is this work. His most prominent recollections, however, are "sharp divisions between Anglo and Mexican," while this author's experiences in Duval County encompasses a positive reinforcement of the unity and wholesomeness of the Mexican American existence. These varied experiences prompted this study and resulted in markedly different conclusions.⁵

⁴ O. Douglas Weeks, "The Texas-Mexican and the Politics of South Texas," *The American Political Science Review* 24, no. 3 (1930): 606–627; Evan Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1982); J. Gilberto Quezada, *Border Boss: Manuel B. Bravo and Zapata County* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999); Dudley M Lynch, *The Duke of Duval: The Life & Times of George B. Parr: A Biography* (Waco, Tex.: Texian Press, 1976); John E. Clark, *The Fall of the Duke of Duval: A Prosecutor's Journal*, 1st ed. (Austin, Tex: Eakin Press, 1995); Anthony R. Carrozza, *The Dukes of Duval County: The Parr Family and Texas Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017).

⁵ James E. Crisp, "Review of *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*," *The Journal of Southern History* 55, no. 1 (1989): 144; David R. Maciel, "Review of *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 69, no. 1 (1989): 177.

The study uses Montejano's political geography approach, making a comparison between Duval County Mexican Americans' political, educational, and business successes vis-a-vis other Mexican American communities. Montejano divides Anglo-Mexican history into four periods. In the incorporation phase, Anglo landowners replaced the Mexican landowners. To the ranch hands, all else remained the same. They stayed loyal to the landowner. The incorporation phase was followed by the reconstruction phase which looks at the coming of the farmers and their efforts to take over the local politics from the ranchers; this did not occur in Duval County. In the segregation phase, Montejano looks at the "decline of *patronismo*," which under Duval County's unique boss rule outlasted others well into the second half of the twentieth century. Finally, in the integration phase, he explains the demise of segregation and the rise of an urban industrial order in which Mexican Americans gained "a measure of (political) influence." Again this occurred in Duval County much earlier than it did in other parts of Texas. Except for the first, which only marginally took place in Duval County, these four periods did not occur or occurred much earlier or later in Duval County. That provides a point of distinction in which the thesis in this paper can be advanced. Because of a social order in Duval County that grew out of a political world that was inclusive of Mexican Americans as leaders in all walks of life, the Mexican American experiences Montejano describes, such being "refused admittance at restaurants, picture shows [etc.]" or "separate schools for Mexicans," were not applicable to Mexican Americans in Duval County. Even in death, Duval County Mexican Americans did not experience the segregation that other communities did. Cemeteries in Duval County did not experience segregation; Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans, Christians, and Jews, Democrat

and Republican, rich and poor, were all laid to rest in the same cemetery. Nor did discrimination winter the world of worship. While other predominantly Mexican American and Catholic communities had separate parishes for Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans, in San Diego, the Catholic priest, French Father Pierre Bard, delivered his sermons in Spanish, German and English.⁶

From very early on Mexican Americans in Duval County possessed a sense of self-worth and self-assuredness. Thus, the successes of Duval County Mexican Americans provide an example of what other minorities can achieve when they insert and assert their political numbers into the political arena.

⁶ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 2009), 8–9, 114, 160; “Segregation in Texas Cemeteries Proves Hard to Undo - Latino USA,” 8–9, 114, 160, accessed November 9, 2018, <https://latinousa.org/2017/07/19/segregation-texas-cemeteries-proves-hard-undo/>.

ANNEXATION

The annexation of Texas to the United States “merely changed the complexion of the landowning elite.” At the dawn of the nineteenth century, Mexican Americans had acquired considerable acres of land in the South Texas region, below the Nueces River. Some Anglo Americans began acquiring land by taking Mexican *señoritas* or *viudas* from landowning families as wives.

By 1850, two years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo fifty-three households in the Rio Grande Valley included an Anglo American husband and Mexican American wife. Some Anglo Americans came into their landed wealth by marrying into the Mexican American landed elite.

In this study, those of non-Mexican ancestry included people of various ethnicities and countries. Often, historians and others group them into the category of White, Anglo, Anglo Saxon, or Anglo-Saxon Protestant. These descriptions do not fit all the immigrants that came to Duval County, which included immigrants from an array of European countries and religious faiths, including English, Scottish, Irish Catholics, Germans, French, Scandinavians, Spaniards, Italians, Jews, and others. For the same reason, “Americans” does not describe the people that came. Moreover, the Mexican Americans were also Americans. Many of them were also “White,” indeed the Census counted them as such. For the sake of clarity, this study refers to this group of people as “Anglo Americans.”

The practice of taking Mexican American wives did not take place to the same degree in Duval County as it did in the Rio Grande Valley. By 1880 only eight intermarriages between Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans were recorded in

Duval County, although three included prominent local politicians. While a handful of Anglo Americans acquired large tracts of land, by and large, Mexican Americans in Duval County retained ownership of much of their property into the twentieth century.

Three hundred years after Hernan Cortes defeated the Aztec empire in Tenochtitlan in the valley of Mexico, the Spanish empire made a permanent entry into the brush country of South Texas and brought with them Spanish and Mexican customs, culture, and language. Spanish and Mexican influence provided the mold for South Texas society, and that influence often clashed with North American notions of governance that ultimately came to dominate the area.

The area that became Duval County opened to settlement in 1806 when the Spanish Crown began making grants on the banks of San Diego Creek. Land grants stalled during the transition from Spanish to Mexican rule but resumed in the 1830s. By the time of the U.S. annexation of Texas an additional score of ranches developed in the Duval County area. The original grant owners of Duval County were Spaniards, but their loyalties were to their *ranchos*. There were no real Spanish institutions in the frontier of Duval County. While Corpus Christi and Brownsville had access to the world through the Gulf of Mexico, the *ranchos* in Duval County were landlocked. They relied on mule and ox-driven carts to connect it to the outside world. Holding onto the land through changes in national government was not new to them. They had struggled with a shift in sovereignty before when Mexico split from Spain. But the transition to the United States was different. The Anglo-American legal system was unlike Spanish land laws. Their

loyalty to the land was paramount because the land was equivalent to sovereignty. They were therefore inclined to deal with the Americans to preserve their land rights.⁷

Medio México

During the dozen years between the start of Texas independence in 1836 and the end of the Mexican American War in 1848, the area between the Nueces and Rio Grande Rivers was in suspended animation. Texas claimed it but could not control it. Mexico denied Texas' claims but only nominally enforced its will over the area. "Contact between two different societies in this stateless region included a dramatic increase in violence (raids, banditry, filibustering, etc.), mass-scale contraband, and population movements." The area found itself between two States without any support from either. The people were between two languages, two cultures, two legal systems, two political systems, and two monetary and economic systems. They were indeed *en medio*.⁸

The initial population settled on the banks of San Diego Creek where Spain made three grants. But the area remained a frontier for years to come. It was not uncommon during raids by Lipan, Tarancahua, Mescalero, Comanche, Kickapoos and other Indians

⁷ Coleman McCampbell, *Texas Seaport: The Story of the Growth of Corpus Christi and the Coastal Bend Area*. (New York: Exposition Press, 1952), 122; "Spanish Land Grants Collection" (Texas General Land Office, n.d.), fols. 640, 311; "Spanish Language Document" (Nueces County District Court, n.d.), fol. 579, Texas General Land Office; For a complete listing of land grants in Duval County see William N Todd et al., *Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas*. (Austin, Tex.: Texas General Land Office, Archives and Records Division, 2003).

⁸ Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border: The State, Capitalism, and Society in Nuevo León, 1848-1910*, 1 edition. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), pt. 217, Kindke Edition.

for ranch owners and their ranch hands to abandon the ranch and seek safety in *las villas del Norte* on the south side of the Rio Grande River. Ranching took a big hit during this time.⁹

When Texas declared its independence from Mexico and launched an armed revolt, the Mexican commander of Tamaulipas directed the rancheros in the Nueces Strip to take up arms and prepare themselves to defend the homeland. After Santa Ana's defeat at San Jacinto, Mexican authorities ordered all Mexicans in the Nueces Strip to abandon their property in the area and return to the communities along the Rio Grande River.¹⁰

After the Texas Revolution, matters in the Nueces Strip continued to be volatile. It was "a time and a space of great geographical, political, social, and economic confusion." Mexican Federalists from the northern states of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila, declared independence from the centralist government in Mexico City. The new revolutionists declared allegiance to the Republic of the Rio Grande that included the Nueces Strip which was claimed by the new Republic of Texas. While the rebellion was short-lived, it continued to bring havoc and instability to the area. The rebels moved

⁹ "Spanish Language Document"; "Trinidad Flores Y Perez v. State of Texas," n.d., fol. 423, File 423, Texas General Land Office; "SAL," February 22, 1823, 074:0254-63(6), Bexar Archives; "LAR," December 7, 1826, 099:0059-62(1), Bexar Archives; "RG," December 7, 1826, 099:0148-56(5), Bexar Archives; Val W. Lehmann, *Forgotten Legions: Sheep in the Rio Grande Plain of Texas* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1969), 21–22.

¹⁰ Jerry Don Thompson, *Sabers on the Rio Grande* (Austin, Tex.: Presidial Press, 1974), 67, accessed June 22, 2018, <http://books.google.com/books?id=0EoLAAAAYAAJ>; H. Yoakum, *Yoakum's History of Texas*, First Thus edition. (Austin, 1935), 19–20; Lehmann, *Forgotten Legions*, 22; Leslie Alice Jones Wagner, *Disputed Territory: Río Grande/Río Bravo, Borderlands, 1838-1840* (UMI Dissertation Services, 1998), 49.

out into the Nueces Strip and established a headquarters at the old Mexican fort at Lipantitlán. In response, Texas President Mirabeau B. Lamar sent troops across the Nueces River. Towards the end of 1840, the new republic ceased to exist.¹¹

Texans continued to make movements below the Nueces River. In 1840, Rangers from San Patricio crossed the Nueces and pillaged and killed Mexican traders from Laredo on their way to Corpus Christi. Mexican troops came after the errant Rangers, who hightailed it back into Texas. This back and forth between Texas and Mexico in the Nueces Strip continued for several years until the United States intervened to settle the matter permanently.¹²

Vienen Los Angloamericanos

Despite Sen. Daniel Webster's claims that the Nueces Strip was "uninhabited and uninhabitable...not worth a single soul," worthy souls did indeed live in the area and had for nearly half a century. Indeed, men with a different outlook of Mexican Americans was now entering this land, but those that had struggled against Indians, revolutionaries, and bandits were prepared to defend their land against these men who looked different, spoke a different language, and appeared determined to take their land. But, the end of

¹¹ Thompson, *Sabers on the Rio Grande*, 84–85, 92; Manuel Ceballos Ramírez, "LA REPÚBLICA DEL RÍO GRANDE:: HISTORIOGRAFÍA Y UTILIZACIÓN DE LA HISTORIA," in *Historia y Nación (Actas Del Congreso En Homenaje a Josefina Zoraida Vázquez)*, 1st ed., II. Política y diplomacia en el siglo XX mexicano (Colegio de Mexico, 1998), 452, accessed October 18, 2018, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctv47w8dd.26>.

¹² Wagner, *Disputed Territory*, 59; Jerry D. Thompson, *A Wild and Vivid Land: An Illustrated History of the South Texas Border* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1997), 39.

the Mexican American War was the “beginning of the end of the frontier’s isolation and the initiation of the border as the next stage of territorial development...The frontier essentially became history when the invaders prevailed over the invaded.”¹³

Henry Kinney founded a trading post known as Corpus Christi in 1839. It and San Diego were the only villages beyond the Rio Grande River border. John J. Dix who became the first surveyor of Duval County, while performing some survey work around San Diego in 1844, reported there were about twenty-five families in the small village. There were other people scattered throughout several *ranchos* in the area, but with four grants totaling some 16,000 acres massed together, San Diego was the hub of the heartland.¹⁴

The first census of the Nueces Strip in 1850 does not provide data as to the residents of Duval County since it did not yet exist. The count of Nueces County did not include a breakout of the San Diego area and offered little by way of information on the Mexican Americans there.

¹³ Wagner, *Disputed Territory*, 9; Juan Mora-Torres, *The Making of the Mexican Border* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2001), 187, accessed August 16, 2018, Kindle edition.

¹⁴ Walter Meek, “History of San Diego,” Unpublished manuscript (In author’s possession, n.d.), In author’s possession.; S. J. Durnett, “San Luis Advocate (San Luis, Tex.), Vol. 1, No. 27, Ed. 1, Tuesday, April 13, 1841,” Newspaper, *The Portal to Texas History*, last modified April 13, 1841, accessed July 20, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth79950/>.

Table 1: 1850 Nueces County Population by Ethnicity

Enumeration District	Place of Birth				Total
	United States*	Europe**	Mexico	Texas***	
Corpus Christi	101	65	191	53	410
Not Stated	127	44	59	6	236
Total Nueces County	228	109	250	59	646
Total by Ethnicity		337		309	
Percent		52.17%		47.83%	100%

*Includes 42 soldiers.

**Includes a couple of Canadians.

***All were children.

The area designated as "Not stated," was no doubt the rural area outside of Corpus Christi, which may have included parts of the future Duval County.

Source: 1850 Census of the United States.

The entire County of Nueces included only one Mexican American landowner. Given the number of Spanish and Mexican land grants in the area, especially in the interior rural areas, this number is unrealistic. Likely many of the Mexicans 1.) preferred not to discuss their wealth or 2.) had moved back to the border towns because of the outcome of the war, only to return later. Trinidad Flores who inherited land in San Diego does not appear in the Nueces County census for 1850 but is in the Rio Grande Valley Census that included Cameron, Starr, and Webb Counties. Deeds, deeds of trust, and land leases archived in the Duval County Clerk's office indicate that Mexican Americans owned significant parcels of land, as do the holdings at the Texas Land Office Archives.¹⁵

The Rio Grande Valley census is more indicative of the actual numbers in the Nueces Strip and suggests that census enumerators included the Duval County area of Nueces County in the Rio Grande Valley count. The census lists Trinidad Flores among the top five Mexican American landowners, with property valued at \$20,000. The

¹⁵ "Schedule of Separate Property, Real and Personal of Trinidad Flores," November 2, 1858, Book I, Duval County Clerk.

Mexican American population in the Valley was 7,087 or 86 percent compared to only 1,175 or 14 percent Anglo Americans. While that was a six-to-one ratio, it was impressive that in two short years after the state's entry into the union, that many Anglo Americans were able to enter southern Texas, where scant few others had ever stepped before.

Table 2: 1850 Rio Grande Valley Population by Ethnicity

	Anglo Americans *	Mexican Americans**	Total
Population	1,175	7,087	8,262
Percent	14.22%	85.78%	85.78%

* Includes 42 Spaniards and 16 Freedmen. ** Includes 46 offspring of intermarriage between Anglo Americans and Mexican Americans and two New Mexicans.

Source: 1850 Census of the United States.

Many of these newcomers were former soldiers that had come to the area with the U.S. Army and decided to stay or returned after their discharge. Others were entrepreneurs who saw business opportunities with Mexico. Still, others were merely freebooters looking for a quick buck. The makeup of property owners suggests that Anglo Americans had not yet entirely displaced or replaced Mexican Americans as property owners. The Census counts 226 property owners as Mexican Americans compared to 89 Anglo Americans. The Mexican Americans' property was valued at \$751,519 while Anglo American real estate holdings totaled \$196,000. The professions of these property owners were also revealing. While 134 Mexican American property owners, with a combined value of real estate of \$479,619, were identified as farmers there were only two Anglo American farmers with property worth \$2,000. Additionally, thirty-five Mexican American laborers, most likely tenant farmers, had property valued at \$55,000, while the four Anglo American laborers had property valued at \$3,200. While

the census included the category of “farmer” it is most likely they were rancheros, as raising livestock predominated with only a little crop farming practiced in the Rio Grande Valley in 1850.

On the other hand, there were 42 Anglo American merchants in 1850 with property valued at \$276,300 while the four Mexican American merchants had property valued at \$37,600. There were eight Anglo American lawyers whose property was valued at \$143,000 while no Mexican American was practicing law. The wealthiest man in the Valley was a Spanish real estate broker who held real estate valued at \$200,000.

Despite the superior numbers, Mexicans were set aside in the first elections in the Rio Grande Valley. In the initial vote in Cameron County in 1848, voters elected Israel Bigelou as Chief Justice, and all other countywide offices went to Anglo Americans. One county commissioner seat went to a Mexican American. The first election recorded in Starr County had nineteen offices up for grabs. Voters elected only one Mexican American to a countywide position, that of the coroner. Two of the four county commissioners were Mexican Americans as were three justices of the peace. In Webb County, with a sizable Mexican majority population, Jack Williams was elected as the first Chief Justice. He complained to Secretary of State Washington D. Miller that “The entire population of Webb County are Mexicans, but one of whom in the entire county can speak the English language...” In the general election held in 1850, voters elected only one Mexican American to a countywide office. In Nueces County, where the census showed Anglo Americans with a majority population, voters selected Spaniard José de Alba as Chief Justice, but an Anglo American replaced him within two years.

Duval County was a transitory point in the developing trade between Corpus Christi and the border towns of Rio Grande City and Laredo. Mule-driven carts from the Mexican side came to Corpus Christi to buy supplies. Kinney had roads built from Corpus Christi to the border by having a “ploughshare (sic) affixed to one of the wagons with which it is intended to turn a furrow the whole distance to the Rio Grande.” These roads necessarily crisscrossed Duval County *ranchos*. The Laredo Road served to provide Fort McIntosh with needed supplies. Other paths connected to Rio Grande City and Eagle Pass.¹⁶

While a semblance of American order was taking place in the Nueces Strip, it remained a frontier for another three decades. The Mexican carts used in commercial trade between Corpus Christi and the border were a slow means of transportation and were easy prey for bandits and Indians. In 1849, the *Corpus Christi Star* reported:

All over the countryside we hear of them [Indians] in parties of 50 to 100 murdering families and stealing and destroying everything...the land between this place and the Rio Grande...is fast reverting to its original wild state, and the country is actually becoming depopulated...such is the terror of the Mexicans they are deserting their ranchos and crowding into the towns and villages along the Rio Grande...Mixed band of Indians (Comanche), whites and Mexicans have been prowling the country, plundering with impunity.

¹⁶ *Corpus Christi Star*, November 21, 1848; Thompson, *Sabers on the Rio Grande*, 168.

In some instances, squatters came in and took over land that owners had temporarily evacuated.¹⁷

El Terreno

On February 10, 1850, the Texas Legislature adopted “An Act to relinquish the rights of the state of Texas of certain lands therein named” and created the Bourland Miller Commission to conduct hearings. Their last inquiry was in 1851 in Nueces County. Shortly before the Commission’s establishment Mexican Americans in the Duval County area began to prepare themselves by securing legal documents witnessing their ownership to the land. While the Bourland Commission resolved some matters, it took several other legislative acts to address all the issues.

One shortcoming of the Bourland Commission was that it addressed only grants made before the Texas Revolution. The Legislature adopted other acts later that considered those grants made by Mexico after 1836 during the existence of the Republic of Texas. Owners of land grants adjacent to San Diego Creek litigated the rightful ownership to the land in 1860, and the state confirmed the ownership to grantee families. Family members continued to sell property to each other and occasionally mortgage them for loans which they later paid. It was not until 1892, during the collapse of the livestock

¹⁷ *Corpus Christi Star*, May 12, 1849; Ford, John Salmon, *Rip Ford’s Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 143–144, 167, 174.

industry that some landowners began to transfer their land in barter for loans.¹⁸

La Gente

Only a handful of Anglo Americans made their way to the Duval County area, and they never amounted to anywhere near a majority. In the 1860 census, San Diego's population was 215, and nearby Agua Poquita had forty-nine residents, for a total of 264. There were sixty-nine native Texans, all Mexican Americans, and most of them infants; 197 Mexican immigrants; one New Yorker; a Swede; and a woman from the Indian Territory. The wealthiest man in town was named Pérez; most likely Pablo Pérez, a well-known cattleman, and landowner in the area. Pérez was worth \$10,828, including \$6,928 in land and \$3,900 in personal property, probably livestock. Trinidad Flores was worth \$7,828, divided almost equally between land and livestock. Juan Sáenz, Antonio García, Edward Gray (who was married to a Mexican American), José M. García, and Benito Ramos were among the other stock raisers in San Diego. According to their declarations to census takers, San Diego accounted for only six landowners. Land grant records indicate that more owners lived in the environs of the county, suggesting other census tracts may have included parts of Duval County.

¹⁸ "Spanish Collection" (Texas General Land Office, Archives and Records Division, n.d.), fols. 311, 416, 423, 424, 450, 451, 539, 542, Texas General Land Office; For a detailed look at the state's initiatives to clarify titles in South Texas see Galen D. Greaser and Jesús F. de la Teja, "Quieting Title to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in the Trans-Nueces: The Bourland and Miller Commission, 1850-1852," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 95, no. 4 (1992): 445-464.

Table 3: Duval County Census, 1860

Community	Mexican Americans	Anglo Americans	Total
San Diego	214	1	215
Agua Poquita*	48	1	49
Total	262	2	264

* The Mexican American count includes a woman from Indian Territory.

Source: U.S. Census of Duval and Nueces Counties, 1860.

An estimate of the 1870 population of Duval County is 1,530, but it remained solidly Mexican American with only thirty-seven Anglo American residents, half of which were children. San Diego with 784 residents and Concepción with 746 had almost evenly split population. From census numbers, the cattle industry was the primary economic driver.

The 1870 census takers reported sixty men as stock raisers, four men were stock managers or *caporales*, and 122 were *vaqueros* herding cattle. Some ninety-eight were classified as laborers, most probably serving as ranch hands. Nineteen men were engaged in sheep raising, and they employed forty-three shepherds. The remaining population served in a support economy, such as retail merchants (ten); store clerks (seven); waggoneers or *carreteros* (five); carpenters (three); tailors (three); peddlers (two); one each of brick mason; teamster; silversmith; blacksmith; musician; doctor; schoolteacher; cook; and priest.

Table 4: Duval County Population, 1870

Community	Mexican Americans	Anglo Americans	Freedmen	Total
San Diego	771	9	4	784
Concepción*	718	28	0	746
Total	1,489	37	4	1,530

*The Concepción population was probably exaggerated since it included parts of Nueces County that would later become part of southern Jim Wells and northern Kleberg counties.

Source: U.S. Census of Duval and Nueces Counties, 1870.

The 1880 Census, the first since the organization of Duval County and the arrival of the railroad to San Diego, reported significant numbers of Anglo Americans had migrated to Duval County, but Mexican Americans still outnumbered them better than ten to one. The county relied strictly on a rural economy with no industry to speak of and only a modest number of merchants. Seventy-three percent of the workforce was engaged in one form or another in the rural economy. The rest, no doubt, were dependent on ranching, sheep raising, and farming. There were 393 stock raisers (cattle and sheep) and farmers. Nearly 1,000 laborers, shepherds, and vaqueros worked in the fields (see Appendix 3 for a count of all professions in the county).

Table 5: Duval County Census, 1880

Enumeration District	Anglo Americans	Mexican Americans	Total
Not stated*	13	87	100
Precinct 1**	155	1,241	1,396
Precinct 2	6	1,044	1,050
Precincts 3 and 4	49	1,665	1,714
San Diego	271	1,177	1,448
Total	494	5,214	5,708
Percent	8.65%	91.35%	100%

* This enumeration was part of San Diego. It is not clear why the census counted it separately, but it included the Special State Troops of the Texas Rangers.

**San Diego was also in Precinct 1. The data in this Enumeration District included that part of the precinct outside of San Diego. However, some 28 people in this count were in San Diego, including the population of the county jail.

Source: U.S. Census of Duval County, 1880.

The population rates changed little at the end of the century. Indeed the numbers rates of Mexican Americans to Anglo Americans increased to better than thirteen to one. The Mexican American population increased by 50.71 percent while the Anglo Americans grew at 13.97 percent. The gap was widening dramatically. Anglo Americans

did not take to the harsh conditions of the backcountry as opposed to the economic opportunities present in the port cities of Corpus Christi, Brownsville, and Laredo.¹⁹

Duval County remained dependent on a rural economy. Sixty-one percent of the workforce were laborers of some sort. The highest category was farm laborers, which numbered 602; next came day laborers, 496; ranch laborers, 83; stock drovers, 139; and shepherds, 37.

Additionally, there were 284 farmers and 89 stock raisers in the county. The merchant class numbered 57. Professionals included twenty-six teachers and five lawyers. Unlike previous years, there were no doctors in the 1900 count. While there were no Mexican American attorneys, there were thirty-five merchants and five teachers.

El rancho y el ganado

Cattle had been the mainstay of the Duval County economy and the primary source of income for Mexican Americans ever since they settled the area. “For generations before the recognition of Texas as a state...the wealthy Mexican ranchos stocked...the finest bullocks on the continent” wrote *The Ranchero* in its October 17, 1857 issue. But, rancheros often faced severe challenges to cattle raising. In 1849, Texas

¹⁹ “AncestryHeritageQuest.Com - 1880 United States Federal Census,” accessed September 10, 2018, <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/interactive/6742/4244720-00598?backurl=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestryheritagequest.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d6742%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=4244720-00634>. Note: The United States Census of 1890 was destroyed in a fire and only sketchy information is available. No information is available for Duval County.

Ranger Rip Ford observed that between Laredo and Corpus Christi there were “countless droves of mustangs and herds of deer [and] wild cattle...abandoned by Mexicans when they were ordered to evacuate the country between the Nueces and the Rio Grande by...the supreme government of Mexico.” These wild horses and cattle “invited the raids the Texians made upon this territory during the period of the Republic.” Cattle rustling was not an isolated occurrence.²⁰

Table 6: Duval County Census, 1900

Precinct	Anglo Americans	Mexican Americans	Total Population
Pct. 1	64	1,122	1,186
Pct. 1	284	1,566	1,850
	348	2,688	3,036
Pct. 2	81	1,780	1,861
Pct. 3	18	857	875
Pct. 4	24	620	644
Pct. 5	58	1,287	1,345
Pct. 6	34	630	664
Total	563	7,862	8,425
Percent	6.68%	93.32%	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census of Duval County, 1900.

During the U.S. Civil War, many landowners, particularly Anglo American ranchers, were unable to tend to their herds because of their military commitments. Consequently, thousands of unbranded cattle roamed freely during the Civil War. This availability of livestock attracted rustlers after the war.

²⁰ Ford, John Salmon, *Rip Ford's Texas*, 143.

In 1873, the Alberto Garza from Atascosa County and Atilano Alvarado from Mexico were killing and skinning cattle near Piedras Pintas in Duval County. Citizens and lawmen found some 600 carcasses in the brush. A letter writer informed the *Corpus Christi Gazette* on August 30, 1873, that during a recent trip to San Diego he had seen “where there had been 1,000 head of cattle skinned...and not exaggerating there has been 5,000 head killed in the vicinity with the last few weeks.” On December 6, 1873, the *Gazette* noted: “Indians, assisted by...white men and... Mexicans” were continuing their rampage against ranchos. On several occasions, the Nueces County Commissioners Court appealed to the state government for help with the marauding Indians and bandits that were causing havoc to the cattle industry and claiming innocent lives.²¹

The cattle industry suffered greatly through the Civil War. First, mother nature took its toll with a severe drought in 1863 that lasted two years. Then U.S. allies like Cecilio and Juan Valerio raided ranchos throughout the area to secure provisions for the U.S. Army bivouacked along the Mexican border. However, wealthy stock raisers like Alvino Canales from Concepción, with a worth of \$19,053, did well. While Canales was not the largest landowner, he had the largest herds. No doubt he made up for his lack of

²¹Norman C. Delaney, *The Maltby Brothers' Civil War*, 1st ed. (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2013), 107; Ford, John Salmon, *Rip Ford's Texas* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1963), 347–348; Jerry D. Thompson and Lawrence T. Jones, *Civil War and Revolution on the Rio Grande Frontier: A Narrative and Photographic History* (Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 2004), 69; Jerry D. Thompson, *Mexican Texans in the Union Army*, 1st ed., Southwestern studies no. 78 (El Paso, Texas: Texas Western Press, 1986), 22; J. Frank Dobie and John Duncan Young, *A Vaquero of the Brush Country* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 60; “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes” (Nueces County, n.d.), bk. C, Nueces County Clerk.

land with a lease of five leagues (22,142 acres) of public-school lands he secured from Nueces County. Other Duval County ranchers did not fare as well. The value of Pablo Perez's land fell almost 100 percent, from \$6,928 in 1860 to \$3,927 in 1870. Encarnacion Garcia's land value dropped more than 100 percent, from \$2,222 to \$1,000. The same was true for Bautisto Gonzalez whose land holdings went from \$1,500 to \$785. Trinidad Flores and Juan Saenz no longer appeared as landowners. Only Jose Maria Garcia saw an increase in value to his land holdings, from \$400 to \$800 (see Appendix 1 and 2).²²

The arrival of the railroad transformed the Duval County economy by providing access to markets. In the summer of 1880, Duval County was said to contain 275,257 sheep, 83,816 goats, 7,951 cattle, and 16,789 horses and mules. Prominent sheep men included Manuel Vela with 12,000 sheep, E. G. Perez with 10,000, C. Hoffman also 10,000, Rios Cayetano, 10,000, and Hubbard & Co. 8,000. Jacinto Guerra was reported to have 100,000 pounds of wool in storage in his store in San Diego. Sale prices of sheep in San Diego were listed daily in a separate market report in the *Galveston News*. In 1884, the Texas Mexican railroad reported it had transported more than one million pounds of wool from San Diego. The following year the *Corpus Christi Caller* reported that cattlemen shipped 15,000 head of cattle from Pena Station.²³

While cattle had always been king in Duval County, sheep made a big splash in the 1880s. One prominent sheep raiser told the *Corpus Christi Caller* that there was more money in sheep than cattle. Cattleman, he said, had to look for buyers "and drive cattle to

²² "Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes," Book C.

²³ Lehmann, *Forgotten Legions*, 27–28; Lynch, *The Duke of Duval*, 10; *Corpus Christi Caller*, August 24, 1884.

market and worry about quarantine. Sheepmen did not. Wool buyers come to him twice a year. Wool is cash.” Cattlemen had fat stock, but the market was flat, and it was disadvantageous to sell in such a market.

In 1888, Duval County assessed the value of livestock, for tax purposes at:

- 12,609 head of horses and mules,\$119,019
- 55,971 head of cattle,\$278,03
- 115 head of donkeys,\$2,365
- 186,246 sheep,\$93,619
- 57,809 goats,\$28,906.²⁴

By 1891, however, a prolonged drought claimed cattle by the thousands. A freeze added to their demise, and by the close of the century, cotton had replaced livestock as a cog in the Duval County economy. It became an important crop, and cotton gins operated 24 hours a day during the picking season in all three communities of San Diego, Benavides, and Concepción. C. Martinez opened the first cotton gin in 1886. In January of that year, Fabian Favela introduced cotton to Duval County and was collecting money to buy cottonseed to give to the poor for planting. Placido Benavides, Isidro Benavides, and Vicente Vera were prominent planters in the county. The Corpus Christi newspaper reported that people could see cotton on all roads leading to San Diego and the cotton harvest was a “grand success” earning Duval County the name “a cotton belt.” *The Laredo Morning Times* reported that cotton was coming faster than workers could pick it. Cotton’s prominence reached a milestone in 1894 when the county produced the first bale

²⁴ “Duval County Notes,” *Laredo Daily Times*, August 16, 1888.

of cotton for the new season, arriving in New York on July 2. They would claim the honor for several years after that.²⁵

Although cotton became the primary crop grown in Duval County many farmers also planted corn in an equal number of acres. Brothers W.A. and R.B. Glover erected a grist mill to process cornmeal. At Concepción, in addition to a great deal of corn, garden crops were also being planted. Prominent planters included Julian Palacios, Charles Stillman, and Teodoro and Alejo Pérez. Paul Henry planted cabbage, potatoes, turnips, carrots, etc. Labor was cheap, and the climate was good to grow vegetables and fruit. It was not the Rio Grande Valley, but it provided added revenues to landowners.²⁶

Llegada del Ferrocarril y comerciantes

In 1874 the proposal to build a railroad from Corpus Christi through San Diego to Laredo was the talk of the area. Not everyone was in favor of the proposal, especially not Mexican American landowners, who feared it would open their lands to Anglo Americans. Realizing that the Mexican Americans had the votes to reject any proposal put to the voters, the railroad abandoned the idea of asking for public funding. But, investors could not abandon the project; they had already drawn route maps and construction plans. On September 18, 1875, the state granted a charter to the Corpus

²⁵ Wayne Gard, *Rawhide Texas* (University of Oklahoma Press, 2015), 14; Elena Bilbao, María Antonieta Gallart Nocetti, and Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social (Mexico), *Los chicanos: segregación y educación* (México, D.F.: Centro de Investigaciones y Estudios Superiores en Antropología Social : Editorial Nueva Imagen, 1981), 102.

²⁶ Corpus Christi Star, March 21, 1886; San Antonio Express, March 15, 1889; Corpus Christi Caller, November 14, 1886.

Christi, San Diego, and Rio Grande Narrow Gauge Railroad Company with San Diego residents Frank Davis and Frank W. Schaeffer among the directors.²⁷

In anticipation of a land rush, N.G. Collins and E. G. Perez, trustees in charge of selling town lots in San Diego, began to advertise their availability in the “thriving town.” Collins and Perez also sold numerous blocks to the railroad. On September 1879, the narrow-gauge railroad rolled into San Diego. While some landowners were still opposed to the railroad, others such as Richard King were doing what they could to facilitate its completion. King sold a 100-foot right of way across his land on the San Leandro Grant to the railroad. Down the road, rancher Juan Saenz at Piedras Pintas refused to sell to the railroad, resulting with others offering the railroad land, which ended the existence of the town at Piedra Pintas and the birth of Benavides. Further down the road, Realitos also began to prosper with the arrival of the railroad. San Diego’s population reached 1,000 and had a bank, three churches, and a newspaper.²⁸

The railroad quickly became a cog in the area’s economy. It provided work on the railroad itself but also in the area communities. The *San Antonio Express* reported in 1889:

Eighteen car loads of rock and gravel being brought in daily from eight miles above San Diego. Cements quickly; considered best foundation material in state. Railroad carrying much freight; a lot of livestock from Capt. Kenedy’s Laureles Ranch. Also, material for road between Mexico City and Veracruz.

²⁷ “Duval County Deed Records” (Duval County, n.d.), Book P, 446-448, Duval County Clerk; J. L Allhands, *Uriah Lott*. (San Antonio: Naylor, 1949), 12, 15.

²⁸ Corpus Christi Gazette, November 6, 1875; “Duval County Deed Records,” Book D, 258-259; Lynch, *The Duke of Duval*, 10.

At Benavides Toklas & Company built a two-story building and a windmill to furnish engine water for the railroad. There were 1,100 barrels of merchandise in the warehouse at Benavides and another 1,000 barrels awaited movement at San Diego. The track soon reached. The railroad also impacted land prices; land by the side of the railroad sold for \$50 an acre while away from the railroad it sold for \$15-\$20 per acre. The minimum price of land in the county was \$8 to \$10 per acre.²⁹

While the railroad brought in an influx of Anglo American merchants, Mexican Americans were not without their businessmen. In 1880, when the railroad was not yet complete, there were 43 merchants in Duval County; twenty-three Mexican Americans and twenty Anglo Americans. Twenty years later, when the railroad's full impact might be measured, there were forty-four merchants of which thirty-five were Mexican Americans, and only nine were Anglo Americans. The professions were dominated by Anglo Americans, with every lawyer and doctor, except Dr. P. Bazan, being Anglo Americans.

Educación

Education was an early priority of citizens of Duval County. The first school in Duval County opened at the end of the Civil War. In 1873, the San Diego school had one teacher "and as many assistants as may be needed." Mexican Americans, such as Juan Saenz at Piedras Pintas had a keen interest in education. Saenz donated land to Duval County for use as a public school on his ranch.

²⁹ San Antonio Express, May 14, 1913; Allhands, Uriah Lott., 20.

The Second Biannual Report of the State Board of Education, 1879-1880 indicated that 653 school children between the age of eight and fourteen attended Duval County schools. The state, however, did not count Mexican Americans separately but were included in the “white” count. Using percentages derived from census data (see Appendix 5) on the children who indicated they were in school in 1880-1910 an estimated seventy-four Anglo Americans and 579 Mexican American students were in attendance. All the Anglo American students were in school at San Diego. Rural schools were 100 percent Mexican American. While there were no schools segregated by ethnicity, there were boys’ and girls’ schools. According to the census, six of the eight teachers in Duval County were Mexican American, with only two Anglo American teachers, both in San Diego. The state reported only six teachers employed in Duval County in 1880, four males and two females. Assessors gathered the student data used above reported by the state. The state’s report also includes data reported by “communities,” which numbered only 308 children enrolled in school, a difference of more than 300 students. The report also indicated that 498 children were not attending school. Finally, the state reported six communities had schools.³⁰

But not all towns had schools. In 1884, a couple of Anglo American families from Sweden, south of Benavides, came to San Diego to express their desire to have a school in Sweden for their children. The following year a school was built for them. In 1886, the teacher at Concepción reported thirty-three students enrolled. In 1887, the public school

³⁰ The Second Biannual Report of the State Board of Education, for the Scholastic Years Ending August 31, 1879-1880 (Galveston, Texas: Department of Education of the State of Texas, n.d.), 39, Texas Library and Archives Commission.

in Realitos closed for lack of funds. That year it appeared that San Diego had three schools; Professor Pollard started a school for boys; Luis Pueblo ran a private academy, and Miss Feuille and Pollard oversaw the public schools. The public school, under teacher Laura Modd, had 30 pupils.³¹

In 1888, the community built a school for girls in San Diego, and a boys' school was also under construction. A new school was also on the drawing board for Benavides. The girls' school in San Diego had 60 students in the 1888-1889 school year. Teachers Adelaide Feuille and Práxedes Garza offered classes in reading, grammar, spelling, history, geography, universal history, and writing. Over in Benavides, the school had 65 students attending daily. There were also schools at Motta de Olmos and Piedras Pintas.³²

Interest in education extended beyond the local public schools. In 1884, a group of men, including Calixto Tovar, Félix B. Del Barrio, E. G. Pérez, and others, called a meeting to discuss the practicality of opening an upper-level school in San Diego. Sixty children from the county were already attending school outside of the county, fourteen in Rolla, Missouri alone. Every year they were sending \$10,000 out of county to educate children. The idea was to try to organize a college and hire teachers from Rolla to keep money at home. They believed they could recruit students from surrounding towns, the Rio Grande Valley, and Mexico. The proposed school could also give poor children the opportunity to attend high school. Within a day \$8,000 was raised in the county, San

³¹ Corpus Christi Caller, August 31, 1884; Corpus Christi Caller, October 11, 1885; Corpus Christi Caller, April 23, 1887; Corpus Christi Caller, October 8, 1887.

³² Laredo Daily Times, August 2, 1888; Laredo Daily Times, April 23, 1889.

Diego contributed \$5,000. The goal was to raise \$15,000 to build a brick structure by the start of the following school year. Nothing came from this effort.³³

There is no census information available for 1890, but the state report for that period indicates that there were 1,959 school children enrolled in Duval County, 1,032 boys, and 927 girls, including five African Americans. The estimated number of Mexican American students is 1,737 and the number of Anglo Americans at 217. There were thirteen teachers, nine male teachers, and four females. None of the teachers had a college degree and only one, a female teacher, had a degree from a Texas Normal School.³⁴

According to Census numbers, the school population in Duval County grew by 300 percent from 1880 to 1900. By 1908-1909, according to the State Superintendent's report, San Diego appears to have a school district. The county's school population totaled 2,174 students, 451 in the independent school district and 1,673 in the rest of the county, including 1,144 boys and 1,030 girls. The estimated number of Mexican American students are 1,927 with Anglo American students at 247. According to the census, there were only five Mexican American teachers.

El acuerdo político

Unlike Laredo, Brownsville, and Corpus Christi, the Nueces Strip hinterland, of which San Diego was a hub, provided limited opportunities for mercantile enterprises

³³ Corpus Christi Caller, February 17, 1884.

³⁴ J.M. Carlisle, "Eighth Annual Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction for the Scholastic Years Ending August 31, 1891, and August 31, 1892" (Austin, TX, 1893), 4, 63, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

presenting the need for a more measured occupation and an accommodation with the overwhelming number of Mexican American residents. Unlike Mexican Americans north of the Nueces River, Mexican Americans in the Duval County area of the Nueces Strip did not experience the more traditional aspects of war where “to the victors go the spoils.” Their experience was not even comparable to what happened in the Rio Grande Valley where Anglo Americans forced and belittled Mexican Americans into giving up their land, and the Mexican American elite stood by and watched or gave aid and comfort to Anglo Americans. In the San Diego area and the rest of the brush country the Anglo Americans did not have the numbers to get rid of or dominate the Mexican Americans and were forced to resort to what Montejano refers to as “benevolent *patronismo*,” a more “secure arrangement.”³⁵

Very early on, Anglo Americans recognized the need to work with the majority of Mexican Americans. The most significant example of this new accommodation was the first election held in San Diego in 1860. It had all the elements of the politics that dominated the area’s future. At the dawn of the Civil War, Duval County—created by the Texas Legislature in 1858—was still unorganized and attached to Nueces County for judicial purposes. The coming of American governance confronted Mexican American landowners with the need to prove their ownership of the land and presented a threat to their very survival. They were unfamiliar with the ways of the American court system that required them to prove ownership and soon learned that judges who held power over their rights of property were elected.

³⁵ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 33–36.

As a consequence, they looked around for allies that could help them navigate this new challenge, and they found two immigrants like themselves. Attorney Charles Lovenskiold, a Dane who spoke several languages, and had represented some Mexican American landowners, and Prussian-born Felix Blucher who had been surveying land grants in Duval County since 1854. Perhaps because they felt an affinity to their foreign upbringing, Mexican American landowners looked at these two men for advice. Lovenskiold and Blucher, however, had their agenda, to help their Anglo American friends secure some of this very land.³⁶

The problem and a likely solution for Mexican Americans came into alignment in 1860 when a vacancy occurred in a district judgeship that had some Duval County land cases on its docket. Fortuitously, when Nueces County called a special election to fill the vacant position, it also created a voting precinct in Duval County. Mexican American landowners from Duval County had, for the first time, an opportunity to influence their destiny. On election day Mexican Americans voted 313-1 in favor of the candidate Lovenskiold and Blucher indicated would rule more favorably in their cases. Ultimately,

³⁶ Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897* (Clark, N.J.: Lawbook Exchange, 2004), 963; Hans Peter Mareus Neilsen Gammel, "The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897 Volume 1," Book, *The Portal to Texas History*, 1482, last modified 1898, accessed June 19, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph5872/>; "Charles Lovenskiold," n.d., Vertical Files, Center for American History; Hortense Warner Ward, "Blucher, Anton Felix Hans Hellmuth Von," *Handbook of Texas Online*, n.d., accessed December 5, 2017, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fbl64>; For a complete listing of land grants in Duval County see Galen D. Greaser, *New Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas*, 1st edition. (Texas General Land Office, 2009).

Gov. Sam Houston and the Texas Supreme Court nullified their votes. the county had not established the voting precinct as required by law. The Supreme Court ruled “not only upon the ground of illegality and fraud in holding the election...but also upon the ground, that but few of the men whose names appeared upon the returns as having voted...were actually present, and that most of those present were not entitled to vote.” The experience, however, whetted the Mexican Americans’ taste for the American political process. To their regret, however, they had little opportunity to flex their political muscle again until towards the end of Reconstruction.³⁷

The Civil War interrupted the political development of Mexican Americans. During the war—and the Reconstruction period that followed—voting in Duval County election precincts appears to have gone dormant, either by design or circumstance. It was nearly a quarter century before Mexican Americans reasserted political influence commensurate with their numbers.

Historians Dale Baum and Robin E. Baker point out that Catholics, who at that time were mostly Mexican Americans, voted in smaller numbers. Mexican Americans in Duval County early on showed an unwillingness to put up with the mistreatment by Anglo Americans. The answer to them was in politics. Perhaps the most salient observation of Mexican American voting was made by Américo Paredes. Using an

³⁷ “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes,” B; “Election Returns from Nueces County,” October 8, 1860, Executive Department, Texas Library and Archives; *John F. McKinney v. Joseph O’Connor*, 26 Texas 5 (Texas Supreme Court 1861); Alfredo E. Cardenas, “Duval County Politics Predated, Fashioned the Parr Machine,” *Journal of South Texas* 25, no. 1 (2012): 40–61.

interesting conversation between two Mexican Americans, Paredes explains their political quandary:

*-Oiga, compadre, ¿por quién va a votar usted?
-Pos la verdad que no se, compadre. Tan cabrón está el pinto coma el colorado.
-Pero hay que votar, compadre. Vamos a pensarlo un poco, a ver cuál de los dos es el menos peor.³⁸*

(- Hey, compadre, for whom are you going to vote?
-The truth is that I do not know, compadre. The pinto is as bad as the red one.
-But we have to vote, compadre. Let's think about it a little to see which of them is the lesser of two evils.)

In addition to the election of the vacant district judgeship, the county included other races in the special election held in Nueces County on August 6, 1860. The 314 votes cast represented 45 percent of the total vote cast in Nueces County, and it influenced the outcome of other countywide races. Edward Gray of Duval County was elected Justice of the Peace with 291 votes. In the constable race, Antonio de la Garza received 287 votes, Antonio Gonzalez 239, and F. Tinney 1. Rafael Salinas served as election judge with R. Miller, A. de la Garza, and Calixto Tovar as clerks. Not only was a Mexican American elected to office, but they also played a pivotal role in the conduct of the election.³⁹

³⁸ Robin E. Baker and Dale Baum, "The Texas Voter and the Crisis of the Union, 1859-1861," *The Journal of Southern History* 53, no. 3 (1987): 417; Américo Paredes, *Between Two Worlds* (Houston, Tex: Arte Publico Press, 1991), 10.

³⁹ "Election Returns from Nueces County." Note: In that era, candidates had to reside in the precinct for which they sought office, but anyone in the county could vote in all precinct races.

In August 1860, the Nueces County Commissioners Court changed the boundaries of Precinct Nine to accommodate the unorganized county of Lasalle and added Precinct Ten, with the Levi Store in San Diego as the polling place. Now Duval County Mexican Americans had two places to vote. A short three months later things changed dramatically. During the presidential election not only was the national Republican ticket not on the ballot, but election officials reported no votes were from Precincts Nine or Ten. In the January 1861 election to send delegates to the Secession Convention, Precinct Nine in Agua Poquita gave fifty-three votes (presumably from Mexican Americans) to each of the Nueces County delegates. Three Mexican Americans, Jacinto Salinas, Prudencio Azargoita, and Rafael Salinas served as election clerks. While it suggested some Mexican American involvement, the turnout was far less than the 314 cast in the 1860 special election for the district judge race a few months earlier. Precinct Ten in San Diego did not report a vote. Of the 177 members of the secessionist assembly, not one was a Mexican American. Although South Texas had an overwhelming majority of Mexican Americans, not one participated in the convention. Nueces County sent P. N. Luckett and Henry Maltby, an avowed racist, to the secessionist convention in Austin.⁴⁰

This trend continued in the second election held in 1861 to determine whether to stay or secede from the Union. Precincts Nine and Ten in Duval County did not report any votes. On the March 24, 1861, election to elect a state senator and representative, Precinct Nine reported 155 votes cast, but Precinct Ten in San Diego again did not report any voting. On Nov. 6, 1861, an election was held to select electors for Confederate

⁴⁰ “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes”; “Election Returns from Nueces County”; *The Ranchero* (Corpus Christi, Tex., August 25, 1860).

Congress and county commissioners. The forty-one votes cast in Precinct Nine were reported late by presiding judge A.M. Palacios, who had help from election clerks Manuel Salinas and Teodoro Hinojosa. But, again no votes were reported from San Diego's Precinct Ten. In 1862, things appeared to go from bad to worse. In the February election to elect an attorney general, neither Precincts Nine or Ten reported having voted. Late in 1863, in an election held on August 4 to elect state and local officials, Precinct Ten in San Diego finally reported voting. Voters elected E.N. Gray Justice of the Peace, and R. Carter as Constable, each received twenty votes. The election judges included E. G. Perez and C.G. Garcia. Precinct Nine did not report a vote. In the 1863 election to elect state officials and amend the Constitution, Nueces County reported no returns from either Precincts Nine or Ten. While Nueces County conducted other elections at the end of the war and the beginning of Reconstruction, no records exist in the Nueces County Clerk's office of their results.⁴¹

On October 23, 1865, Provisional Texas Governor A. J. Hamilton appointed John Dix as Chief Justice of Nueces County and called a special term of the court to reorganize according to the direction approved by the provisional government of the State of Texas. The court established five precincts, none in San Diego. There were no Mexican Americans on the court, no Mexican Americans participated as presiding judges, and none served on the Grand Jury. Voter registration in Nueces County began on June 18, 1867, and went on through January 1868. Two hundred sixty-one voters, including 133

⁴¹ "Election Returns from Nueces County"; Mike Kingston, Sam Attlesey, and Mary G Crawford, *The Texas Almanac's Political History of Texas* (Austin, Tex.: Eakin Press, 1992), 60, 74.

Anglo Americans (the majority being from the north or immigrants); eighty-eight Mexican Americans; and forty-eight Freedmen (18 percent of voters but had only 8 percent of the population). Mexican Americans had 34 percent of the registered voters, widely underrepresented when compared to the population. Edmund J. Davis concluded that “Large number of Mexicans who are entitled to register failed to do so. They were almost universally lost during the war. Failure to the opportunity to register is regretted.” Davis believed people had spread rumors that the U.S. intended to go to war against Mexico and draft Mexican Americans as soldiers as a ploy to keep them from registering to vote. Chief Justice John Dix said Republicans had a clear majority, but that a small group of “rowdies and disaffected rebels” and a “trifling newspaper,” the *Corpus Christi Advertiser*, had stymied Mexican American registrations. In an election held February 10-14, 1868, Nueces County voters approved the constitutional convention by a margin 119-1. They chose Davis as their convention delegate by a vote of 114-5. Seventy-six of the voters were Anglo Americans and forty-four Freedmen. No Mexican Americans voted, which indicates Precincts Nine and Ten participated on a minimal basis if at all. The registration of voters on November 1869, with Guadalupe Cárdenas serving as a voter registrar, resulted in 280 voters or 57 percent Anglo Americans; 138 or 28 percent Mexican Americans; and seventy-six or 15 percent Freedmen. The rumors alleged by Davis and Dix had their effect.⁴²

⁴² “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes,” C; Randolph B. Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1997), 202–204, 206–207.

Things were somewhat uncertain during the first years of Reconstruction, with changes coming down from Austin every few months. The Reconstruction Constitution of 1869 eliminated the position of the county judge and replaced the office of county commissioner with that of justice of the peace. Five justices of the peace, elected by district, exercised the traditional powers of the Commissioners Court. In November 1869 the new Reconstruction County Court defined five new precincts, including Precincts Three and Four for San Diego and Concepción, respectively. The Reconstruction Convention also adopted a measure allowing any male 21 and older, and a naturalized citizen to vote. Of the ninety delegates to the Texas Reconstruction Convention, thirteen were Freedmen, but none were Mexican Americans. In May 1870, N.G. Collins was elected Justice of the Peace for Precinct Three in San Diego, Richard Schubert was named Justice of the Peace for Precinct Four in Concepción, Charles Roach was named constable for Precinct Three in San Diego, and Rafael Salinas for Precinct Four in Concepción. Since under Military Reconstruction Acts former Confederate officials and military officers could not vote or run for public office it is a safe bet that these men were Republicans.⁴³

The new precincts created for San Diego and Concepción seemed to rejuvenate Mexican American participation. In October 1870, Republican Collins defeated Frank C. Gravis by a vote of 107 to 87 for the Precinct Three Justice of the Peace slot. The turnout, however, approached the numbers of the noteworthy 1860 election. Collins, however,

⁴³ Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, 101; Martha Menchaca, *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants: A Texas History*, 1st ed. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2011), 58; “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes.”

was removed from office because he ostensibly was not qualified to hold office. In a special election held in May 1871, James O. Luby, later known as “the fighting Republican,” defeated Richard Miller by 25 votes. Luby won without opposition as a Republican in 1873. In the election for governor in 1873, Mexican Americans split between Democrats and Republicans. In Nueces County, Republican Edmund J. Davis, who had close ties in the area and who had decided in favor of Duval County Mexican American landowners in some land cases, won.⁴⁴

Mexican Americans, who constituted the overwhelming majority in Duval County, were having an impact with the Republican Party, with Republicans Collins, Luby, and Salinas scoring electoral victories. Still, they continued to see little political progress in the rest of Nueces County. In the Republican County Convention in 1872 delegates included eight Anglo Americans and two Freedmen, but no Mexican Americans. Republicans continued to see success in local races winning the posts of the sheriff and treasurer by wide margins. Statewide, the Republicans were losing voters to their cause.

In 1873, Nueces County held its first general election since 1869 and voters turned back Republicans in every national and state race, including their local political star Governor Davis. It was a clean sweep for Democrats in the local races including the defeat of Republican Rafael Salinas by Richard Shubert by a vote of 374-128. Salinas

⁴⁴ Nueces Valley (Corpus Christi, Tex., October 8, 1870); Menchaca, *Naturalizing Mexican Immigrants*, 61; Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, 209; John Henry Brown, *Indian Wars and Pioneers of Texas* (Jazzybee Verlag, 1988), 504. Note: Election results are from *Grass-roots Reconstruction in Texas*, since no record of this elections were found in the Nueces County Clerk’s records.

tried to regain the seat in a special election but lost to a German immigrant named Charles Lege. Despite their overwhelming numbers, only one Mexican American, Constable Apolonio Vega from San Diego, was elected to public office in Duval County. Under new state law, Nueces County again redrew election precincts to seven voting places, including Precinct Six in Justice of the Peace Precinct Three, with voting to take place at Justice of the Peace Luby's office with N.G. Collins presiding. Another new polling place was Precinct Seven, located in Justice of the Peace Precinct Four in Concepción; voting was at the schoolhouse with Charles Lege presiding. In a General Election held on December 2, 1873, to elect state and local officials in Nueces County and the attached county of Duval, voting took place for the first time in voting Precincts Six and Seven. No one reported having voted in San Diego, but Concepción did conduct voting. Rafael Salinas, one of the first Mexican Americans to run for public office in Duval County, was defeated again in his campaign for Justice of the Peace and School Director (both of Precinct Four). In a suspicious act, Justice of the Peace Luby submitted claims for election officers to the December 1873 election, although the precinct reported no votes. He certified claims from presiding judges W.B. Lacy, George Hobbs, T.W. Johnson, P.B. Baldesweiler, and Special Policemen for the Election A.G. Allen and George Pettigrew. All were Anglo Americans in an overwhelmingly Mexican American precinct, and all were newcomers with not one of these men appearing in the 1870

Census for San Diego. Luby also certified a claim for \$15 from Apolonio Vela for conveying registration books from San Diego to Corpus Christi via Concepción.⁴⁵

In July 1874 the Nueces County Justices of the Peace Court accepted the resignation of Concepción Justice of the Peace Richard Schubert. In the replacement election, Charles Lege, E.N. Gray, and Rafael Salinas filed for the post. Lege won the race with Salinas coming in a distant second, receiving no votes from the heavily Mexican American voting precincts in San Diego (where election officials reported only twelve votes cast and Concepción (where eighteen voters turned out). Election officials in Concepción included Mauricio Salinas, an election judge, and Julian Palacios and Juan Gonzales as election clerks. Election officers in San Diego, included N.G. Collins, Theodore Lamberton, and Frank Gravis. Again, no Mexican Americans served in the election as election judge or clerks in San Diego. In another special election called for September 1874 to approve railroad bonds, election officials included Calixto Tovar and Frank Schaeffer in San Diego and Charles Lege, Rafael Salinas, and Spaniard Fidel del Barrio in Concepción. Officials called off the election when the railroad withdrew its request for the county's help due to strong opposition, mainly from Mexican Americans who feared to open their grazing lands for the railroad. It was an apparent concession to the potential voting strength of Mexican Americans. In another suspicious occurrence, the *Corpus Christi Weekly Gazette* reported "The election came off on the 7th resulted in 53 votes against the proposition. Some of the Aztecs swam Las Animas, Piedras Pintas,

⁴⁵ Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, 214; "Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes," Book C; "Election Returns from Nueces County."

and San Diego Creeks to exercise their election franchise.” Perhaps San Diego did not get word of the cancellation of the election, or maybe just Mexican Americans did not get the word and came out just the same. Even though the election was called off by the county, and overlooking the newspaper’s ethnocentric remark, it was notable that the Mexican Americans took voting seriously when it impacted their lives.⁴⁶

Nueces County held no elections in 1875, but as the new year of 1876 opened the county divided itself into four county commissioner precincts as required by the new Constitution. The precincts included the attached county of Duval. Precincts One, Three, and Four remained as before and Precinct Two absorbed Precinct Five. Precinct Four Justice of the Peace Charles Lege moved to Corpus Christi thus disqualifying him from continuing to serve in Precinct Four. The court called a General Election for February 5, 1876. F.W. Schaefer was elected County Commissioner in Precinct Three in San Diego. Also, in Precinct Three, James O. Luby won the Justice of the Peace race with ninety-one votes to J. Humphrey’s forty-four. In the Constable race, Jesus Trevino outdistanced three other opponents with eighty-five votes to seventeen for S. Maldonado, fourteen for Apolonio Vela, and eleven for Juan Martinez. In Precinct Four, the Concepción area, E.N. Gray received twenty-one votes to J. Vining’s seventeen in the Justice of the Peace race. Gray, the only candidate for constable, received one vote. Democrats won state and district races, but Republican Joseph Fitzsimmons defeated the Democrat for County

⁴⁶ “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes,” C; “Election Returns from Nueces County”; *Corpus Christi Gazette*, September 19, 1874; *Galveston Daily News*, October 22, 1874; *Daily Express* (San Diego, Texas, September 12, 1874); *Galveston Daily News*, January 24, 1875.

Judge. A Republican was also elected sheriff. County commissioners Frank Gravis, Andrew R. Valls, and John Vining, all Democrats, won. Democrats continued winning local offices, and only Republicans who were familiar to local voters fared well.⁴⁷

In November 1876, after three attempts Nueces County recognized a petition from Duval County residents to go it on their own. Authorities called for to be held on November 11, 1876, to elect the first slate of officers for the newly organized County of Duval, the county established four precincts:

- Precinct Ten in San Diego with election officers: C.K. Gravis, J.A. Murdock, William E. Stanley, A.J. Ayers, and F.G. Tovar.
- Precinct Eleven in Piedras Pintas with election officers: Félix Salinas, Espiridion Cuellar, H. Maas, Ysidro Benavides, and Máximo Pérez.
- Precinct Twelve in Concepción with election officers: John Vining, Charles K. Moses, Félix del Barrio, Julián Palacios, and Máximo Pérez.
- Precinct Thirteen in Borjas with the election officers: Joseph Alex Pérez, J.C. Cuellar, Rich Blucher, Augustus Gottlieb, and E.H. Caldwell.

Calixto Tovar was elected County Treasurer; it was the first time in the history of the area that voters elected a Mexican American to a countywide office. Two other Mexican Americans, Jesús Treviño, and A. Linares, also sought election to a countywide office but failed. Longtime Mexican American political activist Rafael Salinas was elected to the Commissioners Court; voters chose Modesto Garza as a Justice of the Peace, and Mexican Americans won three of the four constable positions: Apolonia Vela,

⁴⁷ “Nueces County Commissioners Court Minutes,” C; “Election Returns from Nueces County”; Campbell, *Grass-Roots Reconstruction in Texas, 1865-1880*, 216.

Miguel Martinez, and Alex Pérez. Jesús Pérez narrowly lost the fourth constable seat. Election officials reported nearly 300 votes cast, representative of the voting strength Mexican Americans had shown in 1860.⁴⁸

In 1880, the Mexican American voting age population, males twenty-one years of age or older, outnumbered the Anglo American voting population by better than six to one, even when one includes the voting age males in the U.S. 8th Cavalry Post and the Ranger Camp stationed in San Diego. Even with those overwhelming margins, Mexican Americans were still not able to take command of their political destiny. In 1888 the Mexican Americans organized themselves in hopes of changing the status quo. In its first ten years, Duval County voters elected two Mexican Americans to countywide, Calixto Tovar as Assessor of Taxes and Jesus D. Alcala as Inspector of Hides and Animals. The number of Mexican American elected officials at the precinct level steadily increased, but in the entire decade only two Mexican Americans occupied a seat on the Commissioners Court, and they did so at different times.

Against this backdrop entered Catarino Garza and his newspaper *El Comercio*. Garza came to Corpus Christi in 1887 after serving time in jail in Maverick County for ruffling the feathers of Mexican and American officials on the border. Garza railed against the Porfirio Diaz regime in Mexico and was not too keen on Anglo American treatment of Mexican Americans in Texas. In May 1888 Garza made a speech before a large crowd at the fiesta grounds in San Diego celebrating *Cinco de Mayo*. It was perhaps not surprising two months after Garza's speech at the fiesta, Mexican Americans held a

⁴⁸ "Election Returns from Nueces County."

meeting in San Diego to recruit a slate of Mexican Americans for every office in the November election. Worried Anglos stood outside the Garfield House listening to speeches which included visitors from Starr County.⁴⁹

Efforts by Mexican Americans to gain a larger share of the political pie began two years earlier when a group of disgruntled Democrats bolted the county Democratic Convention. Half of the group was Mexican American, and a half was Anglo Americans. Those that remained with the regulars included less than a handful of Mexican Americans. By the time electioneering came around for the general election, the bolters were called the *Botas*, or the Luby Party after County Judge James O. Luby, and the regular Democrats were called the *Huaraches* or Wright Party, after Sheriff L.L. Wright. The designations of *Botas* and *Huaraches* for political parties had first surfaced in Webb County in 1884. *The Laredo Daily Times* explained the split as, “the parties are simply the outs and ins.” The *Botas* were the outs and *Huaraches* were the ins. Like in Webb County, the Duval County parties ostensibly did not represent any political party, social group, or economic class, but the *Daily Times* referred to the *Botas* as the “Mexican Texans Party.” So the *Botas* did indeed stand for something; they were Republicans and stood for Mexican Americans. The leaders of the Duval County *Botas*, included some well-known Republicans, such as James O. Luby, N.G. Collins, Charles Hoffman, Charles Stillman, and Julian Palacios. The political maxim that all politics is local held in Duval County; elections turned not on party label but on how well a job those in office

49 McCampbell, *Texas Seaport*, 212–213; Lehmann, *Forgotten Legions*, 27–28; Allhands, *Uriah Lott.*, 18.

Table 7: Results of Duval County Organizational Election, November 11, 1876

Candidate	Pct. 10- San Diego	Pct. 11- Piedras Pintas	Pct. 12- Concepción	Pct. 13- Borjas	Total
County Judge					
James O. Luby	102	31	76	27	236
H.S. Lang	25	32	1	0	58
Total	127	63	77	27	294
Sheriff					
R.P. Fly	114	61	73	27	275
Sam H. Tinney	13	2	1	0	16
Total	127	63	74	27	291
County Clerk					
A.R. Valls	119	20	2	10	151
Alfred Moses	7	35	76	18	136
Total	126	55	78	28	287
Assessor					
Calixto Tovar	101	6	32	26	165
R.B. Glover	25	57	42	2	126
Total	126	63	74	28	291
County Treasurer					
Charles Hoffman	125	56	78	28	287
M. Burks	1	0	0	0	1
Total	126	56	78	28	288
County Attorney					
J. Williamson Moses	80	58	78	28	244
C. McGuire	43	5	0	0	48
John G. Bell	2	0	0	0	2
Total	123	63	78	28	292
County Surveyor					
J.C. Caldwell	77	44	3	6	130
John J. Dix	48	19	75	22	164
Total	125	63	78	28	294
Hide Inspector					
Theodore Lambertson	86	34	61	27	208
Jesús Treviño	34	27	15	0	76
A. Linares	6	2	0	0	8
Total	126	63	76	27	292
Location of County Seat					
San Diego	118	40	0	0	158
Piedras Pintas	0	2	0	0	2
Concepción	0	0	72	0	72
Total	118	42	72	0	232

Table 7 Continued

	Pct. 10 - San Diego	Pct. 11 - Piedras Pintas	Pct. 12 - Concepción	Pct. 13 - Borjas	Total
County Commissioners					
F.C. Gravis	124	-	-	-	124
B.W. Toklas	-	43	-	-	43
William Hubbard	-	20	-	-	20
John Vining	-	-	38	-	38
Rafael Salinas	-	-	39	-	39
E.H. Caldwell	-	-	-	26	26
N.S. Lang	-	-	-	4	4
Total	124	63	77	30	294
Justice of the Peace					
John Humphrey	77	-	-	-	77
B.N. Fletcher	49	-	-	-	49
Eugene A. Glover	-	18	-	-	18
Modesto Garza	-	45	-	-	45
John Vining	-	-	78	-	78
Charles Roach	-	-	-	26	26
Total	126	63	78	26	293
Constable					
Apolonio Vela	121	-	-	-	121
J. Stansell	1	-	-	-	1
Miguel Martínez	-	60	-	-	60
Peter Skaro	-	-	40	-	40
Jesús Pérez	-	-	36	-	36
Alex Pérez	-	-	-	26	27
Total	122	60	76	26	284

Source: Nueces County Election Returns, 1858-1876.

Table 8: Duval County Voting Age Population, 1880

Precinct	Anglo Americans	Mexican Americans	Total
NS	9	18	27
1*	95	348	443
2	4	266	270
3 and 4	16	345	361
San Diego**	85	304	389
Total	209	1,281	1,490
Percent	14.03%	85.97%	100%

* Was part of San Diego and includes nine men of voting age in the Ranger Camp who probably did not stay long enough in Duval County to participate in elections.

** Includes 76 soldiers of voting age.

Source: U.S. Census of Duval County, 1880.

Table 9: Duval County Elected Officials by Ethnicity, 1876-1886.

Election Year	Countywide Offices		Precinct Offices		Total Officials	
	Number Anglo Americans	Number Mexican Americans	Number Anglo Americans	Number Mexican Americans	Number Anglo Americans	Number Mexican Americans
1876*	7	1	7	3	14	4
1878	8	0	5	3	13	3
1880	9	0	9	3	18	3
1882**	7	1	9	4	16	5
1884	9	0	4	7	13	7
1886	9	0	5	9	12	9
1888	9	0	2	4	11	4
1890	6	2	4	3	10	5
1892	5	3	7	5	12	8
1894	6	1	4	2	10	3
1896	5	2	7	1	12	3
1898	4	2	6	2	10	4
1900	4	3	5	4	9	7
Total	88	15	74	50	160	65

*Andrew R. Valls, a Louisianan of Spanish parents, was the county clerk but not counted as a Mexican American. The only Mexican American elected to countywide office was County Assessor Calixto Tovar.

**Two Spaniards held countywide office, Valls, and Inspector of Hides Juan Puig.

Source: *Duval County Commissioners Court Minutes, Book A. "Election Returns;" Secretary of State, Archives Division, Texas State Library, RG 30, Series 84, Duval County.*

were doing or in Duval County how well they were doing in meeting the needs of their

Mexican American constituents.⁵⁰

50 “Democratic Convention in Duval County Broke Up and Some Bolted to Have Their Own Confab: Meeting of Bolters at School House,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, July 4, 1886; Jerry D Thompson, *Warm Weather & Bad Whiskey: 1886 Laredo Election Riot*. (El Paso, TX: Texas Western Press, 1993), 67; Randolph B. Campbell, “Reconstruction in Nueces County, 1865-76,” *Houston Review* 16, no. 1 (January 1994): 16–18; “From San Diego,” *The Laredo Daily Times*, August 14, 1888; Kenneth Howell, “Just Southwest of Dixie: Reconstruction in South Texas, 1865-1876,” *Journal of South Texas* 16, no. 1 (March 2003): 55.

While the area newspapers downplayed partisan politics in the *Bota-Huarache* faceoff, others did not. Luby was a longstanding diehard Republican, and his party had been out of favor since the end of Reconstruction. By winning the County Judge seat in the 1886 election under the *Bota* banner Luby, who had been appointed Collector of Customs at the Port of Brownsville by Republican President Chester A. Arthur, reenergized the Republicans in Duval County. In 1886, the *Botas* and *Huaraches* split the offices up for grabs. In addition to the County Judge, the *Botas* elected George Bodet, County Treasurer and F. Ridder, Pedro Eznal and W. M. Hebron as County Commissioners. They had solid control of Commissioners Court. The *Huarache*'s leader L.L. Wright was elected Sheriff along with F.C. Gravis, Assessor; R.B. Glover, Clerk; W. B. Austin, Inspector; and Ed. Corkill, Commissioner. The 1886 election was the beginning of the Republican Party's revival in Duval County. After this 1886 election and for the next eighteen years, the Republican and Democratic parties in Duval County were extremely competitive. From 1892 through 1904, the Republicans carried the county for every Republican Congressional candidate.⁵¹

A month before the meeting of Mexican Americans at the Garfield House in July, on June 14, 1888, the County Democratic Party met in San Diego to select delegates to the county convention. Of the 18 envoys, fifteen were Anglos, and three were Mexican Americans. Three weeks later Democrats met to pick delegates to the various area, state, and national conventions. Of the fourteen delegates selected thirteen were Anglos, one was a Spaniard, and no Mexican Americans merited selection. When the Mexican

⁵¹ "From San Diego"; "Weekly Gossip from Jonis," *Corpus Christi Caller*, November 7, 1886; Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas*, 172–173.

Americans met for their second meeting in Concepción, the gathering had a different composition. It was presided over by Julian Palacios; however, some Anglos had joined, or infiltrated, the Mexican American group. The group that met was composed of many of the same political leaders that bolted the Democrats' convention two years earlier and were now known as the *Botas*.⁵²

The assembly named candidates for the November general election. According to the *Corpus Christi Caller*, nothing had changed; eight of the twelve candidates for countywide offices were Anglos, and only two were Mexican Americans. The *Caller* opined that "many good Mexicans cannot fully support the ticket." The Laredo newspaper had a different take and reported that "the ticket selected will be a strong one and generally supported by the Mexican population...and unless present incumbents...spend a good deal of money for manipulating votes, there is a strong probability that the ticket will be elected."⁵³

The political tempo picked up on *Diez y Seis de Septiembre* with big political rallies held at Concepción, Mendieta, and La Rosita. Throughout September and October, the *Botas* and *Huaraches* organized meetings, dances, speechmaking, and events to rally their supporters. When returns came in on November 6, the Laredo newspaper relying on reports from a *Bota* activist reported, on November 10, a *Bota* victory, including control of the Commissioners Court.

⁵² "From San Diego," *Corpus Christi Caller*, August 11, 1888.

⁵³ "Duval County Notes," *Corpus Christi Caller*, August 18, 1888; "From San Diego."

The newspaper's initial reports proved premature. On November 13 the Commissioners Court met to canvass the votes and refused to count the ballots from Precinct Two in Benavides and Precinct Five in Las Julias (La Rosita) because they "failed to show the number of votes polled." Commissioners William Hebron and Pedro Eznal, both *Bota* supporters, voted to count the votes and *Huarache* Commissioner Edward Corkill and *Bota* Commissioner F.K. Ridder voted to throw out the votes. Luby, who was ostensibly the *Bota*'s incumbent county judge, mysteriously broke the tie against counting the votes denying the party bearing his name a major victory. The historical record is silent about the reason for Luby's action, but he may have seen it as a move to continue to strengthen his Republican Party.⁵⁴

The *Huaraches* still had other political moves. On December 3, the Commissioners Court refused the bond for Charles Stillman, commissioner-elect for Precinct 3. The court claimed that Stillman was not a citizen. Stillman had been born in Matamoros and came to the United States at the age of two. Ironically, Stillman had served as County Commissioner in 1884-1886. Stillman and the County Attorney Charles L. Coyner wrote to Texas Attorney General James S. Hogg for help in clarifying the matter. Hogg, through an assistant, demurred writing to Stillman that he had no authority in the matter. Another Commissioner-elect, Juan Zardiente of Precinct 2, was arrested on charges of illegal voting under the claim that Zardiente was not a citizen. He provided

⁵⁴ "Commissioners Court Minutes" (Duval County, November 12, 1888), bk. A, Duval County Clerk; "Duval County Politics: Over 100 Votes Thrown Out on a Technicality, Changing the Results," *The Laredo Daily Times*, November 15, 1888.

proof of citizenship and that he had resided in the county the mandatory time and officials dropped the charges.⁵⁵

The *Bota* partisans then moved to file a challenge in district court. On January 9, 1889, District Judge J.C. Russell empaneled a grand jury to investigate the election and any possible illegal voting that may have occurred. Judge Russell named N.G. Collins, Luby's mentor, as foreman. The *Dallas Morning News* reported that some 50 to 60 indictments were expected and lamented that "lame election law will no doubt send many a poor Mexican to the state prison." At the same session of the District Court, the *Bota* candidates filed a *quo warranto* proceedings against the county judge, county attorney, county clerk, sheriff, assessor, county surveyor, and the inspector of hides and animals. A *quo warranto* is a writ issued by a court formally requiring somebody to state by what authority he or she is acting or is holding a position. The plaintiffs in the *quo warranto* writ asked for a change of venue. The incumbents did not object, and the case went to Corpus Christi, The *Dallas Morning News* wryly reported, "They claim they were elected by a majority of their fellow citizens and at the same time claim they cannot get a fair trial from their people."⁵⁶

⁵⁵ "Charles L. Coyner to James Stephen Hogg," December 4, 1888, James Stephen Hogg Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History; "Charles F. Stillman to James Stephen Hogg," December 1, 1888, James Stephen Hogg Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History; "R.H. Hannison to Charles F. Stillman," December 10, 1888, James Stephen Hogg Papers, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History; "San Diego Doings: Proving His Citizenship," *San Antonio Express*, January 18, 1889.

⁵⁶ "Duval County Court Notes," *Dallas Morning News*, January 10, 1889; "Duval County District Court," *San Antonio Express*, January 13, 1889; *L.L. Wright v. The State of Texas, Ex Rel Jno. Buckley* (Supreme Court of Texas 1890).

Attorney General Hogg interceded on behalf of John Buckley, the *Bota* candidate for sheriff, and applied for leave to file information, alleging the incumbent sheriff “usurped, intruded, and is unlawfully holding office of sheriff and tax collector.” The attorney general claimed that the Duval County Commissioners Court had canvassed the votes improperly by excluding voting Precincts 1 and 5.

Moreover, Hogg asserted, election managers in voting Precincts One, Three, Four, and Six had “fraudulently counted because they included votes cast by persons not entitled as qualified voters.” The reasons for disqualification of voters were numerous, including that they lived in a different precinct, lived in another county, had not lived in the county the required six months, a convicted felon, a Mexican citizen, not twenty-one years of age, and not a resident of the state for required twelve months. The attorney general claimed that these voters—all but eight were Mexican Americans—should be disqualified on the above-stated grounds. The “Mexican Texans” party seemed to be seeking to disqualify Mexican American voters.⁵⁷

On March 27, 1890, the district judge ruled in favor of Buckley, and the *Huaraches* appealed to the Texas Supreme Court. The court summarily dismissed the appeal on June 28, 1890, and ordered that *Huarache* candidates pay all costs.⁵⁸

In 1890, the *Bota* party which had been born out of a desire of Mexican Americans to gain a fair share of Duval County elected offices swept most Duval County

⁵⁷ “Ex Rel,” *Law.Com Legal Dictionary*, accessed August 20, 2018, <https://dictionary.law.com/Default.aspx?selected=705>.

⁵⁸ *Wright v. State of Texas* (District Court 1889); *L.L. Wright v. The State of Texas* (Texas Supreme Court 1890).

offices. Only two Mexican Americans, however, were chosen to countywide office. The primo offices, such as county judge and sheriff, remained in Anglo American hands. The Anglo Americans also dominated the Commissioners Court, with only one Mexican American with a seat at the table. It was not until 1892 that the first Mexican American, F. García Tovar, was elected county judge of Duval County. That year, three Mexican Americans held countywide office. The numbers reverted to one Mexican American selected countywide until 1900 when it climbed back to three.⁵⁹

While Anglo American politicians co-opted the 1888 effort to form a Mexican American political party in Duval County, the Mexican Americans had the idea firmly implanted in their political psyche. It took another quarter century, several more violent deaths, and the political rise of Archie Parr before Mexican Americans in Duval County achieved supremacy at the polls.

As the nineteenth century rolled to a close, change was in the air. The old guard was fading, and new players were making their mark. There had never been a clear political boss in Duval County; no James Powers or James Wells who dominated Valley politics.

Though without a clear political leader, the Mexican Americans were not without resources. Their most valuable resource was their domination of both the population and of prospective voters; at the close of the century, they had gained ground in both.

⁵⁹ “County Election Results” (Texas Secretary of State, n.d.), Texas State Archives.

Table 10: Duval County Voting Age Population, 1900

Precinct	Voter eligible Anglo Americans	Voter eligible Mexican Americans	Total Voting Age Population
Pct. 1	24	231	255
Pct. 1	60	208	268
	84	439	523
Pct. 2	18	369	387
Pct. 3	2	194	196
Pct. 4	12	140	152
Pct. 5	16	289	305
Pct. 6	8	145	153
Total	140	1,576	1,716
Percent	8.16%	91.84%	100%

Source: U.S. Census of Duval County, 1900.

Un tiempo de transformación

Mexican Americans held on to their land through the twentieth century. They coped with many challenges. They had to reclaim their property under a new legal system. The arrival of the railroad in their parts came despite their opposition, but they made the best they could of the situation. When their prolonged use of raising livestock began to impact the land and its environments negatively, they sought other means of making it productive. First, they embraced the introduction of the sheep industry and then accepted the agricultural use of the land, primarily cotton farming.

Mexican Americans also began to assert themselves politically and made it known that they too were citizens of their new country and had every expectation to participate in its government. It was necessary for their continued survival and their economic improvement. Indeed, they had already set in motion the monumental change that was to take place in the coming years.

MODERNIZATION

Writing about a wide-ranging topic, Montejano sometimes inadvertently paints outside the lines. His conclusions are not always applicable to every area he is writing about; this is often the case with Duval County. Montejano acknowledges that Duval County, in the late nineteenth century, was the “archetype” of the South Texas hybrid Mexican society. Indeed, but as it entered the twentieth century, Duval County Mexican Americans continued to develop a more balanced accommodation with the Anglo Americans, rather than succumb to them. Unlike the larger communities in the region where racist newcomers pushed Mexican Americans to the side, Duval County Mexican Americans continually asserted their rightful place in their new nation. The “reconstruction” described by Montejano had a distinctly different flavor in Duval County. Reconstruction for Montejano meant the takeover by farmers over ranchers in which “the Texas Mexican was disenfranchised or eliminated as an important political factor.”⁶⁰

The population of Duval County in 1900 stood at 8,425 and grew modestly to 9,011, or 7 percent, by 1910. Both Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans shared in this small rise in numbers. By 1920, however, the county’s population dropped below its numbers in 1900. The total population fell to 8,186, a 2.9 percent decrease. Mexican Americans remained 90 percent of the population. However, their population dropped from 7,862 to 7,342, or 7 percent. Some may suggest that the Mexican Revolution, a

⁶⁰ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 135–136.

Table 11: Duval County Census by Place of Origin, 1910

Precinct	Texas-born Mexican Americans	Mexican Americans born in Mexico	Total Mexican Americans	Anglo American Texans	Anglo Americans born outside of Texas	Total Anglo Americans	Total Population
Pct. 1, 039	736	259	995	58	15	73	1,068
Pct. 1, 040	1,138	542	1,680	142	60	202	1,882
Total Pct. 1	1,874	801	2,675	200	75	275	2,950
Pct. 2, 041	1,428	377	1,805	122	30	152	1,957
Pct. 3, 042	924	352	1,276	2	26	28	1,304
Pct. 4, 043	480	299	779	63	15	78	857
Pct. 5, 044	905	200	1,105	57	6	63	1,168
Pct. 6, 045	446	285	731	40	4	44	775
Total	6,057	2,314	8,371	484	156	640	9,011
Percent	67.22%	25.68%	92.90%	5.37%	1.73%	7.10%	100.00%

*Source: U.S. Census, 1910***Table 12: Duval County Census by Place of Origin, 1920**

Precinct	Texas-born Mexican Americans	Mexican Americans born in Mexico	Total Mexican Americans	Anglo American Texans	Anglo Americans born outside of Texas	Total Anglo Americans	Total Population
Pct. 1, 045	414	177	591	24	6	30	621
Pct. 1, 046	1,138	397	1,535	147	41	188	1,723
Total Pct. 1	1,552	574	2,126	171	47	218	2,344
Pct. 2, 047	1,116	220	1,336	112	34	146	1,482
Pct. 3, 048	911	278	1,189	3	1	4	1,193
Pct. 4, 049	239	145	384	78	20	98	482
Pct. 5, 050	526	73	599	50	28	78	677
Pct. 6, 051	966	396	1,362	149	131	280	1,642
Pct. 8, 052	281	71	352	13	1	14	366
Total	5,591	1,757	7,348	576	262	838	8,186
Percent	68.30%	21.46%	89.76%	7.04%	3.20%	10.24%	100.00%

Source: U.S. Census, 1920

locally inspired irredentist guerrilla war, and the military draft imposed during World War I contributed to the exodus of Mexicans and Mexican Americans from Duval County. The primary factor for the loss in population, however, was the creation of Jim Hogg County who got its main population from the town of Hebbroville in southern Duval County. In 1920, the first Census for the newly created Jim Hogg County, Hebbroville had a population of 743, which is more than the number of Mexican American population loss in Duval County. And while many of the old-timer Anglo Americans had left Duval County during the time because of the change in the political center, they were replaced in more significant numbers by others chasing their fortune in black gold. In 1900 only 563 Anglo Americans lived in Duval County, by 1920 that number grew 33 percent to 838. But they were still only 10 percent of the county's population.⁶¹

The new economy

The Rio Grande Valley was undergoing a radical transition from ranching to farming, which involved the introduction of thousands of newcomers who had bigoted ideas. These new residents did not know the Mexican Americans living in the Valley. Moreover, they immediately formed a dislike and disdain for the old-time residents, including their compatriots, the early arrivals. However, hardly any newcomers came to

⁶¹ "AncestryHeritageQuest.Com - 1920 United States Federal Census," accessed June 19, 2018, https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/interactive/7667/4297444_00065?backurl=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestryheritagequest.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d7667%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing.

Duval County and the handful that did soon realized that the practices brought to the Valley were not welcome in Duval County.

Ranching to farming

Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans in Duval County had forged a comfortable arrangement; if not a marriage made in heaven not a shotgun wedding either. For the most part, they got along and respected each other. They understood each other. At the center of this understanding were the land and the ranchos. While the ranching economy was changing, it remained at the center of the area's life. Efforts by one company to replicate the strategy employed in the Rio Grande Valley met with monumental failure. A group from Oklahoma and Kansas with the name of the Gulf Coast Land and Townsite Company bought 55,800 acres in Duval County from railroad builders Lott and Nelson. After subdividing the land and advertising extensively in national magazines without success, the group sold the entire property to the Driscoll group out of Corpus Christi.⁶²

While some landowners had sold or mortgaged some property during the dry spell of the 1890s, there were still 300 landowners in Duval County at the turn of the century. Some Anglo Americans who had acquired land began to sell some of their property; some were even selling to Mexican Americans. Frances Smith sold 9,000-acre pasture near Hebronville for \$12,000 to Antonio Gutierrez. Archie Parr and some friends bought

⁶² "Weekly Corpus Christi Caller (Corpus Christi, Tex.), Vol. 25, No. 13, Ed. 1 Friday, March 20, 1908," Newspaper, *The Portal to Texas History*, last modified March 20, 1908, accessed September 4, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metaph168704/m1/7/zoom/>.

the 38,000-acre Stillman Ranch, formerly the Gray Ranch. John Ball purchased the Agua Poquita Ranch south of San Diego, which included 12,000 to 16,000 acres. C.W. Hahl was leasing 26,000 acres of pasture land northwest of San Diego. The Cuero, Texas newspaper advertised two tracts of land for sale in Duval County, one for 19,000 acres of grazing land at \$3/acre and another of 40,000 acres on the market for \$1.50/acre.⁶³

Because acres were on the market, it was not an indication that the ranching industry was a thing of the past. Raising and selling livestock were still vibrant. In May 1900 stockmen shipped 16,000 head of cattle and 5,000 head of sheep via the railroad. R.H. Corbet sold 300 head of four-year-old steers. Local sheep raisers shipped several carloads of sheep to the New Orleans market. Horse buyers from the Mexican government came to Benavides to buy horses. Ranching in Duval County had its ups and downs, but it always remained the primary economic driver.⁶⁴

The discovery of oil

In the 1880s Vicente Molina reportedly sold his land at Piedras Pintas for 10¢ an acre because every time he tried to dig a water well a black liquid came out of the well. John Dix, an old-time surveyor, said he was aware of petroleum in the area as early as 1868. In 1885 the *Corpus Christi Caller* reported:

⁶³ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 130; “From San Diego,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, February 9, 1900; “From Benavides,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, September 14, 1900; “Pasture for Lease,” *The Houston Post*, January 1, 1921, 13.

⁶⁴ “From Duval County,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, May 4, 1900.

One mile east of Benavides is Piedras Pintas Creek which is dry most of the year except here and there water is kept alive probably by springs. Near where it is bridged and crossed by Texas Mexican Railroad is a pool which is never dry. Tastes strongly of sulfur. It is said that a piece of loose cotton is dragged lightly over its surface and a lighted match is turned to it, it will burn brightly with a blue flame like coal oil. Some think it is a kerosene reservoir—no careful investigation has been made...There must be millions in it. A good oil well would be a bonanza to the owner.

By 1900, the Piedras Pintas oil field was no longer a secret. Drilling began in earnest, and by the following year, the area had become a tourist attraction as curiosity seekers came to see the oil fields and others came to bathe in the sulfur springs. More importantly, acres were being leased by the thousands by “oil men.” One oilman had 150,000 acres under lease and others under negotiation. The going rate for oil leases was from \$150 to \$500/acre.⁶⁵

Land anywhere within two to three miles of Piedras Pintas was selling at a premium and everyone wanted to get into the act. John D. Cleary bought 100 acres at Piedras Pintas from James Miller for \$15 an acre. Miller sold 100 acres to J.W. Shaw and W.W. Meek for \$30/acre; Archie Parr bought 160 acres from Andrés Vela for \$36/acre; Ventura Flores sold 26 acres to County Clerk Pedro Eznal for \$50/acre; Crescencio Oliveira and wife sold 20 acres to M.D. Cohn for \$1, and other consideration of \$55/acre. With the added revenue to the county’s coffers from the oil activity, ranchers also received a tax break from the County Commissioners who reduced valuations of cattle

⁶⁵ “Water That Burns,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, July 26, 1885; “Duval County Oil Well,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, May 24, 1901.

from \$12 to \$7; horses and mules, from \$15 to \$10; sheep and goats from \$1 to 75¢ per head.⁶⁶

In the coming years, oil was to Duval County what farming had been to the Rio Grande Valley. Fortunately for Mexican Americans in Duval County, because of the nature of oil production compared to the labor required for harvesting crops, it never brought the numbers of Anglo Americans to Duval County that agriculture had brought to the Valley. Nor did it bring the racially divisive politics newcomers brought with them.

The economic boom of the oil fields brought other modern improvements to the county. While the telephone had been in San Diego as early as 1883, in 1908 a switchboard was installed in a new telephone office in San Diego, and poles were received, and lines were strung out giving San Diego an updated telephone system. Five years later, the *San Antonio Express* reported that San Diego had an electric plant for lighting its homes and streets.

The new awakening

As early as the 1880s Duval County Mexican Americans had begun to challenge Anglo American political dominance. In 1892, they were successful in electing the first Mexican American County Judge. For the first decade of the twentieth century, they managed to keep at least two of their own in countywide offices. A breakthrough came in 1910 when Mexican Americans elected four of their own to countywide office. They held better than half of the offices at the courthouse. In 1912, Mexican Americans held every

⁶⁶ “Oil Excitement in Duval County - Lands Selling at High Prices,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, June 14, 1901.

countywide office, including that of County Judge, except for the County Attorney who was an Anglo American.

The emergent Mexican American

The success in politics for Mexican Americans could have happened, given their dominant numbers. But those numbers had to be nurtured; although the ancestors of Mexican Americans in Duval County were not unfamiliar with self-rule. Under the early influences of José de Escandón, Mexicans had acquired an appreciation for a civil government tradition. As late as 1794, when Mexicans from the Escandón settlements of Mier and Camargo began to migrate to South Texas, public governance predominated in Nuevo Santander. Like their reliance on the land and not on other men for their subsistence, they relied on self-rule in their politics.⁶⁷

They also relied on each other. In 1898, they established a mutual aid society, the *Club Sociedad Mutualista Hijos de Hidalgo*, to promote their culture, as well as their welfare. The Club had a membership of 70 men, with José Elizondo as its president. They had their hall in San Diego. The society aimed to assist its members and the greater Mexican community. The *Corpus Christi Caller* pointed out that the organization had “created vast change in our Mexican population, orally and otherwise.” Through the early 1900s, other similar groups—such as *Logia Simón Bolívar Numero 4* and *Campamento Le fieros Porfirio Diaz Numero 2318*—existed in Duval County.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ *Tamaulipas, texto de sus historia, 1910-1921* (San Juan, Mixcoac, Mexico: Instituto de Investigaciones, 1990), 20–21.

⁶⁸ “From Duval County,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, September 22, 1899.

This continued growth in Mexican American self-confidence yielded increased results in the political arena. Every year they gained ground in the number of offices they held at the countywide level. Through the first two decades of the twentieth century, Mexican Americans held both the County Clerk and County Treasurer's offices. Except for two years, they occupied the office of Sheriff, who doubled up as the Tax Collector. Since before the close of the first decade, they filled the post of Tax Assessor. They did not fare as well in the principal offices of County Judge and County Attorney. Perhaps they lacked the self-confidence to run the entire county, which was the job of the County Judge. As for County Attorney, during this period no Mexican American in Duval County had a license to practice law.

While individually they may not have had the confidence to run the county, as a group they appeared to have no problem. In seven out of the ten years for which data is available, Mexican Americans held the majority at the County Commissioners table. In 1914, the entire Commissioners Court consisted of Mexican Americans, although there was one vacancy on the court with the election of County Commissioner Archie Parr to the Texas Senate. At the precinct level, twenty-five Mexican Americans presided over Justice of Peace courts, compared to 15 by Anglo Americans. Every Constable during this twenty-year period was Mexican American. In no other county in the Coastal Bend could Mexican Americans boast of such political success. Indeed, no county in the Coastal Bend would achieve these numbers until the end of the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century.

Los Pinches Rinches

With their political success, Mexican Americans invited special scrutiny. To some in the halls of power in Austin and other power centers in South Texas, Mexican

Americans in Duval County may have seemed a tad “uppity.” This situation no doubt was a matter for the Texas Rangers to investigate. The “*pinches rinches*,” as the Mexican American community knew the Rangers, did not enjoy much respect in Duval County. The Rangers had caused consternation for years, in cases large and small.

Mexicans were exposed to Ranger atrocities as early as 1840 when Rangers from San Patricio raided, plundered, and murdered Mexican traders along the Laredo-Corpus Christi Road. In 1880, a Company of nine Texas Rangers under the command of Thomas L. Oglesby had a camp in San Diego. Three years later, former Ranger Paulino Coy, who had been under Oglesby’s command in San Diego, accompanied by two other Rangers, killed Esquivel De Los Santos while executing a warrant. Four months later Coy, again accompanied by two Rangers, killed Cristóbal Salinas who allegedly had shot at one of the Rangers at a rancho near Concepción. In November 1886, during the political battles between the *Botas* and *Huaraches*, Rangers were sent to Duval County to keep order on Election Day. In 1888, the Rangers arrested Catarino Garza in Realitos on a charge of libel. Garza had made a name for himself in South Texas, from Eagle Pass to Corpus Christi, with his intense opposition to Mexican President Porfirio Diaz as well as his defense of the rights of Mexican Americans. A large crowd gathered, and Rangers chained Garza to prevent the Rangers from killing him trying to escape and being charged with murder as had been in a case from Rio Grande City heard in Duval County.

Table 13: Duval Countywide Elected Officials, 1900-1920

	1900	1902	1904	1906	1908	1910	1912*	1914	1916	1918	1920
County Judge	S.H Woods	S.H Woods	S.H Woods	S.H Woods	S.H Woods	S.H Woods		A.W. Tobin ¹	G.A. Parr	J.F. Clarkson	J.F. Clarkson
County Clerk	Pedro Eznal	Pedro Eznal	Pedro Eznal	Pedro Eznal	Pedro Eznal	Pedro Eznal		J.V. Palacios	J.V. Palacios	J.V. Palacios	J.V. Palacios
County Attorney	W.W. McCampbell	John L. George	John O. Luby	W.W. McCampbell	W.W. McCampbell	W.W. McCampbell		J.F. Clarkson	J.F. Clarkson		H.R. Clark
Treasurer	A.D. García	Julián Palacios		Clemente García	Crisóforo Hinojosa	Lino García		Alonso López	Alonso López	Leónidas Gonzales	Horacio Sáenz
County Surveyor	J.J. Dix			Hayes Dix	Hayes Dix	M.A. Muñoz			R.M. González	R.M. González	R.M. González
Sheriff	Manuel Rogers ¹	Manuel Rogers	Manuel Rogers	C.K. Gravis	A.W. Tobin	A.W. Tobin			A.W. Tobin	J.O. Treviño ³	Jesús Oliveira
Tax Assessor	John D. Cleary	John D. Cleary	John D. Cleary	John D. Cleary	Clemente García	Clemente García		W. L. Rogers ¹	T.G. Rogers ^{1,2}	T.G. Rogers	T.G. Rogers
Inspector Hides									M.A. Muñoz		

Source: Secretary of State Election Returns, Texas Library & Archives Commission.

Names in italics were Mexican Americans.

¹ These men had Anglo American surnames but were Mexican Americans.

² Appointed to replace W.L. Rogers who died.

³ Succeeded J. F. Sáenz who died.

* Data for 1912 is not available at the State Archives.

Table 14: Duval Precinct Elected Officials, 1900-1920

	1900	1902	1904	1906	1908	1910	1912	1914	1916	1918	1920
Commissioner Pct. 1	Charles Hoffman	Charles Hoffman	Charles Hoffman	Eliseo Martínez	D.C. Warne	J.W. Shaw		Luciano Hinojosa	Luciano Hinojosa	Luciano Hinojosa	Luciano Hinojosa
Commissioner Pct. 2	Archie Parr	Clemente García	Clemente García	Crisóforo Hinojosa	Archie Parr	Archie Parr			O.G. Allen	O.G. Allen	O.G. Allen
Commissioner Pct. 3	H.W. Garrett	C.T. Stillman	C.T. Stillman	A.J. Ayers	A.J. Ayers	Filiberto Peña		Eusebio Carrillo	Eusebio Carrillo	Eusebio Carrillo	Eusebio Carrillo
Commissioner Pct. 4	F.K. Ridder	M.G. Diaz	M.G. Diaz	M.G. Diaz	N. Couling	M.G. Diaz		Manuel Garza	Manuel Garza	Manuel Garza	Manuel Garza
JP, Pct. 1	J.D. Alcalá	Clark Lewis	Juan D. Alcalá	Juan D. Alcalá	R.M. González	A.C. Lewis		B. Miret	B. Miret	F. Lotto	F. Lotto
JP, Pct. 2			S.R. Peters			W. A. Tinney			W.A. Tinney	W.A. Tinney	W.A. Tinney
JP, Pct. 3	M.G. Diaz		Julián P. Rivera		Victoriano Leal	S.C. Navarro			Práxedis Sáenz	Práxedis Sáenz	Francisco Cantú
JP, Pct. 4	Charles Shaw		J.A. Roach		Filiberto Pena				Zaragoza López		
J.P. Pct. 5				Feliciano Cantú	Pablo Trevino	Feliciano Cantú		Domingo Reyes	Domingo Reyes	Cenobio Cantú	
J.P. Pct. 6				Rafael Arredondo	Rafael Arredondo				Rafael Arredondo	E.J. Rogers	S.S. Jamison
J.P. Pct. 7									O.H. Bone	O.H. Bone	
J.P. Pct. 8								Félix Vera	Teodoro Sendejo	Teodoro Sendejo	

Table 14: Continued

	1900	1902	1904	1906	1908	1910	1912	1914	1916	1918	1920
Constable Pct. 1	Antonio Anguiano	Antonio Anguiano	Antonio Anguiano	Antonio Anguiano	Aurelio Alemán	Aurelio Alemán		Aurelio Alemán	Pedro R. Garza	Ventura Sánchez	Emeterio Barrera
Constable Pct. 2						Crescencio Oliveira		Dolores Lozano	Isaac González	C. García	Camilo G. Ramirez
Constable Pct. 3	Hipólito Garza		José Palacios			Mauricio Palacios			Filomeno Martínez	Ismael Chapa	Ismael Chapa
Constable Pct. 4			Liborio Barrera		Santiago Sanmiguel				Abelardo Pérez		
Constable Pct. 5					Casimiro Lozano				Liborio Barrera	Casimiro Lozano	
Constable Pct. 6				Fortunato Martínez						L.L. Coleman	
Constable Pct. 7									Jesús Villarreal	Flavio García	
Constable Pct. 8								Amado Sáenz	Mariano Benavides	Mariano Benavides	

Source: Secretary of State Election Returns, Texas State Library & Archives Commission.

The Rangers were very active in Duval County during Catarino Garza's revolutionary efforts.⁶⁹

As the new century dawned, the Rangers' activities in Duval County did not wane. In 1901, Texas Rangers shot and killed Pablo Flores, a suspected bootlegger, at his home. An inquest concluded that Flores had fired at the Rangers first, thus clearing the Rangers of wrongdoing. The Rangers were also called to investigate and assist local law enforcement on two highly charged assassinations in San Diego. In 1907, Rangers assisted the local sheriff in the investigation of the murder of John Cleary, the longtime Democratic Tax Assessor involved in a hotly contested reelection race. In 1912, the Rangers were again sent to Duval County by the governor to help with the investigation of the assassination of three Mexican American leaders by three Anglo Americans. The

⁶⁹ Wagner, *Disputed Territory*, 59; "AncestryHeritageQuest.Com - 1880 United States Federal Census"; "Killed While Resisting Arrest," *Corpus Christi Caller*, December 9, 1883; "Coy Gets Another Man," *Corpus Christi Caller*, January 6, 1884; "Frontier Ranger Battalion, Company C Monthly Reports," n.d., Texas Library and Archives; "Notes from Realitos," *Corpus Christi Caller*, September 30, 1888.; "AncestryHeritageQuest.Com - 1880 United States Federal Census," accessed September 10, 2018, <https://www.ancestryheritagequest.com/interactive/6742/4244720-00598?backurl=https%3a%2f%2fsearch.ancestryheritagequest.com%2fsearch%2fdb.aspx%3fdbid%3d6742%26path%3d&ssrc=&backlabel=ReturnBrowsing#?imageId=4244720-00634>; "Killed While Resisting Arrest," *Corpus Christi Caller*, December 9, 1883; "Coy Gets Another Man," *Corpus Christi Caller*, January 6, 1884; "Frontier Ranger Battalion, Company C Monthly Reports"; "Notes from Realitos."

following year the governor asked Texas Rangers to go to Duval County to investigate “flouting of liquor laws in San Diego.”⁷⁰

The Rangers next played a role in tampering down the 1915 irredentist plot concocted in San Diego, which called for Mexicans to rise in revolt and retake the land lost by Mexico in the Mexican American War and create a new nation in the American Southwest. The Plan of San Diego was signed in San Diego by a group of Mexican expatriates living there in exile. Several had connections to San Diego. Ironically, none of the violence that sprung from attempts to implement the Plan of San Diego took place in the town that bore its name. The Rangers most likely played a role in the arrest of two San Diego men, Manuel Flores and Anatolio González whose names were the same as two of the signers of the Plan. The two were released after authorities realized they had the wrong men. The Texas Rangers were said to have executed as many as 100 and perhaps as many as 300 Mexican “bandits” throughout South Texas because of the Plan of San Diego.⁷¹

⁷⁰ “End of Pablo Flores,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, August 23, 1901; “No Clue to Assassin of Cleary, Officers and Rangers Working on the Case The Theories Are Many, But None of Them Have Afforded the Officers Any Assistance In Their Efforts to Unravel Mystery,” *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller*, January 3, 1908; *Charles H. Harris and Louis R. Sadler, The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution: The Bloodiest Decade, 1910-1920* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2004), 276, 311-312, 402. For more information on the Plan of San Diego see Benjamin Heber Johnson, *Revolution in Texas: How a Forgotten Rebellion and Its Bloody Suppression Turned Mexicans into Americans*, Western Americana series (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003).

⁷¹ Thompson, *A Wild and Vivid Land*, 140–141; “U.S. Marshall Yesterday Noon Arrested Anatolio Gonzalez, Plan to Murder Americans,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, February 16, 1915.

Archie Parr and the Rangers were not on friendly terms. While ordinarily, the Rangers supported the power structure, in Parr's case they supported the landowners trying to depose him. Parr had no need for the Rangers, who had a poor record in dealing with his Mexican American constituents.

Despite the Plan of San Diego origins, Mexican Americans in San Diego and Duval County appeared content with their station in life. Anglo Americans, however, were fleeing to Corpus Christi. In 1915, the *Corpus Christi Caller* reported that only 13 Anglo Americans remained in San Diego. "Mexicans" in San Diego were said to be "armed and buying ammunition in large quantities." The Army headquartered in Brownsville ordered five soldiers to San Diego, and the Ranger captain stationed in Alice claimed that he had a request to send Rangers to San Diego. Duval political boss Parr, however, asked the Army to remove its detachment from San Diego and opposed the governor's appointment of a Texas Ranger in Duval County. Parr said there was no need for Rangers in Duval County; that his political opponents wanted the Rangers there to harass "our people." And Parr may have been on to something as complaints reached the governor "that Rangers were not needed to cover elections in 'white communities' like Corpus Christi but should be sent to Mexican towns like San Diego." Indeed in 1915 Rangers spent three weeks in San Diego giving cover to Anglo Americans seeking an investigation into the financial records of Duval County.⁷²

⁷² Harris and Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, 97, 106, 184–185.

In the 1918 Senatorial election Rangers ostensibly came to Duval County to help Parr's opponent. In the process, the Rangers "told Hispanic voters that they would go to jail if they were illiterate and tried to vote." Parr won the Democratic Primary, but his opponent ran a write-in campaign in November, during which Rangers "supervised the voting in Hispanic precincts in Duval, Cameron, Hidalgo, Nueces, and Starr counties." After the election, two Rangers reportedly got drunk and threatened the life of a Duval County Constable. Another San Diego resident, Virginia Yaeger complained to the House-Senate committee investigating the Rangers that Rangers were a "lawless breed of highwayman" who had abused her and had abused Mexican Americans. At the start of World War I when many Mexicans and some Mexican Americans returned to Mexico to avoid the draft, Rangers played free and loose with the law. Jesus Villareal of Duval County told investigators looking into Ranger malfeasance that Rangers tortured him because they wanted him to confess to transporting draft dodgers across the border. Villareal who was the elected Constable for Duval County Precinct 7 said the Rangers "tortured him by suffocation and pistol-whipped him."⁷³

Archie Parr takes over

The focus of this paper is the Parr Machine's relationship with Mexican Americans in Duval County. Several books are available on the machine's relationship with state and national politicians, his place in the Progressive movement, his election controversies, etc. The reader should consult these books for the history of the Parr

⁷³ Ibid., 423–424, 436–438.

Machine: *Boss Rule in South Texas: The Progressive Era; The Duke of Duval, the Life and Times of George B. Parr; The Fall of the Duke of Duval; and The Dukes of Duval County.*⁷⁴

At the dawn of the twentieth century in the Rio Grande Valley, political bosses began to lose their power to newcomers who did not understand the old ways. Often the struggle between newcomers and the old-timers was over who would hold the reigns of county governments that had the power to tax and provide public services. Always present in this conflict over political power was the question of ethnicity. While Duval County experienced some of the changes Montejano addresses, it was not affected by all. For example, Mexican Americans in Duval County did not experience “dispossession” of their land; political power did not slip from their hands; nor were they “segregated into their quarters.”⁷⁵

Two important killings occurred in Duval County early in the new century that cast a dye on the future of its politics and its people. The prime beneficiary was a relative newcomer named Archie Parr.

Parr lost his father at a very young age and his mother, assisted by her sisters and her older brother John S. Givens, raised him. His uncle provided the young Archie with a male figure and his early life opportunities. In 1882, Givens was practicing law in Duval County, and no doubt assisted his young 22-year-old nephew get a job at the Lott &

⁷⁴ Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas*; Lynch, *The Duke of Duval*; Clark, *The Fall of the Duke of Duval*; Carrozza, *The Dukes of Duval County*.

⁷⁵ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 110–113.

Nelson cattle operation. Givens had previously secured his nephew work as a cowboy at the Coleman-Fulton Pasture Company, one of his clients. It was at this job as a cowboy that Parr first encountered Mexican Americans. The vaqueros at the ranch took the young boy under their charge. His move to manage the Lott & Nelson operation also brought him into close contact with Mexican American ranch hands, and no doubt with Mexican Americans in general, who were prevalent in that part of Duval County. He learned their language and customs and considered them friends. It was a friendship that served him well throughout his life in politics.⁷⁶

Parr made his entry into Duval County politics in 1896 when voters in Precinct 3, which included the Benavides area, elected him County Commissioner. He served through 1900 when he also served as chairman of the Duval County Democratic Party. After an eight-year absence, he returned for a second term on the Commissioners Court in 1908. That same year someone murdered John Cleary, a Parr political opponent, in a restaurant in San Diego. Rumors quickly spread that the killing was politically motivated, but another scenario was that Cleary's murder was a business deal gone bad. Authorities arrested two Cleary business associates who were in on an oil well venture with him, along with a Mexican American named Candelario Sáenz who was believed to have fired the deadly shot. In a report that would not muster editorial approval in today's media, the *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller* noted that the prevalent opinion was that the shooter was

⁷⁶ Alfredo E. Cárdenas, "Givens, John Slye," Handbook of Texas Online, June 15, 2010, accessed September 10, 2018, <https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fgi57>.

not a white man since Cleary, an unsuspecting victim, was shot from behind, from a hiding place, with a shotgun. This scenario “would lead the average man to believe that Cleary met his death at the hands of a Mexican,” the *Caller* reported. A white man, however, must have had a hand in it the paper went on. These were just opinions; however, they were very plausible, the newspaper added. The grand jury no-billed Cleary’s business associates and indicted Sáenz. After witnesses died of natural causes authorities did not convict anyone for Cleary’s killing.⁷⁷

Whether Cleary’s killing was politically motivated or a business deal that went bad, it was a political boon for Parr’s political fortunes. It removed Parr’s chief opponent for the leadership of the Democratic Party. Before Cleary’s murder, the local newspaper *La Libertad* opined in its columns that “San Diego’s history had enjoyed unequal harmony.” But on May 18, 1912, three Anglo Americans shot and killed three Mexican American officials in front of the courthouse, and everything changed. Parr had instigated the election to incorporate the town of San Diego. He reasoned this move would provide more elected positions and jobs for his political friends. Anglo Americans and old family Mexican Americans opposed the idea and three of their members, Charles K. Gravis, Frank Robinson, and Dr. S.H. Roberts, took matters into their own hands. As the polls

⁷⁷ “County Election Results” (Texas Secretary of State, 1892 1890), Texas State Archives; “District Court in Duval,” *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller*, April 17, 1908; “No Clue to Assassin of Cleary Officers and Rangers Working on the Case The Theories Are Many But None of Them Have Afforded the Officers Any Assistance In Their Efforts to Unravel Mystery,” *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller*, January 3, 1908; “The Lawsons Released,” *Corpus Christi Weekly Caller*, April 1908; Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas*, 175.

opened, they shot and killed Candelario Sáenz, Antonio Anguiano, and Pedro Eznal. Sáenz was the same man indicted for Cleary's murder. Anguiano was a deputy sheriff, and Eznal was the elected County Clerk. After the massacre, which was over in minutes, Mexican Americans stayed home, and the referendum was defeated. It was a bittersweet victory for those opposing the incorporation of San Diego, and it marked the birth of the Parr political dynasty that ruled over Duval County for three-quarters of a century.⁷⁸

When Parr received word of the shooting at his ranch near Benavides, he promptly put his family on the first train to Corpus Christi, after which he went to San Diego to help the Mexican American community through the crisis. He advised them to put up their guns. He told them revenge was not the answer. This incident and Parr's response sealed the future of Duval County. F. de P. González, the publisher of *La Libertad*, presciently wrote in the August 3, 1912 issue:

While Parr lives the people will be loyal to him, and they will not lose. They will enjoy triumph after triumph until all citizens of the county come together under the banner of Parr's party.

The trial of the three Anglo Americans was moved to Richmond in Fort Bend County outside of Houston. An Anglo American jury promptly acquitted them. Back in Duval County, Parr began to consolidate his power. Despite assassination threats against

⁷⁸ F. de P. González, "La Libertad. (San Diego, Tex.), Ed. 1 Saturday, May 25, 1912," Newspaper, The Portal to Texas History, last modified May 25, 1912, accessed August 30, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1009578/m1/1/>; Dudley M Lynch, *The Duke of Duval: The Life & Times of George B. Parr: A Biography* (Waco, Tex.: Texian Press, 1976), 3–5; "In Memoriam," *La Libertad*, October 12, 1912.

him in San Diego and Hebbbronville, his slate swept the July Democratic Primary and the November General Election, and he declared his candidacy for State Senator. In 1915 he took his seat in the Texas Senate where he served for twenty-two years.

At the beginning in his role as political boss of Duval County, which he readily acknowledged, newcomers such as Ed Lasater from Brooks County as well as old-timers like Republican James O. Luby challenged him. Often they got help from Austin. “Progressives across the state came to regard Parr a symbol of the worst qualities in Texas politics; corruption, violence, and intransigent opposition to reform.” In time, the Austin political crowd recognized Parr’s power and influence and sought out his help. He developed especially close ties with Governor James Ferguson. His first major challenge came from a group of landowners led by Lasater, who alleged extensive corruption, including chicanery with the county’s finances. Lasater achieved some early legal wins, but in the end, Parr prevailed, aided in no small part by the suspicious burning of the County Courthouse which housed the financial records Lasater was having audited.⁷⁹

Parr’s initiatives at the start of his senatorial career point to a desire to strengthen his hold on Duval County, which had been his modus operandi from early on in his political career. As soon as 1911, he unsuccessfully tried to move the county courthouse from San Diego to Benavides, his bailiwick. The next year he decided to incorporate San

⁷⁹ “Archie Parr Says He Is Boss of Duval County Committee Meeting at Austin Developed Some Illuminating Testimony,” *Corpus Christi Caller*, February 3, 1915; Harris and Sadler, *The Texas Rangers and the Mexican Revolution*, 11–12; Anders, *Boss Rule in South Texas*, 174; Dale Lasater, *Falfurrias: Ed C. Lasater and the Development of South Texas*. (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1998), 94–119.

Diego, with the already noted colossal failure. Parr then turned his influence in the Senate to try to advance his political ambitions. No doubt, influenced by the 1913 creation of Jim Hogg County, whose primary population came from Parr's sphere of influence in Duval County, Parr got the idea that formation of counties could add to his political power. The same year Jim Hogg County was created, Parr maneuvered to form Dunn County out of Duval County. The courts ultimately invalidated the enabling legislation, and Parr went back to the well and attempted to establish Lanham County from Duval County. It too failed, but 500 residents of Duval County seemed to have had enough and petitioned the state to dissolve Duval County and attach it to Live Oak County. Parr succeeded in beating back this initiative, as he did whatever his opponents and the state threw at him.⁸⁰

Birth of a new era

While Montejano viewed this time in Anglo American and Mexican American relations as the death of an age, people in Duval County saw the bottle was half full, and they saw the transition as the birth of a new era. It took a tragedy that claimed three of their leaders, but Mexican Americans finally saw the political opening they had been

⁸⁰ Dudley M Lynch, *The Duke of Duval: The Life & Times of George B. Parr : A Biography* (Waco, Tex.: Texian Press, 1976), 13; "Parr and Dunn Lost In Fight For Creation of Lanham County," *Corpus Christi Caller*, February 11, 1915; "Two Years Prior Pat Dunn County Was Created But Courts Through Out Bill That Created It Because of Mistake," *Corpus Christi Caller*, February 11, 1915; "Archie Parr Plan for Division of Twenty-Eighth Judicial District Accepted by Dunn; Bill Passed," *Corpus Christi Caller*, March 5, 1915.

La Libertad.

SEMANARIO LIBERAL

Debe circular la verdad, aunque sea a costa de la vida.

Epoca 2.^a

San Diego, Texas, Mayo 23 de 1912.

Núm. 460

LUCTUOSO DIA.

El 18 del presente todo el pueblo de San Diego, estaba a la expectativa del resultado que tuviera la elección, que ese día tenía lugar, esperando el público que el número de votos, fallara si San Diego, llegaría a la categoría de Ciudad ó continuaría como hasta hoy.

Desgraciadamente no pasó así, pues a las 8 de la mañana hora en que se abrió la casilla, surgió un disgusto, según lo han platicado los testigos que concitaron a Sr. Pedro Eznal, y un americano, y para evitar las proporciones de este, fueron los Sres. Candelario Saenz y Antonio Anguiano, pero cuando estos se dirigían al lugar, unos tiros certeros tirados por americanos que estaban cerca de ellos, les hicieron caer. Anguiano recibió un tiro de carabina en medio de la espalda, quedando muerto como fulminado por rayo, a la vez era balaceado Saenz y Pedro Eznal, que caían también sin vida. Eznal y Saenz, no traían ni navaja en el bolsillo, Anguiano tenía pistola, pero no tuvo oportunidad ni de tocarla.

La opinión general aquí es de que se tenía fraguado ese infame plan, pues desde el momento que asistieron al lugar de la elección, armados sin ser empleados, los pensamientos no deben haber estado normados en buena fe ni en la ley.

Los Sres. Dr. S. A. Roberts Chas. Gray y Frank Robin-

son, han sido puestos bajo fianza de \$15.000 cada uno para ser juzgados ante una Corte de Distrito.

Para principiar el juicio llegó aquí un día después el Hon. Sr. Fiscal del Distrito John I. Kleiber, quien con la habilidad y talento que tiene logró tanto calmar los ánimos como preparar la persecución.

Acompañado el Sr. Fiscal vino un Capitán de Rangers y cuatro subalternos quienes no hicieron alarde, corrieron consideraciones que se merecen el pueblo, que en todo ha demostrado cordura pues no se escuchan imprecaciones, lo único que se desea es obtener justicia y hay que esperarla con confianza, porque lo acontecido no es para menos.

Para no entorpecer la acción de la justicia, no entramos en detalles.

San Diego, está contristado, pues en su historia no se habían registrado sucesos tan dolorosos.

Tres hogares han quedado llenos de luto, pidiendo Justicia.

Reciban los estimados de las víctimas, nuestro más sentido pesame.

El funeral que tuvo lugar el mismo día, fué presidido por la Logia 'Simón Bolívar' Número 4. Campamento Leñeros "Porfirio Díaz" Número 2348, Sociedad Mutual "Hijos de Hidalgo" y numeroso acompañamiento.



SEÑOR
Pedro Eznal.

Publicamos uno de los últimos retratos, del que fué para nosotros no un amigo, sino un buen hermano.

Pedro era natural de Ciudad Juárez, Chihuahua, Texas, pasó sus primeros años, viniendo a Texas, muy joven, trabajando en diferentes casas de comercio, en Roma, Laredo, y Corpus Christi. También se estableció por su cuenta, primero en Laredo, Texas, y después en Benavides, girando capital de consideración.

En política siempre tomó parte activa, siendo por algunos años Comisionado del Condado y uno de los que aprobaron el gasto de los Puentes Públicos que tanto beneficio han dado al Condado. También desempeñó el empleo de Asesor y en su parte técnica no le faltó el desempeño satisfactorio la Secretaría del Condado y Distrito, siendo en la política uno de los principales factores, por su popularidad y habilidad, lo que le atrajo enemistades y avidades políticas, que al fin le llevaron de manera infame al sepulcro el 18 del presente.

Los 23 años de edad...

Pedro pertenecía a varias Logias, como la Logia "Simón Bolívar" y "Porfirio Díaz" Núm. 2348, de la que era Consul Comandante, a la Logia Simón Bolívar, Num. 4 siendo su Secretario, y de la Logia americana "Caballeros de Honor" de la que era Cajero.

Su muerte ha sido generalmente sentida, hasta por sus enemigos honrados, pues estos querían vencerle, pero en buena lid, no como fué.

Pedro fué para muchos pobres un protector, su mano nunca se cerró para impartir auxilio, por eso y sus otras muchas cualidades, el asesinato causó en él, abundantes lágrimas, las que por mucho tiempo no se secarán.

Sírvanse recibir nuestro más sincero pesame: su estimable esposa Sr. Juanita G. de Eznal, su apreciable hija Srta. Elisa E. de Treviño y demás deudos.

Descanse en paz el amigo leal!

LIBROS.

Los siguientes libros los mandamos por Correo, franco de porte, al recibir la orden acompañada del valor. Los pedidos mayores de \$5. se mandan registrados por nuestra cuenta.

- Las obras dirigidas a...
- Los Principios de Aritmética y Sistema Métrico Decimal, un volumen de 320 páginas, en español, por el Sr. Rodríguez Navas y...
 - Mantilla, libro 1.º de lectura, uno de 200 páginas...
 - Mantilla libro 2.º de lectura, uno de 40 páginas...
 - Mantilla libro 3.º de lectura, uno de 50 páginas...
 - Gramática Castellana, uno de 20 páginas...
 - Vocabulario de los Verbos, uno de 20 páginas...
 - Definiciones y Reglas de Aritmética y Sistema Métrico Decimal, un volumen de 320 páginas, en español, por el Sr. Rodríguez Navas y...
 - Con Sillas de San Miguel, uno de 20 páginas...
 - Diccionario de la Lengua Española, por el Sr. Rodríguez Navas y...
 - Alfabeto de la Filosofía y Letras, uno de 20 páginas...

Figure 2: Copy of the issue of La Libertad covering the shooting at the Duval County Courthouse.

seeking. They had seen Parr come to their aide after the fateful 1912 massacre at the courthouse. Unlike other Anglo American politicians, Parr was willing to share his power with Mexican Americans, encouraging and helping them in their desires to hold public office. Sure, Parr was still an Anglo American, but he was simpatico. Parr had a more compassionate approach to their problems. He understood their plight. He was willing to share the political pie by sharing political offices and jobs with them. As one observer described in a somewhat Biblical tone:

Parr's approach was feudal, and his method of looking out for his constituents was paternalistic. Parr ran a one-man welfare department, but some of the funds trickled back to his Mexican supporters: "When they were hungry, he fed them; when they were jobless, he found them work; and when their wives and babies fell sick, he paid the doctors' bills. It was only natural that they should vote en bloc for his candidates for public office."⁸¹

Together, as *La Libertad* publisher had suggested, they won election after election. They mourned their lost brothers but looked to the future with hope and anticipation.

⁸¹ Lasater, *Falfurrias*, 115–116.

RENEWAL

Montejano's assumptions regarding "segregation" between 1920 and 1940 do not apply to the Duval County of that time. At the core of Montejano's assumption is that a modern agriculture industry replaced the ranching society. That was not the case in Duval County. It was the discovery of marketable oil in the county that introduced modernity. In his discussion on signs of "modernity," Montejano fails to mention the introduction of the oil industry to Texas, including South Texas. The oil industry was a crucial component in Texas' advancement into the twentieth century.

The oil industry was particularly vital in Duval County where commercial farming never took root. A scanning of the *Benavides Facts* in the 1930s reveals oilmen were drilling new wells on a weekly basis in Duval County. The oil industry provided good paying jobs for Mexican Americans, oil royalties for landowners, including Mexican Americans, and tax revenue for the county and school districts, which of course meant an increase in Parr's slush fund for patronage. An aspect of the oil industry and the Parr Machine that has gone unnoticed is the role the industry's taxes played in Parr's ability to extend his machine's life far beyond the other political machines in South Texas. For many years, Duval County had the highest property tax rate of any county in Texas. While the oil companies could pay the higher taxes, Parr's followers could not and did not. To keep his constituents happy, Parr would assess high taxes which the oil companies paid, but he overlooked delinquent taxes of his followers. It was not unusual to see properties with decades of delinquent taxes. In 1978, after the crumbling of the Parr Machine, "The List of Lands and Lots Delinquent on June 30, 1979, for Taxes of 1978 in Duval County" ran for 406 pages and totaled \$346,818.26. That was for that one

year alone. In 1993, Duval County had \$4 million in delinquent taxes. Duval County Tax Collector Zaragosa Gutierrez III told the local newspaper that “Properties overburdened with **delinquent taxes are a legacy people still have from past political schemes.**”⁸²

As part of the ascendance of agriculture, Montejano contends that the central focus was that of a “racial character.” Again, in Duval County, much of the racial or more precisely ethnic considerations were removed from the equation with the ascendance of the Parr political machine, which had Mexican Americans as its essential cog and thus protected and promoted the group rather than demean their value. Montejano also places much emphasis on the rise of segregated schools, which did not exist in Duval County. There were no “Mexican” and “Anglo” schools in Duval County. Finally, Montejano investigates the work arrangements between the Anglo American farmers and Mexican American laborers. While there was a reservoir of laborers in Duval County, the absence of modern farming techniques did not result in the labor abuses that Montejano described, which focused on three techniques to control Mexican American laborers:

1. “violence, coercion and law” was required through the use of undemocratic political measures;
2. “physical separation...was necessary” requiring “elaborate social rules” to make sure the Mexican Americans knew their place, and

⁸² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 159; *List of Lands and Lots Delinquent on June 30, 1979 for Taxes of 1978 in Duval County*, Microfilm, n.d., Texas Library and Archives; Alfredo E. Cardenas, “Delinquent Tax Situation Not as Bad as It Seems, Says County Tax Collector,” *Duval County Picture* (San Diego, Texas, September 22, 1993), accessed November 9, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth1005476/m1/1/zoom/>.

3. a “culture of race-thinking” was developed and fostered to make Mexican Americans feel inferior to Anglo Americans.

These rules did not take root in Duval County where the overwhelming majority was Mexican American, and Anglo Americans learned early on to work with the majority. Not to say that Boss rule in Duval County was a panacea, plenty of poverty existed just not of the same character that was prevalent in the Rio Grande Valley or other agricultural counties.⁸³

Discrimination

The place where most Mexican Americans in Texas first experienced discrimination was in school. Before enrolling in school family and the community sheltered most Mexican American children from discriminatory experiences. Other families like them lived in their *barrio*. They spoke Spanish, ate traditional South Texas meals, and were showered with love and care by parents, grandparents, *padrinos*, *tías*, and *vecinos*.

In Duval County, Mexican Americans did not experience rampant or systemic discrimination on the scale that others did. With a population of ninety percent Mexican American it was hard for young children to encounter Anglo Americans and when they did they were often bilingual and some bicultural. Many with Anglo American names were Mexican American since their Anglo American ancestor was usually limited to one man who likely was no longer living. The record is void of evidence indicating that the offspring of the first intermarriage ever married other Anglo Americans. Many of the

⁸³ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, 159–161.

schools in Duval County, in its early years, were 100 percent Mexican American and were so for most of its history to the present time. Unlike many of their friends and *primos* in neighboring schools, they never experienced overt discrimination at school. There were schools in which Anglo Americans had more students where bias may have raised its ugly head. It, however, was not widespread and probably not as overt as has been noted in other communities, such as the neighboring town of Alice in Jim Wells County where as late as the 1960s students felt that the school reserved all the choice positions, such as cheerleaders, student council, etc. for Anglo American students. Many Mexican American students that attended school in Duval County with Anglo Americans suggest that there was no racial discrimination, but that children of the political elite did receive favoritism.

For more than a quarter-century, the county judge doubled as the county school superintendent and oversaw the school system. By 1908, the state superintendent's report indicates that San Diego had its own independent school district. The state superintendent's report for 1922 provided more information than earlier releases and included a "school census" and "total enrollment." The census totaled 3,057 while those enrolled numbered only 1,976 of which fifty-seven were in high school and 1,919 in the elementary schools. The superintendent's report indicated that the county's illiterate rate was 18.7 percent, ranking it 109th in the state.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ Annie Webb Blanton, Twenty-Second Biennial Report of the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, State of Texas, School Sessions 1920-21, 1921-22 (Austin, TX, n.d.), 147, 152, Texas State Library and Archives Commission.

School district board minutes for San Diego became available in the 1930s, providing greater details on school personnel. In January-March 1932, board minutes indicate that every member of the school board was Mexican American; they included F.C. Perez, President; E.A. Cadena, Secretary; Alonso Lopez; Dan U. Garcia; Jesus Oliveira; C.G. Garcia; and Jose Maria Sepulveda. The Tax Collector, E.E. Pena, was also Mexican American. O.N. McKinney, an Anglo American, was school principal. Dolores Barrera was the librarian. The teaching staff included twenty-four teachers, of which thirteen were Mexican American. By 1944, the number of Mexican American teachers was twenty-seven with only three Anglo American teachers in the district's employment. In March 1932, the board selected Maria Garcia as Superintendent for the 1932-1933 school year. From that point forward, except for a brief period in the mid-1960s, every superintendent of the San Diego school district was a Mexican American. By comparison, the Brooks ISD selected its first Mexican American superintendent in 1974; the Alice ISD hired its first superintendent Mexican American Superintendent in 1985; Kingsville ISD in 1991; and Corpus Christi ISD in 1993.⁸⁵

In the early years of Duval County most Anglo Americans lived in San Diego, but after the shooting at the courthouse in 1914, most of the old timers left. In the first half of the twentieth century, San Diego was almost 100 percent Mexican American and the growing oil town of Benavides and the newly founded town of Freer had substantial

⁸⁵ "Minute Book No. 1" (San Diego Independent School District, n.d.), 1, 6, 8-10, 297, School Superintendent. Note: No detailed information is available on the minutes about student activities and the district did not have copies of student publications from the earliest years.

Anglo American populations, although they were still majority Mexican American. At that time Freer was part of the Benavides school district, explaining why Benavides had the larger of the school district in the county. That also tells why the Benavides school district had a more significant presence of Anglo Americans as students, teachers, administrators, and board members.

A review of the *Benavides Facts* for 1939-1941 suggested little interest in the school board, as the same members were running for reelection. The only two names provided in the newspaper were of W.C. Barton and D.C. Chapa, both Mexican Americans. The 1942 and 1946 Benavides High School yearbooks indicate all board members were Mexican American, including Chapa, Octavio Saenz, A.C. Canales, Barton, C.G. Ramirez, and Jesus Garza. By 1955, with the Anglo American dominated town of Freer experiencing growth, the school board included four Anglo Americans and three Mexican Americans. In 1967, five Mexican Americans were on the board along with two Anglo Americans.⁸⁶

The Spring issue of the school's 1933 monthly magazine, *The Benavides Scholar*, provides valuable insights into the role Mexican Americans and Anglo Americans played in the school. The magazine had a staff of sixteen with four Anglo Americans, including the editor. Of the seven-member editorial board, five were Mexican Americans. The twenty-two-member graduating class, the largest to that point, was led by Emil Barwis as valedictorian and Oralia Canales salutatorian. Manuel Bozada delivered the class address.

⁸⁶ "The Benavides Scholar," *The Benavides Scholar*, 1933, 1, 2, 4, 5, 10; *El Cenizo* (Benavides, Texas, 1942, 1947, 1955, 1967).

The school orchestra, composed of ten Mexican Americans and two Anglo Americans, performed at the ceremony. One of the more active clubs was the English Dramatic Club, which had eleven members, nine Mexican Americans and two Anglo Americans, including its President. The club sponsor was H.O. Duty. The pattern appears to be that Mexican Americans dominated membership, but Anglo Americans, both students, and sponsors filled the top leadership positions.

At the grammar school level, four of the teachers were Mexican American, and two were Anglo Americans. Samuel B. Garcia was the class sponsor. The graduating class for the grammar school totaled thirty-one, with twenty-eight Mexican Americans and three Anglo Americans. Both the salutatorian and valedictorian were Mexican American. Over at Freer, whose school was relatively new since the town had only been in existence since 1925, only four students completed seventh grade and five the eighth grade. All were Anglo Americans, with no Mexican Americans in either group. The teachers at the small Freer school were all Anglo Americans in keeping with the town's dominant population.⁸⁷

By 1939 the Benavides High School senior class had grown to thirty-five with twenty-four Mexican Americans and eleven Anglo Americans. R. W. Milligan was the superintendent, and the board hired seven new teachers, six Mexican Americans and one Anglo American. The high school debate team was composed of all Anglo Americans, while Mexican Americans were elected president of the band and named editor of the

⁸⁷ "The Benavides Scholar," 13–14, 16–17.

school paper. The high school and primary school principals were Anglo Americans while the grammar school principal was a Mexican American. The teacher ratio remained the same in 1942, including four Anglo Americans and three Mexican Americans; at the grammar school the six teachers were split evenly, and at the primary school, nine of the twelve teachers were Mexican American.⁸⁸

In 1942, the editor of the Benavides High School first yearbook, *El Cenizo*, was Phyllis Kent. The faculty included eight Anglo Americans and three Mexican Americans. The two sponsors were Anglo Americans, and the four class officers were all Mexican Americans. Of the twenty-three graduates, seventeen were Mexican Americans and six Anglo Americans. The “best looking” girl and boy were both Anglo Americans. Mexican American students received honors for football queen, the most popular boy and girl, and the drum major. It appears that discrimination may have indeed existed in the Benavides schools, but that is difficult to confirm without data that is not available. Were the “best looking” boy and girl selected by the Anglo sponsors or were they chosen by a vote of the student body, in which case the Mexican American students made the choices?⁸⁹

⁸⁸ “Music and Debates Are Featured at High School,” Jim Hogg County Enterprise (Hebbronville, Texas, March 10, 1938); “35 Seniors to Graduate Here in Auditorium,” Benavides Facts (Benavides, Texas, May 19, 1939); “Benavides High School Bank Elects E. Garcia Pres.,” Benavides Facts (Benavides, Texas, September 15, 1939); “School Paper Staff Named by Katie B. Adams,” Benavides Facts (Benavides, Texas, November 3, 1939); “Registration of All Students Starts on Tuesday,” Benavides Facts (Be, September 4, 1942).

⁸⁹ Kent, *El Cenizo*.

Duval County students attended integrated schools and were active participants and recipients of what the schools and teachers had to offer. The teacher corps was majority Mexican American, especially in San Diego. Still, the educational system was not seen as ideal by some in the community. In 1962, the Republican Party's candidate for County Judge, the beloved Dr. E.E. Dunlap, relayed a conversation he had with George Parr in the early 1940s. After Dr. Dunlap explained his views on education, Parr reportedly replied:

Doctor, if you educate a Mexican, he is as smart as you are, and then you can't control him. If we had good schools, the oil field workers will settle down and put their children in school here in Duval County; we can't control that type of people. If our schools are bad, the Anglos will live in Alice and elsewhere, putting their children in better schools and driving to work, but they won't vote here.

The doctor also echoed the sentiments of Manuel Sanchez, the leader of the Freedom Party. Sanchez told a Spanish language newspaper in Corpus Christi, "The most condemning fact concerning our schools is the fact that now and in the past, all the members of the school board of trustees, that could afford to do so, have sent their children away to private or boarding schools..." Sanchez added that the political machine had forgotten the people. They had little interest in the county's rural schools which were no better than "shacks" and dangerous for the children who walked miles in muddy roads to attend classes.⁹⁰

⁹⁰ Dr. E.E. Dunlap, "Resume of General Election, Duval Co. Nov. 6, 1962," November 6, 1962, Texas Library and Archives; "A Los Votantes del Condado Duval," *La Verdad* (Corpus Christi, Tex., July 4, 1952).

Perhaps Sanchez was engaging in political hyperbole regarding Duval County's lack of interest in its rural student population. Because of their remote locations and the lack of adequate county roads to reach them, it may have appeared to some that the county was disinterested. But the county operated a common school system in the rural areas, and every small ranching community had a school, in addition to the rural schools run by the San Diego and Benavides school districts. There were thirty-six teachers in the county's payroll. In 1930, Duval County had 1,080 enrolled students. Ten years later, the county's school population shot up somewhat to 2,022 of which 1,233 were enrolled. The student population in the county's rural schools exceeded those of either independent school district in the county.

Indeed, Parr may have looked at a good education for the children as a pressure release valve for his political operation. There were not enough jobs to be had in Duval County to support the growing educated population, so those who had obtained a college degree, and they were many, could go to other communities and find good jobs. To be sure many, especially teachers, came back to Duval County, but the numbers of educated professionals from Duval County, including from its rural communities, that spread throughout the state and other parts of the nation are legion.

Parr Machine solidifies its base

At the start of the 1920s, Archie Parr had solidified his hold on Duval County politics, and Mexican Americans were participating in the process in meaningful ways. In 1922, every county elected official, except three, were Mexican Americans. Only three Anglo Americans had offices at the courthouse, and two were Parr's relatives. Parr's son Givens Parr was County Judge and his brother-in-law O.G. Allen served as County

Commissioner for Precinct Two in Benavides. The County Attorney was J.F. Clarkson. Ten years later, Archie Parr's youngest son George occupied the County Judge's seat but was forced to resign after pleading guilty to income tax evasion. The young Parr took a \$25,000 kickback in 1928 from a road contractor as well as gambling concessions from houses of ill-repute operating in the county under Parr's protection.⁹¹

By the end of the decade, Daniel Tobin, a Mexican American descended from intermarriage, served as County Judge and did so through the 1940s. In 1940 every courthouse office, including that of the County Attorney, was held by Mexican Americans. The *Benavides Facts* of May 15, 1942, commented that "little interest will be taken in the county elections," since no candidate had opposition. The decade ended with the same individuals in office that were in office when it started: Daniel Tobin, County Judge; J.O. Trevino, County Clerk; R.F. Luna, County Attorney; and Dan U. Garcia, Sheriff.⁹²

Archie Parr continued to win re-election to the Texas Senate. He made friends in high places, including several Texas governors. While political writers often focus on his many controversial antics, his record in Austin was impressive and impacted many citizens in South Texas. He was responsible for the development of the Port of Corpus

⁹¹ "County Election Results," 1922, 1924; "Received 25 Thousand Dollars of Graft in Nice Black Satchel for Road Work," *The Tribune* (Hallettsville, Texas, May 25, 1934).

⁹² "Duval County Officials Announce for Reelection," *Benavides Facts* (Benavides, Texas, May 15, 1942); "County Election Results," 1948.

Christi, the establishment of Texas A&I College in Kingsville, securing funding for flood control projects in the Valley, and other initiatives. He often took stands in support of those who were abused, including controlling the excesses of the Texas Rangers, hazing at Texas A&M, and abuse of inmates in state prisons. In 1934, while Dean of the Texas Senate, Parr was defeated for reelection by Jim Neal of Laredo. Parr graciously accepted the loss and invited Neal to sit with him during his last Legislative session.⁹³

Archie Parr was also able to fulfill his plans of incorporating San Diego, and he did the same for Benavides and Freer. These new cities provided his political machine, and Mexican Americans, an opportunity to be active participants in the life of their communities. The cities, as did the school districts, took advantage of New Deal programs established by President Roosevelt during the Great Depression to build water towers, streets, football fields, and other community improvements.⁹⁴

Mexican Americans Were Part of County's Commercial Life

Mexican Americans in Duval County had always been part of the business and professional community. Early businessmen in San Diego included Manuel Ancira who rented his building for the first courthouse, Encarnacion Garcia Perez who operated a general merchandise store, C. Cuellar and A.B. Cuellar, proprietors of the Cuellar Motor Co., Bruno Rios Drug Co., Martinez Brothers, owners of Martinez Gin, O.G. Garcia & Co.; R.S. Gonzalez, F. G. Garcia & Son Garage, newspaper publisher Francisco P. de

⁹³ "Neal Defeats Archie Parr for Senator," Kingsville Record, August 29, 1934.

Gonzales, and others. In Benavides, likewise, several Mexican Americans owned and operated businesses including Jose Vaello, Andres Farias owned the Empress Theater, and L. Heras owned the Heras Store. Also, Jesus Oliveira and Brothers operated a garage, J.R. De Leon and R. Garcia had the Benavides Drug Store, the Cuellar Store, Jesus Flores operated a rooming house, F. Vaello owned the Piggly Wiggly Grocery, M. Ramirez owned the Faust Café, and Pedro Coronado had a new building. These men were but some of the Mexican Americans that operated successful businesses. Incredibly, because of the booming oil industry in the county, not a single business went belly up during the Great Depression.⁹⁵

Yearning for Self-Identity

On February 16, 1930, the governing board of LULAC met in San Diego to remove leaders that were not being true to the organization's goal of working with Anglo Americans amenable to working with Mexican Americans who were willing and interested in integrating into the American melting pot. Since Duval County Mexican Americans already viewed themselves as very much active participants in the American society the appeal of a group like LULAC was not very strong. Still, LULAC chapters

⁹⁵ San Antonio Express, June 27, 1927; "San Antonio Express," June 21, 1927; Emil Barwis, "Brief History of Benavides," *The Benavides Scholar* 1, no. 7-8 (May 1932): 18-19.

existed in San Diego and Benavides, but the organization never developed deep roots in the county.⁹⁶

Returning World War II veterans, however, were a different story. There is no evidence of an active American GI Forum presence in Duval County, but members of a new political movement in the county calling itself the Freedom Party echoed the battle cry of the Forum. Writing about the American GI Forum, Marshall Roderick said

When Mexican American soldiers returned home from Europe and the Pacific following World War II, a significant change in their expectations for social justice challenged the entrenched practices of ethnic prejudice in Texas. The pre-war patterns of political disenfranchisement...[left] average Mexican Americans...without realistic opportunities for enjoying full and equal citizenship in the United States.

Duval County veterans returned home with vivid reminders of the price they had paid for freedom. Some had wounds from battle to remind them, and all had experienced the horrors of war. When they came home, they could see more clearly than ever that their war experience would have been for nothing unless they took up the battle cry of freedom in their backyard. It was they who returned home with the renewed hope of helping their fellow citizens in Duval County to experience the privileges they had experienced while serving the country. They were aware that the price of providing an elective office to a few and jobs to the relatives of those privileged meant that there were

⁹⁶ Marshall Roderick, "The 'Box Bill': Public Policy, Ethnicity, and Economic Exploitation in Texas," 2011, 65; "M. Gonzales and V.A. Santoy LULAC Officials," Benavides Facts (Benavides, Texas, April 12, 1940).

not enough offices and positions to go around. To overcome these circumstances they felt they had to wrest control of the local governing bodies away from the Parr Machine.⁹⁷

By the 1950s the Parr Machine had begun to lose its luster. Archie Parr died in 1942, and his son George inherited his political apparatus. George Parr was born in a different century, in a different setting, and in a different family structure. Archie Parr was born in 1859 in the frontier town of Indianola, where no Mexican Americans lived. George Parr entered life at the turn of a new century in the town of San Diego dominated by Mexican American language and culture. Archie Parr was tragically orphaned at the age of nine when someone murdered his father. George Parr was the youngest of a family with a mother and a doting father. It was not surprising that the two had very different personalities. Archie Parr was said to be “free from so many vices” common in Duval County. His son George, although he too was a teetotaler and did not smoke like his father, developed a reputation of having a short temper and a propensity to threaten violence. His first reported encounter with violence occurred in 1934 when he reportedly assaulted State Representative J.T. Canales at the Duval County Courthouse forfeiting his probation from an earlier conviction. It was not the last time that Parr threatened harm to others at the Courthouse. In August 1952, Sheriff George B. Parr allegedly beat Donato Serna with a flashlight in the Duval County jail. In 1956, Parr walked into the courthouse

⁹⁷ Joseph Orbock Medina, “The Politics of Mexican-American Civil Rights in Texas, 1948-1955,” 2008, 3; Alfredo E. Cárdenas, “The Freedom Party: Part One,” soydeduval.com, SoydeDuval, June 4, 2018, <https://www.soydeduval.com/2018/06/the-duval-county-freedom-party-part-one/>.

with a rifle making death threats against Duval County Commissioner Tomas Molina. In 1975, George B. Parr went into the Duval County Courthouse with a gun threatening to kill District Judge O. P. Carrillo. Other aggressive incidents did not reach this level of notoriety.⁹⁸

Purported physical violence was not the only tool in George Parr's character; revenge was another of his well-known characteristics. George Parr was a man who carried a grudge. He did not take kindly to political opponents, while his father invited the man who defeated him for the Senate to sit next to him during his last Legislative session. In the most publicized case of his political revenge was the 1948 U.S. Senate race in which Parr swung the election to Lyndon B. Johnson over Governor Coke Stevenson because the governor had refused to appoint a Parr ally as district attorney for Webb County. Parr also took out his political revenge against Congressman Robert Kleberg, Jr. who had opposed Archie Parr in his lost Senate race and had obstructed George Parr's application for a Presidential pardon. With Parr's help, voters ousted Kleberg from office, and Parr got even for his father and with Johnson's advice received his pardon.⁹⁹

⁹⁸ Alfredo E. Cardenas, "The Rearing of Duval County Political Kingpin Archie Parr," *Journal of South Texas* 22, no. 2 (Fall 2009): 134–144; Lynch, *The Duke of Duval*, 7; "Politics Dominated Courthouse Activities," *Alfredo E. Cardenas*, November 20, 2016, accessed November 9, 2018, <https://www.soydeduval.com/2016/11/politics-dominated-courthouse-activities/>.

⁹⁹ Robert A. Caro, *Means of Ascent*, 1st ed., The years of Lyndon Johnson 2 (New York: Knopf, 1990), 190–191.

Perhaps the most damning observations on conditions in Duval County under George Parr came from Texas Attorney General John Ben Shepherd who during his investigations of Duval County politics in the 1950s, detailed some of the disorders in Duval County his investigators found while looking into political corruption:

- sixty-three unsolved and unpunished murders in the previous thirteen years;
- a refuge for criminals fleeing the law from other states;
- fear of 200 “gun-slingers” on the county’s employment as deputy sheriffs;
- denial of peaceful assembly of citizens;
- intimidation of voters at the polls;
- spying on citizens;
- kidnapping citizens and pistol-whipping them into submission;
- incarceration without cause;
- denial of bail or legal counsel;
- government meetings held in secret to prevent citizens from attending;
- violation of the secrecy of the ballot box; and
- running people out of the county, squeezing them out of business, beating or killing them for voting against the political machine.¹⁰⁰

It was in this setting that returning World War II veterans founded the Freedom Party in Duval County on March 26, 1952. Its purpose, according to Matias Garcia of San Diego, was to oppose “the political rule of...George Parr.” The veterans had been overseas fighting for the American way of life; fighting for freedom and liberty; fighting for civil and human rights; fighting for economic freedom. When they returned home, they found these precious liberties were absent in their backyard. Its seven founders took an oath “that if harm befell any of them, the others would ‘get’ George Parr.”¹⁰¹

¹⁰⁰ John Ben Shepherd, “Duval U.S.A.,” June 25, 1954, Texas Library and Archives.

¹⁰¹ Cárdenas, “The Freedom Party: Part One.”

For the next eight years, the Freedom Party engaged Parr in political guerrilla warfare. The open revolt did expose weaknesses in the machine. Concurrent with the Freedom Party's revolt, two of Parr's lieutenants saw fit to split from him, if only for a short while. Both were important players in Parr's apparatus; the only two county judges during the Parr regime that were not named Parr and who were Mexican American were members of the Garcia and Tobin families. Sheriff Daniel Garcia informed the group that he had decided to challenge Parr in the next election. For unknown but suspicious reasons Garcia changed his mind and retired from politics instead. A couple of years later, Garcia's son-in-law Dan Tobin, who had been elected County Judge on the Parr ticket, openly split with Parr. Tobin met with the Freedom Party to discuss a possible alliance. Talks between Tobin and the Freedom Party did not yield the desired results. There was disagreement on what candidate would run for which office. After modest success at the polls, Tobin announced he had reached an agreement with George Parr to return to the fold. He was back in the machine, and he left the Freedom Party in limbo. The Freedom Party candidate for County Judge, H.R. "Lacho" Canales lashed out, "Dan Tobin has always been a Parr man in disguise," he told the *Alice Daily Echo*.¹⁰²

¹⁰² Jesenia Guerra, "The Fight for Democracy: An Oral History of the Freedom Party," 2005, 22–23; "Political Factions Merge for United Opposition to Parr," *Sweetwater Reporter*, December 18, 1955, accessed November 10, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth284621/m1/19/zoom/>; "El Juez Tobin Se Rehusa a Encabezar Partido Politico; Dice Que o Esta Interesado En La Coalicion de Duval," *New Duval* (San Diego, Texas, December 18, 1955), accessed May 15, 2018, <https://texashistory.unt.edu/ark:/67531/metapth829254/m1/1/zoom/>; "August Run-off Will Decide," *Duval County Maverick* (San Diego, Texas, August 1,

The idea of revolt from Parr had certainly continued to percolate. Twenty years later, when Parr and his heir apparent and nephew Archer Parr faced legal problems, the Carrillo family of Benavides openly split with the Parr's Old Party. The Carrillo family had controlled politics in Benavides with Parr's blessings since the beginning of the machine. Oscar Carrillo was State Representative for Duval County seeking a sit in the Texas Senate, O.P Carrillo sat on the bench as a District Judge, and Ramiro Carrillo was a County Commissioner. With the support of millionaire Clinton Manges they launched an attempted coup d'état. The attempt was short-lived as they too faced legal problems. The Texas House of Representatives impeached O.P. Carrillo, and the Senate convicted him. The Federal government convicted Ramiro Carrillo Income Tax evasion and removed him from office. The revolt failed. Not long after on April 1, 1975, George Parr placed a gun to his temple and committed suicide. All elements of the Parr Machine were now in the trash heap of history.¹⁰³

Mexican Americans in Full Control

With the Parrs out of the picture, the doors swung wide open for Mexican Americans to assume control on their own. Dan Tobin Jr. had replaced Archer Parr as County Judge but soon found himself under indictment. Indeed, every member of the Commissioners Court faced legal problems. On October 31, 1975, Brownsville District

1958); "Tobin Reverses Stand," *Duval County Maverick* (San Diego, Texas, August 8, 1958)..

¹⁰³ Anthony R. Carrozza, *The Dukes of Duval County: The Parr Family and Texas Politics* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2017), 323–350.

Judge Darrel Hester, presiding over corruption cases in Duval County, replaced Tobin with Gilberto Uresti, a pharmacist from Benavides active in the civic life his community. He also removed Felipe Valerio as County Commissioner and named W.E. Wiederkehr from Freer to replace him. In time, Hester replaced the entire Commissioners Court.¹⁰⁴

Uresti did not have clear connections to any of the political players of the past, but many Freedom Party old-timers supported him and promoted his progressive agenda. He went after and secured many state and Federal grant programs. Uresti won the County Judge's seat on his own for two terms before being defeated at the polls by Frank Garcia, the son of Sheriff Garcia who toyed with the idea of challenging Parr during the Freedom Party era. Uresti regained the office in 1992, only to lose it again four years later to E.B. Garcia Jr., who also had Old Party family connections. Abel Aragon, the first Freer resident to hold the office, replaced E.B. Garcia. Like Uresti, Aragon had no connections to the politics of the past. Ricardo Carrillo, son of Ramiro Carrillo, was elected County Judge in 2014, only to be defeated after one term by a political unknown in the 2018 Democratic Primary.

A Concluding Note

While the Freedom Party did not achieve its goal, it certainly left its mark. It planted in the psyche of Duval County citizens that it did not always have to be the way *el patron* wanted it to be. Many of its members and many of their offspring lived to see the end of the Parr machine. And when it came to an end with George Parr's suicide, they

¹⁰⁴ "Hester Appoints Uresti as Judge," *Brownsville Herald*, November 4, 1975.

were ready to pick up the pieces. While some Parristas were still around, the people held memories of the Freedom Party and its values. They always hoped for free access to the ballot. They looked forward to better government often advocated by opponents of political bosses in other parts of the country. They also yearned for a new, vibrant Duval County, open to economic development that could create jobs for its people.

As for memories of Parr, the *Duval County Picture* opined in June 1991 “Remember George Parr, yes. Take advantage of his colorful past, yes. Honor him, absolutely not.” The Duval County Museum was dedicating the George Parr Room with a big celebration. The *Picture* praised the Museum for their efforts at promoting the county’s history and economy but cautioned against honoring Parr. The newspaper gave him credit for some positive accomplishments:

We do not for a moment suggest that the man’s life was not noteworthy. He did indeed accomplish good things, if for the wrong reasons. Perhaps the greatest contribution that he made was the instilling in the Duval County Mexican Americans with a positive self-image and self-confidence by involving them as equal political players from very early on.

The newspaper went on to explain the negative impact Parr had on the county and its people. “Many praise Parr of his generosity,” the editorial read. “It was, of course, easy to be generous with the money of others. The historical record is replete with evidence that Parr and his political friends made political corruption an art form.”¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ “To Recognize Parr’s Contributions Should Not Mean We ‘honor’ Him,” *Duval County Picture* (San Diego, Texas, June 19, 1991).

CONCLUSION

In 1972-73, the Oakland Raiders drafted Noe Gonzalez who had led the Texas State University Bobcats (then known as Southwest Texas State) as their quarterback. A few miles up the road in Austin his high school teammate Rene Amaya was a linebacker for the Texas Longhorns. Further up the road on IH 35, a few years earlier, Walter Reyna, a state champion miler ran track for the Baylor Bears. Across the state at Rice University his classmate Tommy Molina was playing basketball for the Rice Owls, and, back in Central Texas another classmate, Manuel Esparza was a running back for the Texas Lutheran Bulldogs. What they all have in common is that they hailed from the small town of San Diego in Duval County. These examples are only a sampling of the mountain of anecdotal evidence that exists on the success of students produced by the ostensibly poor schools in Duval County.

All these men went on to successful professional lives in their chosen communities. But sports are one of the lesser areas where Duval County alumni excelled. San Diego graduate Orlando Garcia who represented San Antonio in the state legislature, today seats on the Federal bench as judge of the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas. After serving a term in the Legislature representing Duval County, Richard Raymond—one of many Mexican Americans from Duval County with an Anglo American last name from an earlier interethnic marriage—was the Democratic Party's nominee for Texas Land Commissioner. He still sits in the Legislature, representing Webb County. While holding the position of president of the Texas State Teachers Association, Ignacio Salinas from San Diego was elected to the Texas House to represent Duval County, among other South Texas counties.

The list of successful natives of Duval County includes people from all professions: attorneys, doctors, pharmacists, architects, engineers, scientists, professors, school administrators, writers, musicians, journalists, military officers, people in business, civic leaders, etc. Take for example San Diego natives Nilda M. Garcia, MD, FACS, Surgeon-in-Chief at Dell Children's Medical Center in Austin; Nora Hancock recently retired as Associate Commissioner, Grants and Federal Fiscal Compliance, for the Texas Education Agency; and Dr. Cutberto Garza, Professor, Division of Nutritional Sciences, Cornell University. Also Benavides natives Leo Saavedra, Ph.D. retired associate chancellor at Texas A&M University and the late Jose. R. Coronado from Benavides who served as Director of the South Texas Veterans Health Care System and was responsible for an annual budget exceeding \$450 million with more than 2,800 employees. In Freer, Arnold Saenz owns the local Chevrolet dealership and doubles as mayor, and attorney Gilbert N. Saenz is the County Judge-elect. Successful rural residents are numerous, beginning at the turn of the century when Realitos native Jose de la Luz Saenz went on to be one of the founders of LULAC. In more recent times Realitos has produced a family of doctors, including Dr. Julio Vela, Dr. Robert Vela, and Dr. Rene Vela. Ramirez, Texas native Ruben Maldonado, Ph.D. served as City Manager in Alice and later as superintendent of schools in Benavides. The San Jose area of Duval County has produced several pharmacists, including Eladio Barrera, Eleuterio Sáenz, and

Louie Martinez. These are only a sampling of the many successful men and women from Duval County.¹⁰⁶

To be sure other communities can proudly point at successful alumni from their schools. These anecdotal observations, however, are supported by the public record which includes compelling data in support of the thesis presented here.

While Montejano looks at the entire state, this paper focuses on Duval County and evaluates the county’s successes by comparing it to similar neighboring counties. First, Duval County is a landlocked county just far enough removed from the border to be different from Webb, Zapata, Starr, and other border counties. Duval County is a member of the Coastal Bend Council of Governments and is in the Corpus Christi economic sphere of influence. Therefore it will be evaluated against four other counties around Corpus Christi which have historically had majority Mexican American populations: Brooks, Jim Wells, Kleberg, and Nueces.

Table 15: Coastal Bend Counties with Majority Mexican American Population

	Brooks		Duval		Jim Wells		Kleberg		Nueces	
Total Population	7,796		13,120		39,326		31,549		313,645	
Anglo Americans	633	7.9%	1,452	11.1%	9,001	22.9%	8,997	28.5%	118,178	37.7%
Mexican American	7,304	91.6%	11,544	88.0%	29,772	72.5%	20,635	65.4%	174,951	60.2%

Source: U.S. Census, 2000. Compiled by Social Explorer, 2005-2018.

¹⁰⁶ Nicole Villalpando, “Dell Children’s Chief Surgeon Helps Create Guidelines for Trauma Care,” Austin American, accessed October 6, 2018, <https://www.statesman.com/news/20170519/dell-childrens-chief-surgeon-helps-create-guidelines-for-trauma-care>; “View Jose Coronado’s Obituary on MySanAntonio.Com and Share Memories,” accessed October 5, 2018, <https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/sanantonio/obituary.aspx?n=jose-coronado&pid=149024068&fhid=8920>.

Duval County voters elected the first Mexican American County Judge in 1892, sixteen years after the county's organization. By comparison, Nueces County, organized in 1846, did not elect its first Mexican American County judge until 1996, 150 after its organization. None of the five counties come close to the speed in which Duval County selected its first Mexican American County Judge.

Table 16: First Mexican American County Judge Election

County	Year Organized	Year First Mexican American County Judge Elected	Years Required to Elect First Mexican American County Judge*	Name of County Judge
Brooks	1911	1972	61	F.G. Garza
Duval	1876	1892	16	F. Garcia Tovar
Jim Wells	1911	1984	73	Roberto Guerra
Kleberg	1913	1996	83	Pete de la Garza
Nueces	1846	1996	150	Richard M. Borchard

Source: Texas Almanac.

*The First Nueces County Judge was a Spaniard, which this study does not consider Mexican American.

Over the last century, Duval County had a Mexican American county judge for most of the time, except for periodic terms when a Parr (Givens, George or Archer) held the office. Since the election of their first Mexican American county judge, Jim Wells and Brooks Counties have consistently elected Mexican Americans as county judge. Kleberg has done so most of the time, and Nueces has not elected a second county judge since Judge Borchard left office in 2002.

In addition to having the first county judge elected in the area, Of its neighboring counties, Duval County also chose the first Mexican American State Representative. To be sure, other Mexican Americans, such as Santo Benavides of Laredo and J.T. Canales of Brownsville, served in the Legislature as early as the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. But the first representative from the hinterland south of the Nueces River was Amando F. Canales, a successful Duval County rancher, who served in the Texas House

of Representatives from 1963-1967. In Addition to Canales, Oscar Carrillo, Richard Raymond, and Ignacio Salinas, all Duval County natives, have also represented Duval County in the House. As mentioned previously Raymond now represents Webb County and Orlando Garcia, a San Diego native, served San Antonio in the House from 1983-1991. A year after Amando Canales entered the House, Tony Bonilla was the first Mexican American elected to advocate for Nueces County in the House of Representatives. It was a decade before another Coastal Bend County elected a Mexican American to the legislature when Canales' kinsman Terry Canales was elected in 1973 to represent Jim Wells County. Irma Rangel was chosen in 1977 to represent Kleberg County.¹⁰⁷

San Diego ISD in Duval County named its first Mexican American superintendent in 1932. Maria Garcia was not only the first Mexican American she was the first woman superintendent in the area. The first Mexican American appointed superintendent of any area school district came more than forty years later when Brooks ISD selected Alberto Byington in 1974; the Alice ISD hired Henry Herrera in 1985; Enrique Gallegos in Kingsville ISD in 1991; and Abe Saavedra in Corpus Christi ISD in 1993.

¹⁰⁷ "The Hispanic Experience - Tejano Representation," accessed July 17, 2018, <http://www.houstonculture.org/hispanic/tejano4.html>; "Garcia, Orlando Luis | Federal Judicial Center," accessed October 6, 2018, <https://www.fjc.gov/history/judges/garcia-orlando-luis>.

A Closing Note

It is impractical, if not impossible, to give attention to the small elements in a painting when using a broad brush. In the same way, a more comprehensive historical landscape is helpful but not determinative to every local situation. Montejano's work *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas* is a significant contribution to the history of Texas and useful for a general understanding of the subject under study, but because of his overreaching approach, it is not representative of every aspect or region he investigates. A great need exists for the study of local history to understand a region's development.

Hopefully, other historians will take the challenge issued by Montejano and others to examine his work in specific areas to determine whether it applies or to amplify with more detail why it is not entirely applicable in their area. When one builds anything, it is from the ground up, piece by piece. It is not fashioned from whole cloth and thrown over an area where the structure should stand and magically it appears. So too with history. It can be better understood if local historians build the foundation first, so long as they keep in mind that some of their building materials come from elsewhere.

In Duval County, Mexican Americans did it their way. They came into the area with a strong tradition of autonomy under the example provided by José de Escandón in Nuevo Santander. They were forced to provide for themselves in the frontier of South Texas while, first Spain and then Mexico had no time, inclination or ability to offer them political, military, or economic support. They expected no better treatment from the American government and were not disappointed. Their new Anglo American neighbors quickly set sights on their land.

The land was the Mexican Americans' rock of survival. They depended on the land, it was their support, and it would be that for their children. Unlike many of their fellow *campesinos* in other parts of Montejano's Texas, Mexican Americans in Duval County held on to their land. They also held on to their language and culture.

Early on in their American experience, they gained an understanding of the American political and legal systems, and they enjoyed some success, which in turn whetted their appetite for a greater desire to command their destiny. It gave them a desire to be active citizens in their new country and, they actively sought ways to organize politically. They participated in the politics of their county with some success, getting a taste of what could be theirs given their overwhelming numbers.

At the turn of the twentieth century, Duval County Mexican Americans saw an opening to advance their way of life. It required some sacrifice to gain a meaningful measure of political independence, but they were willing to:

- swap some of their political rights;
- sacrifice some civil liberties; and
- forfeit some economic opportunities.

They entered into a compact with an Anglo American politician that was willing to share his power. Archie Parr showed them compassion, demonstrated his friendship and was ready to share in the goods of his ill-gotten gains. They did so for the greater good; for a better education for their children, for better job opportunities, for a greater share of the political pie, and for greater respect for themselves. They enjoyed all these things much earlier than Montejano recognizes for other Mexican Americans in Texas.

The Parr machine was no panacea, no political machine is. By definition a political machine is corrupt, is undemocratic, and usurps its followers' rights. It also

provides its supporters with protection from unfriendly agents of the government such as Texas Rangers, is a source for jobs and welfare benefits, and can provide a valuable training ground for its supporters to learn about politics, governance, etc.

No, the Parr machine was no panacea, but neither was it an incurable disease.

Perhaps the *Duval County Picture* surmised it best in a 1991 editorial:

We doubt it was done for any great love of Mexican Americans, but rather for love of power. In...Duval County...political power meant the active involvement of Mexican Americans in the political process. To his credit, Parr recognized this fact and used it to his benefit and to the benefit of those being used.

APPENDIX SECTION

Appendix 1. Duval County's Mexican American Property Owners, 1860

Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
[Pablo?] López Pérez	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$6,928	\$3,900	\$10,828
Trinidad Flores	San Diego		\$3,928	\$3,900	\$7,828
Juan Sáenz	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$1,000	\$5,900	\$6,900
Antonio García	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$0	\$6,730	\$6,730
Encarnación García	San Diego		\$2,222	\$1,980	\$4,202
Bautisto Gonzales	San Diego	Laborer	\$1,500	\$600	\$2,100
José M. García	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$400	\$500	\$900
Alphonse Charles	Agua Poquita	Laborer	\$0	\$700	\$700
Benito Ramos	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$0	\$460	\$460
Rafael Salinas	Agua Poquita	Overseer	\$0	\$300	\$300
Narciso Pérez	San Diego	Herdsman	\$0	\$225	\$225
Jesús Ageho	San Diego	Herdsman	\$0	\$200	\$200
Ramón Cantú	San Diego	Laborer	\$0	\$200	\$200
Práxedes Tovar	San Diego		\$0	\$180	\$180
Ruperto Longoria	San Diego	Herdsman	\$0	\$150	\$150
Francisco Bazán	San Diego	Carpenter	\$0	\$125	\$125
Eugenio Presáis	San Diego	Herdsman	\$0	\$100	\$100
José M. Gonzales	Agua Poquita	Carpenter	\$0	\$75	\$75
Julián Ramírez	San Diego	Shoemaker	\$0	\$75	\$75
Nardo Reyes (Nabor Ríos?)	San Diego	Laborer	\$0	\$75	\$75
Domingo Saliváis	San Diego	Laborer	\$0	\$75	\$75
Antonio Tapia	San Diego	Laborer	\$0	\$50	\$50
José M Gonzales	San Diego	Shoemaker	\$0	\$50	\$50
Antonio Martínez	San Diego	Laborer	\$0	\$45	\$45

Source: Data adapted from Bureau of the Census, Population of the United States in 1860, Nueces County.

Note: In 1863, The Ranchero listed cattle brands for county ranchers, which indicated a measure of wealth. They were Juan Sáenz, Santos Flores Gonzales, Francisco Flores Gonzales, Antonio García Flores, Pablo Pérez, all of Rancho San Diego, and Tiburcio Ramírez, Rancho Concepción. Only Juan Saenz appears in the 1860 census as a landowner.

Appendix 2: Duval County Property Owners, 1870

Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
Alvino Canales	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$1,933	\$17,120	\$19,053
Alejos Pérez	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$1,000	\$14,945	\$15,945
Pablo Pérez	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$3,927	\$6,500	\$10,427
Santos Moreno	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$20	\$9,650	\$9,670
Jesús García	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$4,428	\$3,100	\$7,528
Abelardo García	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$640	\$3,900	\$4,540
Norman G. Collins	San Diego	Retail Merchant	\$500	\$4,000	\$4,500
Cecilio Valerio	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$280	\$4,210	\$4,490
Juan Díaz	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$3,720	\$3,720
Luciano Bazán	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$3,320	\$3,320
Francisco Flores	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$200	\$3,030	\$3,230
Calixto Tovar	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$298	\$2,750	\$3,048
Juan Valerio	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$3,000	\$3,000
José María Martínez	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$2,520	\$2,520
Benito Ramos	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$2,400	\$2,400
Encarnación García	San Diego	Retail Merchant	\$1,000	\$1,200	\$2,200
Alejandro Gonzales	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$340	\$1,660	\$2,000
Rafael López	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$1,950	\$1,950
Anastasio Pérez	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,900	\$1,900
Jesús Valdez	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$200	\$1,665	\$1,865
Eugenio Falcón	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$55	\$1,800	\$1,855
Dionicio Mendoza	San Diego	Sheep Raiser	\$160	\$1,640	\$1,800
Máximo Pérez	Concepción	Sheep Raiser	\$40	\$1,590	\$1,630
Eduardo García	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,600	\$1,600
Nicolás Maldonado	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$1,490	\$1,530
Andrés Cantú	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$160	\$1,250	\$1,410
Ramón García	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,260	\$1,260
Isidro Benavides	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,250	\$1,250
Lucas Barrera	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$1,230	\$1,230
Juan Justan	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,150	\$1,150
Eugenio Hinojosa	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$1,060	\$1,140
Emilio Barrera	San Diego	Sheep Raiser	\$80	\$1,020	\$1,100
Francisco Flores	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$1,025	\$1,065
Jacinto Salinas	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$950	\$1,030
Andrés Sánchez	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$1,000	\$1,000
Juan Leal	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$1,000	\$1,000

Appendix 2 Continued

Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
Margarito Gonzales	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$1,000	\$1,000
Vicente Vera	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$955	\$955
José María García	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$800	\$145	\$945
Salustiano Benavides	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$860	\$860
Rafael Sáenz	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$800	\$840
Marino Pena	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$790	\$830
Fidel del Barrio	Concepción	Retail Merchant		\$800	\$800
Warren Wallace	Concepción	Retail Merchant		\$800	\$800
Bautisto Gonzales	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$785	\$785
Saturnino Vera	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$675	\$755
Policarpo Sáenz	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$740	\$740
Antonio Vela	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$650	\$690
Teodoro Hinojosa	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$610	\$650
Juan Ruiz	Concepción	Sheep Raiser	\$40	\$600	\$640
Pedro Ramos	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$600	\$600
Felipe Valerio	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$540	\$540
Juliano Resta	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$530	\$530
Narciso Molina	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$530	\$530
Cornelio Serna	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$500	\$500
Guadalupe Alanís	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$460	\$500
Guadalupe García	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$500	\$500
Nepomuceno Gutiérrez	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$500	\$500
Florencio Benavides	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$380	\$460
Ascensión Pérez	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$360	\$440
Hilario Benavides	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$440	\$440
Melitón Morales	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$440	\$440
José Ángel García	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$350	\$430
Marcelo Hinojosa	San Diego	Stock Raiser	\$80	\$320	\$400
Anselmo Ruiz	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$375	\$375
Ventura Maldonado	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$375	\$375
Valente Pérez	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$350	\$350
Basilio De León	San Diego	Silversmith		\$300	\$300
P. Lávele	Concepción	Sheep Raiser	\$40	\$240	\$280
Manuel García	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$250	\$250
Matías García	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$240	\$240
Catarino Gutiérrez	Concepción	Stock Raiser		\$232	\$232
Félix Salinas	Concepción	Sheep Raiser		\$200	\$200

Appendix 2 Continued

Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
Antonio Chapa	Concepción	Stock Raiser	\$40	\$150	\$190
Pedro Garza	San Diego	Peddler		\$150	\$150
Santiago Rodríguez	San Diego	Stock Raiser		\$145	\$145
Cesario Elizondo	San Diego	Retail Merchant		\$100	\$100

Source: United States Census. Duval and Nueces Counties, 1870.

Appendix 3: Professions in Duval County, 1880

Professions	San Diego	Precinct 1	Precinct 2	Precincts 3 and 4	Total
Laborers	122	123	78	290	613
Herdsman (Shepherds)	19	99	50	32	200
Stock raisers	37	76	68		181
Farmers	4	34	40	84	162
Vaqueros	1	39	71		111
Soldiers		60			60
Clerk	19	4	6	7	36
Merchants	12	5	4	13	34
Laundress	15	7	5		27
Carpenters	21	3	2		26
Baker	13	2	4	1	20
Waggoner	12	2	6		20
Cook	7	7	1		15
Saloon Keeper	15				15
Lawmen	2	8	3		13
Tailor	7	1	3	2	13
Blacksmith	6	3	1	2	12
Shoemaker	10	1	1		12
Butcher	8	1		1	10
Musician	6	4			10
School teacher	2	1	4	2	9
Stonemason	5	3	1		9
Railroader	5	2	1		8
Drayman	7				7
Grocer	7				7
Seamstress	2	4	1		7
Teamster					
Saddler		5	2		7
Bookkeeper	2	3		1	6
Doctor	2	2			4
Druggist	2	1	1		4
Silversmith	3	1			4

Appendix 3 Continued Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
Brick mason			4		4
Elected Official	1		2		3
Freighter			1	2	3
Gunsmith	3				3
Hotel Keeper	3				3
Lawyer	2		1		3
Tinner	2		1		3
Wheelwright	3				3
Barber	2			1	3
Bread Peddler	2				2
Horse raiser	2				2
Hostler	1			1	2
Jailer			2		2
Livery Stable			2		2
Milk Peddler	2				2
Minister	1		1		2
Painter				1	1
Mailman			2		2
Priest	2				2
Printer	2				2
Quartermaster helper	1		1		2
Ranchero	2				2
Stage Driver			2		2
Stockbroker	1			1	2
Surveyor	2				2
Cartman	2				2
Farrier	1				1
Hairdresser			1		1
Huckster				1	1
Miner	1				1
Ropemaker			1		1

Appendix 3 Continued Name	Community	Occupation	Real Estate	Personal	Total
Woodchopper			1		1
Total	414	525	359	437	1,735

Source: United States Census. Duval and Nueces Counties, 1880.

Appendix 4: Professions in Duval County, 1900

	Pct. 1, 037	Pct. 1, 038	Pct. 2, 039	Pct. 3, 040	Pct. 4, 041	Pct. 5, 042	Pct. 6, 043	Total
Baker	1	8	1	0	2	0	0	12
Barber	1	13	0	0	0	0	1	15
Bartender	1	5	6	0	1	0	0	13
Blacksmith		6	0	1	1	0	1	9
Bookkeeper		2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Bricklayer		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Builder		1	2	0	0	0	0	3
Butcher	1	9	1	1	1	0	2	15
Carpenter	1	13	0	0	3	4	0	21
Cashier		1	6	0	0	0	0	7
Clerk				1	3	0	0	4
Cobbler				1	0	0	0	1
Cook	2	20	0	0	0	0	4	26
Courtesan		7	0	0	0	0	0	7
Day Laborer	94	148	120	29	42	8	55	496
Doctor			0	0	0	0	0	0
Drayman		5	2	0	0	0	0	7
Dressmaker		3	0	0	2	0	0	5
Druggist		3	1	0	0	0	0	4
Engineer			0	0	0	1	0	1
Errand Boy		2	1	0	0	0	0	3
Farm Laborer	45	61	142	93	10	235	16	602
Farmer	61	3	95	74	10	27	14	284
Fence Rider			3	0	0	0	0	3
Freighter		2	0	0	3	0	0	5
Gambler		2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Ginner		4	0	0	0	0	0	4
Gravedigger		2	0	0	0	0	0	2
Harness Maker		3	0	0	0	0	0	3
Hog herder				1	0	0	0	1

Appendix 4 Continued

	Pct 1, 037	Pct. 1, 038	Pct. 2, 039	Pct. 3, 040	Pct. 4, 041	Pct. 5, 042	Pct. 6, 043	Total
Horse Breaker			1	0	0	0	0	1
Hostler		5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Hotel/Boarding House		2	2	0	1	0	0	5
Jailer		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Janitor	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	3
Labor Merchant	1		0	0	0	0	0	1
Lawman		5	0	0	0	0	0	5
Lawyer		4	1	0	0	0	0	5
Livery Stable		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Mechanic		4	0	0	1	0	0	5
Merchant	1	31	4	3	8	5	4	56
Mexican Crockery Readler							0	0
Midwife		1	2	0	0	1	0	4
Milkman	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Milner		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Musician	1	6	2	0	1	0	1	11
Nurse		2	0	0	0	1	0	3
Painter		1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Peddler		1	1	0	0	0	0	2
Photographer								0
Porter		6	0	0	0	0	0	6
Postal employee		3	0	2	0	1	0	6
Priest		1	0	0	1	0	0	2
Printer		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Public Official		5	0	0	0	1	0	6
Railroader		6	1	0	6	0	9	22
Ranch laborer		39	1	0	0	43	0	83
Sadler		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Salesman		13	3	0	1	1	1	19
School Teacher	2	13	3	3	3	1	1	26

Appendix 4 Continued

	Pct 1, 037	Pct. 1, 038	Pct. 2, 039	Pct. 3, 040	Pct. 4, 041	Pct, 5, 042	Pct. 6, 043	Total
Seamstress		3	2	0	0	0	0	5
Section Foreman	1		2	0	0	0	0	3
Section Laborer	2		7	0	0	0	0	9
Section Walkman	1		0	0	0	0	0	1
Sheep Herder	7	2	5	5	5	13	0	37
Shoemaker		4	0	0	0	1	0	5
Silversmith		2	1	0	0	1	0	4
Stock Dealer	1		0	0	0	0	2	3
Stock Drover	55	29	4	14	16	0	21	139
Stock Raiser	6	17	1	11	21	9	14	79
Stonemason		2	0	0	4	0	1	7
Tailor		1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Teamster	1		4	0	0	0	1	6
Telegraph operator			3	0	0	0	4	7
Tinner	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
Waggoner	3		3	0	0	0	0	6
Waiter	1		0	0	0	0	0	1
Warehouseman			1	0	0	0	0	1
Washer Woman	2	39	6	3	2	2	0	54
Waterman		2	0	0	1	0	0	3
Well Driller						2	1	3
Windmill repairman			3	0	0	1	0	4
Wood Contractor		1	11	0	0	0	0	12
Total	295	583	457	242	150	358	153	2,238

Source: United States Census, 1900.

Appendix 5: Duval County School Population by Ethnicity, 1880-1910

	Anglo Americans	Mexican Americans	Total Population
1880	18	151	169
1900	110	604	714
1910	132	1,275	1,407
Total	260	2,030	2,290
Percent	11.35%	88.65%	100.00%

Compiled from the 1880-1910 U.S. Census.

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