Crucible of Struggle
A History of Mexican Americans from Colonial Times to the Present Era

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CHAPTER 4

Mexican Americans from the 1850s to the End of the Civil War

After the Mexican War, the estimated one hundred thousand Mexicans in the Southwest recently granted U.S. citizenship soon became a dispossessed minority in both numbers and power, as they fell victim to the deep-seated prejudice against nonwhite peoples brought by the arriving Americans. The ruling Democratic Party of the United States was the party of white supremacy and racism. The belief that blacks, Indians, Mexicans, and Chinese were backward races inferior to whites took root. Racist ideas about Mexicans, which served to legitimize the Mexican American War, only grew more virulent after the war. Nativism made itself felt as Anglos lashed out at Mexicans for their indolence, moral laxity, and criminality. Eyeing the new territories in Texas and the West and embracing the mandate of the “right of manifest destiny,” land-hungry Americans dispossessed Mexicans of their lands through subtle and extralegal fraud, pressure through tax forfeiture, and squatting, often accompanied by force. This Yankee xenophobia profoundly affected the Mexicans struggling to define themselves as U.S. citizens.1

Hostilities broke out from California to the Texas border region as a war of “gringo against greaser” ensued, whereby the latter surrendered their labor and land to the former. The outbreak of disorder in California can be attributed to the rapid pace of social change. Although a free state, California was flooded by Anglos with proslavery views. There was a near absence of civil and legal authority, and, as a result, considerable tension arose between Mexican and Anglo. Equating wage labor with free labor and free men, the latter charged that Mexicans were taking away the work of the white man. Choosing between cowardice and violence, some resentful Mexicans chose violence expressed as robbery and banditry. Lawlessness broke out in the mining camps and along the highways. In this chaotic situation Anglo vigilantes attacked and terrorized Mexicans, associating them with criminality. In the suppression that followed, whites detained and executed Mexicans, many of whom had no involvement in the robberies and killings. These actions served as justification for the activities of the Mexican outlaws: they adopted and applied the same principles of frontier justice used on them.

In Texas, the increasing concentration of land in Anglo hands brought penury to many more Tejanos than ever before. Texas, like the rest of the Southwest, was a
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frontier region in which there was one standard of justice for the Anglos and another for the Mexicans. Many Anglo-Texans came from the slave South, a region predisposed to extralegal violence and justice. Others had spent time in the California gold fields and had participated in the vigilante justice that targeted Mexicans with floggings and lynchings. The escalating violent conflicts between Anglo-Texans and Tejanos over land highlighted cultural differences and glorified racism.

In South Texas, Tejanos were pitted against Anglo land grabbers as the lives of Tejanos worsened. Anglo-Texans turned to repression and persecution as a means of disciplining Tejanos, even to the point of murdering them. The abuse of Tejanos generated resentment and a desire for retribution. Juan Nepomuceno Cortina enforced their vision of justice; he urged Tejanos to rise up against the Anglos who attacked them and seized their lands. War between Tejanos and Anglos soon seared the South Texas landscape as the full force of the Texas Rangers and the U.S. military concentrated against Cortina and his followers, the Cortinistas.

The Civil War divided Mexican Americans between those who saw the conflict as a crusade to preserve the Union and secessionists who believed in state’s rights and condemned abolitionists and the Republican Party. Nearly ten thousand Mexican Americans volunteered for military service in both the Confederate and the Union armies. There was Anglo opposition to their recruitment, and racism against Mexican American soldiers was widespread. Anglo officers and soldiers questioned the bravery of the Spanish-speaking troops. Disciplined fighting men, Mexican Americans played decisive roles in the Southwest and held fast in the southern campaigns, in which they experienced horrific carnage and savagery in some of the Civil War’s most famous battles. Regular Army soldiers taken out of the Southwest for service in the Union and Confederate armies left local settlements exposed to renewed Indian attacks. Following the end of the Civil War, Mexican American soldiers in the New Mexico and Arizona territories fought the Indians, often alongside African Americans of the Tenth Cavalry.

American racism became even more pronounced after the Civil War, and by 1870 violence once again was on the upswing in the Southwest region. Anglos, many of them southern whites loyal to the defeated Confederacy, fled to the Southwest and subjected Mexican Americans to new extremes of racism, thereby stoking the fires of future conflicts. In the midst of growing hostility a new society developed in the Southwest. It matured with the building and consolidation of an American economic empire in the region.

MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE POSTCONQUEST SOUTHWEST

The Territory of New Mexico was created on September 9, 1850, and consisted of present-day New Mexico, Arizona, and parts of present-day southern Colorado, southern Utah, and southern Nevada. In 1863, New Mexico was divided in half, and the western portion became the Arizona Territory. New Mexico and Arizona remained territories until 1912 because the majority of the inhabitants were Mexican or Indian and thus considered inassimilable and unqualified for citizenship.
Arizona was a military outpost first under Mexico and then under the United States. Arizona's Santa Cruz Valley grew and became a prosperous center of trade, farming, and ranching. The Apaches and Mexicans were longtime enemies. The Apache Indians raided regularly and kept the Santa Cruz Valley in a virtual state of siege. The Apaches especially hated the professional scalp hunters among the Mexicans, paid by the governors of Mexican states of Sonora and Chihuahua starting in 1835 to bring in scalps of warriors, women, and children in a systematic attempt to exterminate them. Because of Apache depredations, the Spanish-speaking settlers deserted Tubac and abandoned the ranches on the San Pedro River and Babocomari Creek located on the San Ignacio Babocóamari land grant. Fewer than a thousand Mexicans lived in the Tucson area.

The United States acquired that portion of Arizona in which Tucson was located from Mexico through the Gadsden Purchase, which transferred more Mexicans to the United States. On January 1, 1856, the U.S. Army took possession of the Tucson presidio as Mexico's Adjutant Inspector Ignacio Pesqueira directed the transfer of the Mexican residents to Imuris, Sonora, one hundred miles to the south. The residents could choose to stay and become U.S. citizens. Less than half left, but many returned to Tucson. With the arrival of large numbers of Anglos in Arizona, the Apaches began to raid more vigorously and ventured as far as Mexico. In addition to relentless Indian attacks, the Mexicans in Arizona now experienced Anglo racism.

New Mexico changed during the American territorial period. The Old Spanish Trail provided an important connection to California, and the construction of forts resulted in an economic boom. New settlements were started along the Río Hondo, in the Valley of the Río San Francisco close to Arizona, and in the San Juan Basin in the northwest area of the territory.

Anglo racism became pronounced in New Mexico. Native New Mexicans remained the dominant population, with some ricos holding positions of power; the basis for this racism was competition for local trade, land, and other resources. Authorities connived with speculators and, abetted by New Mexico's ricos, seized more than 75 percent of the land owned by native New Mexicans. The land grab included community grants and communal holdings. New Mexicans forfeited their lands owing to their inability to document ownership or pay the steep taxes. The Surveyor General Claims Office could not process claims fast enough to prevent the takeover. Even the U.S. government seized the opportunity to acquire land for the public domain.

The gold rush did much to mold California society, for it fueled the postwar immigration of eighty thousand Americans to California. Many of the arrivals were Mexican War veterans and southerners with proslavery views who deemed Mexicans a conquered people, a despised race with no equality before the law. Immigration to California continued at a fast pace, so that by 1852 the state census counted two hundred sixty thousand non-Indian residents. Northern California received most of the migration, whereas southern California remained Mexican. This reality factored into the debate over dividing the state in half, as happened with the New Mexico territory. California's Indian population was the first to feel the sting of Anglo wrath.
Indians were hunted down like animals and shot under American rule as a “veritable slaughter of Indians occurred all over California...” Of the remaining one hundred thousand Indians, fifty thousand would die of disease, starvation, and murder. Violence against Mexicans likewise simmered. Having decimated the Indian populations near the gold fields, Americans resented the Spanish-speaking miners in the diggings. The Mexicans were considered undesirables, for California was now “American,” obtained through the rite of conquest, and thus the profits from its gold fields belonged to them. Ignoring posted threatening notices and unwilling to give up their claims and the mines they had developed, the Mexicans and other Spanish-speaking people came under attack by armed militias. Anglos roamed the countryside targeting the Mexicans, because killing a greaser risked little punishment.13

The rapidly established Anglo majority in California, backed by the new Democratic state legislature, passed laws imposing restrictions on Mexicans. To limit Mexican access to the mines, the state legislature in 1850 enacted a $20-per-month Foreign Miners Tax. Counties with large numbers of Spanish-speaking people were taxed at a rate five times higher than other parts of the state. Violence against Mexicans, Indians, and the Chinese accompanied the racist tax because local Anglo militias enforced it. Thousands of Mexicans fled from the
growing chaos in the gold fields. They headed south to Los Angeles or else crossed into Mexico, all of them carrying bitter hatred of the Americans. Some Mexicans put up resistance to the new Foreign Miners Tax imposed on them and on the Chinese miners. On May 19, 1850, in the town of Sonora, a large gathering of Spanish-speaking miners protested the tax enacted to deport them from the gold fields. Outnumbering the protestors, angry whites retaliated with violence. They lynched scores of Mexicans and placed additional barriers against those who remained in the mother lode. Many Mexicans turned to violence to avenge the Anglo racist violence. Local and state authorities quickly responded in kind.

Through additional legal racialization, Anglos consolidated their control over Mexicans in California. The state legislature enacted laws prohibiting such amusements as bull- and bear-baiting and cockfighting. The right to assemble and associate peacefully was denied or severely curtailed. Most brutal were the antivagrancy provisions. In 1855, a law known as the “Greaser Law” was passed. The disparagements “greaser,” “yellow-bellied greaser,” and “half-bred greaser” came into use during the Mexican War. The law stated “persons commonly known as ‘greasers’ who are vagrants and who go armed may be punished.” The antivagrancy law provided one more justification for expropriating lands belonging to Mexicans in northern California. Another repressive law overturned the requirement that California state laws be translated into Spanish. These popular forms of justice further stirred deep anti-Anglo sentiment among Mexicans. Finally, there was growing vigilantism and squatter violence against Spanish-speaking landowners.

The land on the California coast and in the interior valleys was owned by about two hundred Californio families and totaled fourteen million acres in parcels averaging 45,000 acres to 49,500 acres. The land grants to a large extent lacked surveyed boundaries and were closed to preemption or to free homestead. Anglos who had come to California tried farming when their quest for gold proved fruitless. Learning about the 160-acre preemption and homestead rights settlers were using elsewhere in the West, the ex-gold seekers rushed to stake out their claims in California by direct occupation and working of the land through squatting. Squatter violence was rampant in these early years. Many squatters banded together or formed associations for aggressive action on behalf of their interests. Ignoring or expressing indifference to the property and civil rights provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo and emboldened by the Federal Land Grant Act of 1851 that violated the specific provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, the squatters did not distinguish public lands from those included in the Mexican grants. Overlapping land grants erupted into a series of ongoing disputes that clogged the legal system.

Most of the Spanish and Mexican land grants were vaguely described, seldom recorded on paper, and split by inheritance. Already burdened by heavy taxes and lacking capital, Californio landowners now had to legally confirm their claims. Verifying a land claim was a long and stringent process and, because either side could appeal a court decision, very expensive. Lawyers’ fees averaged between 25 and 40 percent of the land grant’s value. Cases were argued before U.S. judges and a Board of Land Commissioners established through the Federal Land Grant Act
of 1851. The act ordered that all land titles held under Spanish or Mexican grants were invalid and must be submitted for verification. The act mandated that either side could appeal to the U.S. District Court and the U.S. Supreme Court. It further stated that land claims not submitted within two years would be automatically forfeited. Californio land was the chief target of this federal act. Poorly trained government lawyers were unfamiliar with Spanish and Mexican legal principles and the land tenure system on which grants were based. Precedents were set that hampered efforts to distinguish between legal, fraudulent, and undocumented land titles. Some questionable land claims were confirmed, and other claims had their boundaries extended. Many Californios could not speak English; moreover, they were ignorant of American law and had to take out high-interest loans to cover the legal costs or else pay their legal fees with land. As a result, those who verified their land titles were ruined by the expense of adjudication; the land often fell into the hands of their lawyers as payment for their services. Landownership as a result became concentrated in the hands of speculators who took 40 percent of the great estates the old-line Californio families had owned prior to 1846.18

Between 1852 and 1857, the Board of Land Commissioners reviewed more than 800 Spanish and Mexican land titles, involving about twelve million acres of land. Of these claims, 549 were appealed, some claims as many as six times. Because of multiple appeals, litigation of land cases dragged on for an average time of seventeen years. The remaining land claims were either rejected or withdrawn and became the property of the federal government, which sold the land at auction. The Americans’ lust for land, believed to be rightfully theirs through preemption, and the Californios failure to understand the American legal system led to the latter’s wholesale dispossession.19 The self-aggrandizing Californios were essentially knocked off their lofty perch.

On the other hand, the enormous food needs of the northern California gold fields proved an economic boon to many cattle ranchers in southern California. Spanish-speaking ranchers driving their cattle north to the lucrative markets could demand from $30 to $40 a head, or a price ten times greater than that of the previous hide-and-tallow era.90

However, the southern phase in the decline of the Californio ranches set in. As cattle ranching spread westward, Spanish-speaking ranchers faced competition from stockmen in Texas, New Mexico, and the Plains States who began to drive cattle and sheep to California. This new source of meat was of better quality and less expensive. Soon the demand for local beef fell off sharply. Moreover, during the record-breaking floods in the winter of 1861–1862 in California, the so-called “Noachian Deluge of California Floods,” hundreds of thousands of Californio-owned livestock died. This deluge-induced die-off of livestock was followed by two years of severe drought in which immense swarms of locusts devastated the water-stressed cattle pastures, resulting in nearly three million cattle dying through starvation, or approximately half of California’s cattle. This succession of natural catastrophes, along with overexpansion, poor investments, and unregulated and high interest rates, sounded the death knell for Californio ranchers. Many of them, already in debt and laden with unpaid property taxes, went bankrupt. The breakup of the huge Mexican land grants quickened through sale and subdivision to a host
of speculators. By 1871, livestock grazing ceased to be an important economic factor in southern California. It had succumbed to overgrazing, the rise of the sheep industry, and the conversion of range land to agricultural uses. With large tracts of pasturelands turned into farms, Mexican vaqueros and sheepshearers no longer could find work, and they moved to cities and towns. They were confined to itinerant work because white union workers who refused to work with them excluded Mexicans from the skilled work.

As Anglos gained dominance in California, the elite Californios lost their social, racial, and political standing. Their land taken away, their wealth lost, and their political power on the decline, the dispossessed Californios responded by embracing their whiteness and emulating the aristocratic cultivation of Spanish hidalgos. That is, they claimed the privileges of whiteness by emphasizing their "blue Spanish blood" (sangre azul). They took great pains to distinguish themselves from the thousands of Sonoran Mexican mestizos or "cholos" emigrating from Mexico, whom they disdained as inferior, deprived, and below their station. However, to Anglos caught up in the derogatory dogma about inferior races, Californios and Mexicans were a vanquished race, all one and the same: "greasers" and "greaseritas." Whites further charged that "as a hybrid race Mexicans represented the worst nightmare of what might become of the white race if they let down their racial guard." A mestizo, but mistaken as an Indian, Manuel Domínguez in April 1857 was barred from giving testimony for the defense because of prohibitions against testimony from Indians. Domínguez was a wealthy landowner, a Los Angeles County Supervisor, and a delegate to the State constitutional convention and signer of the constitution. In Los Angeles, Mexican American journalist Francisco Ramírez, with his ally José Elias González, lashed out at American racism that now deeply marred the California landscape. Through the columns of his newspaper El Clamor Público, Ramírez condemned lynchings, supported reforms, opposed slavery and squatters, and spoke out vigorously against the courts, one of the key instruments of racist power, trying Mexican land claims. His articles on growing discrimination proved powerful in arousing moral indignation among California's Mexican Americans.

Francisco Ramírez quickly established a reputation among California Mexicans as a defender of their rights. The young Mexican American journalist launched his newspaper in July 1855. The first statewide Spanish-language newspaper of the post-Mexican War era, El Clamor Público published weekly until August 1859. Born in Los Angeles in 1837, Ramírez was a printer and former editor for La Estrella, the Spanish edition that occupied two pages of the weekly tabloid the Los Angeles Star. Ramírez was a strong admirer of the democratic principles of both Benito Juárez and Abraham Lincoln, and he became the unofficial voice of the Mexican people of California. The principal subjects engaging editorial opinion in El Clamor Público were strong views against lynchings and the public floggings introduced at the Los Angeles Plaza in 1850 by a local vigilante committee.

El Clamor Público at first urged cooperation between Mexicans and Anglos because Ramírez endorsed the American ideals of "popular government, economic progress, civil rights, and . . . peace." However, the mounting number of
lynchings and murders of Mexicans by Anglo mobs deeply angered Ramírez. For example, in February 1857 a justice of the peace assembled the local Mexicans outside the San Gabriel Mission to watch as he sliced off the head of the recently killed robber Miguel Soto and then stabbed repeatedly at the corpse. It prompted the Mexican American journalist to exclaim in his newspaper's editorial pages that American democracy and law was hypocritical. "Why trouble to publish California's laws in Spanish and English?" Ramírez asked. "What language they may be published in does not matter much—in Kanaka or Chinese it is the same if we are always to be governed by Lynch Law. Everyone understands perfectly the words 'hang! hang!'" El Clamor Publico disparaged the new American government for failing to protect the rights of Mexicans. Ramírez exhorted the Spanish-speaking community to unite against these prejudices.24

Journalist Francisco Ramírez was one of the few Mexican Americans in the mid-nineteenth century aware of the scale of Mexican American subjugation to Anglos. Through his newspaper, Ramírez defended the rights of Mexicans, promoted public education for them, instructed its readership in American civics, and advocated for their assimilation. Ramírez told Mexicans "like it or not, we are under the American flag . . . let us divest ourselves of all bygone traditions, and become Americanized all over—in language, in manners, in customs and habits." Distributed throughout California as far north as San Francisco, El Clamor Publico was an important source of information about local, state, and national politics and international news and remained committed to improving the lot of the mass of Mexicans. The cause of Ramírez's downfall and the demise of his newspaper was his outspoken opposition to the expansion of slavery, one of the issues embraced by the newly emerged Republican Party, opposed to slavery. Ramirez's views were opposed by the state's pro-slavery Democrats.25 Nonetheless, Francisco Ramírez began a tradition of social and political commentary in articulating the concerns and the dilemmas faced by Mexican Americans in the 1850s. In what many Californians called acts of crime, a handful of Mexican bandits meted out their own brand of justice on their enemies for vengeance.
Mexicans and Anglos both shared the responsibility for the mayhem that plagued the Southwest. In California, years of distrust and animosity between Anglo and Mexican erupted into violence and lawlessness. Joaquín Murieta, Juan García, Tiburcio Vásquez, and lesser lights who engaged in highway murder and robbery for personal gain became the embodiment of Mexican criminality.

The most famous of the California outlaw-heroes in legend of the early 1850s was Joaquín Murieta. Murieta’s myth grew; he captured the rage that California’s Mexican people felt toward Anglo injustice. Joaquín Murieta was born in Sonora, Mexico. As a young man, Murieta was one of the thousands of Mexicans from Sonora who left for California between 1848 and 1850. From 1850 to 1851 Murieta panned the rivers for gold in the Stanislaus mining district. He was soon caught up in the anti-Mexican climate created by the heightened racial tensions that exploded in violence. According to the story of Murieta, he had been a peaceful miner in the California gold fields until Anglos jumped his claim, killed his father and brother, and drove his mother out of the family ranch. These actions forced the young Murieta to avenge himself on all whites. As a hunted Mexican, he went into hiding and became a thief and a bandit in order to survive. So began the notorious career of Joaquín Murieta. A wave of highway robberies plagued much of northern and southern California’s valleys and mountains and served to keep tensions high; almost every crime committed was blamed on Murieta, and the price on his head grew. With Bernardino García (Three-Fingered Jack) and his other partners in crime, Murieta raided ranches and towns until he was allegedly captured and killed in an ambush. The Mexican robbers enjoyed widespread support from Spanish-speaking lower classes, which did not regard them as bandits but as heroes who had righted wrongs even though by illegal actions. Unfortunately, the bandit activity brought retribution to all Mexicans.

Using the mountains to hide and protect themselves, the bands of brigands began robbing and murdering travelers, stealing cattle and horses, and looting stores and saloons. As the disorder spread across California, Anglos attributed all the crimes to Mexicans, even though many of the crimes were committed by Anglos. The Spanish-speaking highwaymen who terrorized the California countryside all seemed to be named Joaquín, with the surnames Botilleras, Ocomorenia, Valenzuela, Carrillo, and Murieta.

The growing accounts of Joaquín Murieta’s exploits, combined with pressure from the Anglo population and from Californios such as Andrés Pico, forced the state of California to take action. On May 17, 1853, it passed a bill authorizing the formation of the California Rangers, hired mercenaries modeled after the Texas Rangers, to reduce lawlessness in the region. The mounted rangers were under the leadership of Los Angeles County deputy sheriff Harry Love. The “well armed and equipped” California Rangers, some of them gunfighters and Indian hunters, were ordered to capture the “party or gang of robbers commanded by the five Joaquins, Muriati, Ocomorenia, Valenzuela, Botellier, and Carrillo.” Californio legislator Antonio María de la Guerra insisted on adding these specific surnames to the bill given that its original language made every Mexican in California named Joaquín suspect. Governor John Bigler then posted a $1,000 reward for any of the Joaquins captured or killed.
On July 25, 1853, the California Rangers came upon a group of Mexicans near Panoche Pass west of Tulare Lake. The peace officers cornered the "Murieta gang" and, in the ensuing gunfight, fatally wounded Joaquin Valenzuela, killed Three-Fingered Jack, and two other bandits. The California Rangers cut off Three-Fingered Jack's head and hand, and an Army surgeon at Fort Miller preserved the severed head in a jar of whiskey. The same was done to the head of Joaquin Valenzuela. These acts were carried out for the reward and as a token of the defeat of the Mexicans. The California state legislature accepted the grisly evidence and awarded Captain Harry Love and his California Rangers their blood money.

However, it became difficult to sort out fact from fiction as to the details of what actually occurred during the shootout. The editor of the San Francisco Alta California charged that the California state legislature created the fictive Murieta to justify the money appropriated to fight the "Joaquin War." The editor put the story of the capture of Joaquin Murieta this way:

A few weeks ago a party of native Californians and Sonorans started for the Tulare Valley for the purpose of running mustangs. Three of the party have returned and report that they were attacked by a party of Americans, and that the balance of their party, four in number, had been killed; that Joaquin Valenzuela was killed, and that his head was cut off by his captors and held as a trophy. It is too well known that Joaquin Murieta was not the person killed by Captain Harry Love's party at the Panoche Pass.

Murieta's alleged pickled head was the prize trophy of the struggle with Mexican bandits. The severed head was displayed in San Francisco at John King's Saloon on Sansome Street and could be seen for the price of a dollar. In 1856, the head was taken on a world tour by its owner as a money-making scheme. It remained a popular museum piece at Dr. Jordan's Museum of Anatomy and Natural Science in San Francisco for young and old alike until the 1906 earthquake. The legend of Joaquin Murieta, a wronged man who sought vengeance on society, was pieced together from conflicting, contradictory, and fraudulent evidence. It grew and endured as a result of the 1854 publication of The Life and Adventures of Joaquin Murieta, Celebrated California Bandit by John Rollins Ridge. To many Americans fed on racism, the fictional Joaquin Murieta symbolized the violent nature and lawlessness of Mexicans of 1850s California in general. For Mexicans, angered by Anglo nativism, the myth of the good-bad man Murieta filled their need for heroic villains. Joaquin Murieta's folklore image as an unvanquished hero endured.

After Joaquin Murieta, the most notorious of the California bandits was Tiburcio Vásquez. Like other Mexicans who had been jailed, flogged, or chased back into Mexico, Vásquez was a product of the particularly violent clashes between Anglos and Mexicans in California. The highway robbers and cattle rustlers either were emigrants from Mexico, came from old-line California families as did Simón Pico, or, like Tiburcio Vásquez, were from the lower classes. These men committed crimes because they were motivated by personal aggrandizement or revenge.

Tiburcio Vásquez was born in Monterey in 1835. The native Californian attended school and could speak, read, and write English. He nurtured an
intense hatred of Anglos and the institutions dominated by them. As a sixteen-year-old in 1851, Vásquez and several other Mexicans were falsely accused of taking part in the murder of a local constable during a fandango in Monterey. From this time forth, Vásquez embarked on a life of cattle rustling, stage robbing, and other crimes until he was caught. He joined a gang of outlaws and eventually led his own group of highwaymen that ranged up and down central and southern California.35

In 1857, Tiburcio Vásquez was caught horse stealing in Los Angeles, convicted, and sentenced to San Quentin prison for his crime. Two years later, on June 25, 1859, Vásquez, along with forty-one other men, escaped from prison; but he was recaptured on August 17. After serving his full prison term, Vásquez was released on August 13, 1863, and endeavored to lead a peaceful and honest life. However, he resumed his life as a brigand and was sent to San Quentin again from January 1867 until June 4, 1870. Vásquez had spent almost ten years of his life in San Quentin and the rest as a bandit and gambler. He and his men committed robberies and murders over a four-year period in the San Benito County area and made their way to southern California. Once again, Vásquez was a fugitive from the law but no longer an unknown bandit; he had a dual price on his head, $3,000 alive and $2,000 dead, for robbing and killing three men at Snyder's Store in Tres Pinos on August 26, 1873. For several months, Vásquez managed to elude law enforcement officers and vigilante committees of three counties by hiding in the canyons around the Tejón Pass. He would be betrayed by one of his own men, Abdon Leyva.36

Following a quarrel with Tiburcio Vásquez, Abdon Leyva surrendered to the authorities and, to save his own neck, agreed to turn state's evidence against Vásquez. Leyva revealed that the wanted highwayman was hiding out at a shack in the Arroyo Seco area ten miles north of Los Angeles. On the morning of May 14, 1874, Los Angeles County Sheriff William Richard Rowland and a posse left Los Angeles to apprehend and arrest Vásquez. Six armed peace officers charged the cabin, but Vásquez dove out the window and ran. He was hit by a shotgun blast as he fled. "Don't shoot me," exclaimed the wounded Vásquez, throwing up his hands. "You've got me." The posse closed in on the Mexican, blood running from his wounded arms and leg. "You boys have got me," repeated Vásquez. "My name is Alejandro Martinez." "I have had your photograph for years," countered Under-sheriff Albert Johnson, "and know you to be Tiburcio Vásquez."37

Why did Vásquez choose a life of crime? After his capture, Vásquez told a Los Angeles Star reporter in an interview on May 16, 1874: "A spirit of revenge took possession of me. I had numerous fights in defense of what I believed to be my rights and those of my countrymen." Nine days after his capture, Vásquez was transported from Los Angeles on the steamer Senator up the California coast to San Jose to stand trial for the two murders he allegedly committed at Tres Pinos. Thousands came to visit or catch a glimpse of Tiburcio Vásquez, who became a major tourist draw, and many of the outlaw's visitors supported him. Convicted of two murders on January 9, 1875, Vásquez was sentenced to death on January 23. Despite rumors that the Mexican government was sending troops to his rescue, as well as an unsuccessful appeal, Tiburcio Vásquez was hanged on March 19, 1875. Allowed to make
a short speech, the only word Vásquez spoke from the gallows was “Pronto.” His final capture and execution brought to an end the rash of banditry by Mexicans in California. Not all outlawry was political protest against social injustice, for, as the example of Tiburcio Vásquez illustrates, many Mexican bandits often fell far short of their heroic images. Nevertheless, such legends die hard.

The worst outbreaks of violence in the Southwest occurred in Texas as a result of the ongoing conflict between Mexicans and Anglos. The discontent was aggravated by land disputes. The Nueces strip that extended to the border region became particularly fraught with violence as Tejano landowners and Anglo-Texan ranchers and land speculators began to face off against each other. Sporadic fighting between ranchers, irregular militia, and army troops from both sides of the Rio Grande dated to the Texas Revolution. The Texas Constitution aided Anglos in taking property from the Tejanos. It allowed confiscation of land if the owner had left the land vacant, had refused to participate in the Texas Revolution, or had aided Mexico in the struggle. By 1854, the twenty-five thousand Tejanos who lived in Texas formed the majority of the population in the South Texas region. They had lost much of their land and had no political power. Of the fifty thousand Anglos living in Texas, one of every four was a slave owner, and 80 percent had come from slave-holding states. Texas teemed with racism because of the growing sectional conflict. Anglo-Texans embraced the mantle of white supremacy.

JUAN CORTINA: CHAMPION AND HATED VILLAIN OF THE TEXAS BORDER REGION

The Texas Revolution had been a slaveholder’s conspiracy. Proslavery Texans held that Tejanos did not have the same rights as “white folk” because they were “yaller niggers,” a cut above the black slaves with whom Tejanos sympathized. Abolition was an attack on property rights, and it encouraged slave uprisings. Despite threats and violence against antislavery advocates, Tejanos took part in the struggle to end slavery and risked their lives in the process. They rescued runaway slaves, hid them, fed them, and at great risk guided them to safe passage across the Río Grande at Laredo and Eagle Pass. When the Texas Rangers captured Tejano abolitionists, they immediately executed them. Racist passions in Texas were further enflamed when the Know-Nothing Party appeared in 1854. Several Texas counties had organized vigilance committees to investigate threats of slave insurrections and to punish lawbreakers. In September 1854, Anglo-Texans in the South Texas town of Seguin drafted a resolution prohibiting Mexican “peons” from residing in or entering Texas and associating with black slaves. Similar resolutions were passed by Anglos representing eight South Texas counties who met in Gonzales to discuss actions against Tejanos who helped runaway slaves escape to Mexico via an underground railroad. In Austin, a citizen’s committee threatened violence against the “half-negro, half-Indian greasers” if they did not leave town within ten days. Two years later, authorities aided by white mobs ran out all the Tejanos from Colorado and Matagorda counties, concluding that Mexicans had aided a slave insurrection. In Uvalde County west of San Antonio, officials prohibited Tejanos
from passing through the area without a passport. Meanwhile, in the area of Goliad and Karnes counties, southeast of San Antonio, tensions between Tejanos and Anglo-Texans culminated in the so-called cart war. Sparked by racism and economic competition, the cart war was a terrorist campaign against Tejano carreteros (cart men) by rival Anglo-Texan freighters determined to take over the relatively lucrative freight trade.40

Tejanos and Mexican fleteros hauled freight from the Texas port of Indianola to San Antonio and to other towns in the Texas interior, charging less than Anglo freighters. On July 3, 1857, at Manauila Creek in Goliad County, Anglo-Texans attacked carreteros and wounded some of them. For more than a year, bands of heavily armed Anglo-Texans wearing masks intercepted and destroyed the carts, stole the freight, shot and killed scores of Mexican freighters, and generally disrupted the cart traffic. Because public sentiment weighed heavily against the carreteros, whom area Anglo-Texans regarded as “greasers” and a “nuisance” and who helped slaves to escape, nothing was done by local authorities to stop the crimes or apprehend the criminals. Mexico protested the hostilities that had thus resulted in the willful killing of seventy-five Tejano freight men to U.S. Secretary of State Lewis Cass. The Mexican Embassy in Washington, DC, reported that posses of armed Texans “have been organized for the exclusive purpose of hunting down Mexicans on the highway, despoiling them of their property, and putting them to death.” Cass urged Texas Governor Elisha M. Pease to take action in the matter. The Texas Legislature approved setting aside monies for the protection of the carreteros, but no law was passed to guarantee their safety. In fact, Goliad County’s citizens warned Tejanos that any Mexican caught committing a crime would be swept “from the face of the earth.” For many Tejanos the cart wars remained a potent metaphor for Anglo-Texan racism.41

The general disorder in the South Texas border region over Tejano lands escalated into a confrontation between Anglos and Tejanos. Through adverse court rulings, swindling, and coercion, Anglo speculators and Mexican War veterans were consolidating land ownership and water rights in the Rio Grande Valley. Unlike California and New Mexico, the federal government played no role in the land issue in Texas because Texas entered the Union with control over all its public lands. Anglo-Texans challenged the claims of the original heirs to the Espiritu Santo grant and turned on the Tejanos, sowing the seeds of the Cortina War. The border region’s Tejanos did not yield their land without a fight. Their resistance was considered an “uprising” that needed to be savagely suppressed.42

Juan Nepomuceno Cortina became the self-appointed champion of the border region Tejanos. He was born in Camargo, Tamaulipas, Mexico, on May 16, 1824, into a prominent landowning family who for three generations had lived along the Rio Grande. During the Mexican War, Cortina enlisted in the National Guard of Tamaulipas, served as a scout, and fought against General Zachary Taylor’s troops at the battles of Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma. Following the end of the war, the Cortina family became American citizens under the provisions of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Juan Cortina worked briefly for a contractor in the U.S. Quartermaster Corps, ironically assisting the army he had previously fought
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against. In 1850, the Tejano was involved in several filibustering expeditions financed by local Anglo-Texan merchants wanting to form the “Republic of the Sierra Madre” out of the Rio Grande region south of New Mexico. On the death of his father in 1855, Cortina’s family moved to the Espiritu Santo grant located in the southern Nueces strip near Brownsville, Texas. Juan Cortina became a cattle rancher and endeared himself to the local vaqueros, who nicknamed him “Cheno.” Active in politics, he gained some power in the local Democratic Party as leader of the Tejano vote. Texas governor Sam Houston counted on Cortina (who had opposed Houston’s election to governor) to prevent Texas from seceding from the Union. Like Houston, Cortina opposed slavery. The elite Tejano rancher won over the poor Tejanos of South Texas because he responded to their strongly felt antipathies toward Anglos who abused them because of their race.44

Cortina acquired his reputation as a defender of the rights of poor Tejanos on July 13, 1859, after witnessing Brownsville marshal Bob Spears, an ex-Texas Ranger, humiliate an old vaquero who formerly worked on the Cortina ranch, then brutally pistol-whip him until he was bloody and nearly unconscious. Cortina chose to avenge the assault. The Tejano shot Spears, carried the injured vaquero to his mother’s ranch, and then slipped across the border into Mexico. Two months later, Cortina, at the head of over seventy Tejanos, two-thirds of them from Cameron County, attacked Brownsville. They freed a dozen jailed Tejanos, killed three Anglos, and then rode out of town shouting “Muertan los gringos!” (“death to the gringos”). In a pronunciamiento (proclamation) written by Cortinista Miguel Peña and issued at his mother’s ranch, Juan Cortina cited his reasons for avenging the injustices Tejanos suffered at the hands of Anglo-Texans. Cortina vowed that he and his men would continue their fight for justice and commenced a campaign of harassment of the isolated settlements and towns along the Rio Grande from Brownsville to as far as Eagle Pass, Texas. The Cortina War that would rage for ten years had begun.45

On November 23, 1859, Cortina issued another proclamation. In it he again outlined the wrongs committed against Tejanos and vowed to protect their rights guaranteed by the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. After a brief lull, Cortina renewed his attacks and defeated a group of Texas Rangers pursuing him. Cortina expanded his border war. Despite protests by the state of Texas that Mexico shielded Cortina and his followers, Mexico did not pursue and prosecute Cortina because he was an American citizen. Cortina’s army mushroomed to four hundred men as additional Tejanos joined his movement. Settling personal scores contributed to the ascending level of violence in the Rio Grande Valley as Tejanos united solidly behind his insurgency. Juan Cortina’s support from the Tejano population grew. Cortina “was received as the champion of his race—as the man who would right the wrongs the Mexicans had received; that he would drive the hated [Americans] to the Nueces. . . .” The Cortinista sympathizers provided supplies, offered refuge, and refused to help officials in capturing the elusive rebel and putting a stop to the hit-and-run warfare. The violence mounted. On December 27, near Rio Grande City, Cortina and his men fought American troops under Major S. P. Heintzelman and a force of Texas Rangers led by John “Rip” Ford. The Tejanos lost this skirmish and escaped to Mexico. This clash further fueled the Cortina War that shook the lower
Rio Grande Valley for a decade as Juan Cortina staged raids from Rio Grande City to Brownsville. Federal troops and Texas Rangers found Cortina impossible to capture; the elusive Tejano succeeded in antagonizing his pursuers, including an expedition led by Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Lee. In retaliation, the Texas Rangers cracked down on the Tejano insurgency by unleashing a reign of terror against Mexicans. All along the Rio Grande and up to central Texas, the Rangers burned ranches and farms and shot Tejanos believed to be Cortinistas or Cortina sympathizers. Heintzelman reported “The whole country from Brownsville to Rio Grande City, 120 miles and back to the Arroyo Colorado, has been laid waste.” Fighting the Cortinistas with the Texas Rangers were members of the Knights of the Golden Circle, whose goal was the destruction of the Union and the perpetuation of slavery.45

Cortina rode away from the Texas border and into Mexico once the Mexican military began cooperating with the U.S. military in his capture. Chaotic conditions prevailed in Mexico. The country was wracked by civil war and then by foreign intervention and occupation by France. Emperor Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph ruled Mexico until he was executed in 1867. Juan Cortina had sympathized with Mexico’s conservatives in the War of the Reform, but in 1860 he joined the liberal army supporting President Benito Juárez. Cortina quickly rose through the military ranks, becoming Juárez’s military commander. Campaigning against the French, Cortina helped defend Tamaulipas and settled there, serving as its military governor and as mayor of Matamoros. However, Cortina turned against republican leaders in Mexico and went over to Maximilian’s side.46 Cortina soon lapsed into banditry as his political fortunes collapsed.

Cattle raids by Cortinistas ravaged the Rio Grande Valley. In 1876, under pressure from the United States, the Mexican government arrested Cortina for transporting stolen cattle and imprisoned him in Mexico City. He was branded a bandit and a cattle thief, and, because he was a Union sympathizer during the American Civil War, efforts were delayed to gain a pardon for Cortina from the state of Texas. Cortina escaped from prison, but as he made his way to the Texas-Mexico border, Mexican forces captured him. The Tejano was court-martialed and ordered executed. However, Mexico’s president Porfirio Díaz intervened and ordered that “the Robin Hood of the Rio Grande,” now an old man plagued by rheumatism, be kept under house arrest for the remainder of his life.47 On October 30, 1894, Juan Cortina died at his residence at Azcapotzalco, Mexico. His death was noted by only a few newspapers on either side of the border. Cortina nevertheless left a powerful legacy for decades in South Texas. Great numbers of Tejanos joined him in common cause against Anglo-Texans who stole their land and hated all Mexicans.48

The secession movement took power in the Deep South and began occupying federal military installations, soon triggering a civil war in the United States. In the Southwest, Mexican Americans mobilized to fight for both the North and the South. Nearly ten thousand Mexican Americans fought in the American Civil War in both the Union and the Confederate armies. Anglos questioned the loyalty and fighting spirit of the Mexican American soldiers and officers despite their numerous acts of courage and sacrifices.
MEXICAN AMERICANS IN THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR

In 1861, as civil war loomed, Mexican Americans in California, New Mexico, and Texas responded to President Lincoln’s call for seventy-five thousand volunteers. The loyalty of the state of California to the Union cause was in doubt. Forty percent of the recently established Anglo population had origins in the South or were sympathetic to the Confederate cause. Other Anglos were Democrats from the Midwest or Northeast who disliked both abolitionists and blacks. Notwithstanding, Californians believed strongly in popular sovereignty and wanted the Pacific states to remain neutral regarding the slavery issue.

On May 17, 1861, the state legislature of California unanimously passed a resolution declaring the state’s loyalty to the Union and its readiness to defend the United States. Volunteers in the state replaced regular Army soldiers. Native Californians firmly supported the Union. They had rallied to the Republican cause in 1860 when Abraham Lincoln became the party’s nominee. In 1863, the United States government established four companies that made up the First Battalion of the Native Cavalry of California. The companies were made up mostly of Californios but included California and Yaqui Indians, Sonorans, and Germans recruited by Mexican American officers such as Captain José Ramón Pico of Company A, who traveled throughout the state calling for Spanish-speaking volunteers. Pico advanced the cause of the Union. Passing through San Jose on a recruiting mission, Captain Pico addressed an assembly of Mexican Americans. To inspire them to join the Union cause, Pico proclaimed:
Sons of California! Our country calls and we must obey. This unholy rebellion of the Southern States must be crushed; they must come back to the Union, and pay obedience to the Stars and Stripes. United we will by force of circumstances become the first and mightiest republic on earth. 10

Mexican Americans in San Juan Bautista, San Francisco, and elsewhere also answered Pico's call and enlisted, so that by September the Mexican American officer had formed a full company of cavalry soldiers. Antonio María de la Guerra of Santa Barbara formed other companies from the volunteers recruited by José Antonio Sánchez in Monterey and Watsonville. One hundred and sixty-three Spanish-speaking recruits from Los Angeles joined the Union army. Serving as brigadier general of the First Brigade of the California militia, Mexican War veteran Andrés Pico was commissioned major of the First Battalion of the Native Cavalry, but due to sickness he declined the commission. Major Salvador Vallejo of Napa replaced Pico as the First Battalion's commander. 51

The California Unionists regretted that they were not sent east to serve. Instead, the 470 Mexican Americans who made up the four companies of the First Battalion of the Native Cavalry, with the rest of the California volunteers, served throughout California and in the New Mexico and Arizona Territory, where they helped to defeat a Confederate invasion. In May, the First Battalion of Native Cavalry was assigned to patrol the Colorado River region of southern Arizona and east to Texas. The men guarded telegraph lines, settlements, and travelers and captured Army deserters. The later assignment took Captain Pico and his men into Sonora, Mexico. In April 1866, the First Battalion returned to California and was mustered out. 52

Because of the continued Indian raiding in northern California and the deployment of Union army units for duty in the East, a mounted company of native Californians joined the California Mountaineers Battalion and the Sixth California Infantry. These units were engaged in brutal military campaigns against California Indians to secure the area for Anglos, some of whom had been murdering Indians and stealing their lands. The fighting against the Indians, many of the California tribes already on the verge of extinction, did not stop until the surrender of the South that ended the Civil War. 53

The Confederacy's plan of campaign in the Southwest involved capturing the strategically important gold fields of Colorado and California, as well as the valuable Santa Fe Trail. In July 1861, three hundred Texans, led by Lieutenant Colonel John R. Baylor, took the southern New Mexico settlement of Mesilla and proclaimed the area the Confederate Territory of Arizona. Baylor's forces were later reinforced by three Texas regiments led by General Henry H. Sibley in preparation for an invasion of New Mexico. New Mexico was to serve as a springboard for securing the gold fields of Colorado and California for the Confederate States of America. In early February 1862, the Confederates launched an attack on Fort Craig, located south of Socorro, New Mexico. The Confederates planned to capture supplies at the fort and then move north and take Albuquerque, Santa Fe, and the military supply depot at Fort Union and then seize Colorado, Utah, and California. 54

Washington officials at first expressed little interest in the military problems of the New Mexico Territory. The Territory's non-Indian population numbered about
ninety-five thousand and was made up mostly of Mexicans who only thirteen years earlier had been citizens of Mexico. Washington dismissed the Mexicans as troublesome citizens who contributed nothing to the United States and whose need for protection from Indian depredations was costly and burdensome. The United States nevertheless asked the New Mexico Territorial Governor to raise units of volunteers to serve for three years. The racist regular army officers and soldiers believed the native New Mexicans were by nature cowardly and doubted their fighting ability. That the Spanish-speaking New Mexicans made good soldiers was soon proven in the face of enemy fire.

In July of 1861, the First New Mexico Infantry was organized in response to the invasion of the southern New Mexican territory by Baylor's Texas Confederate forces. The enlistments of New Mexicans increased through appeals to their patriotism, the offer of bounties and higher pay, and, for some, an end to their peonage. However, it was the news of the arrival of the much-hated Texas forces that had captured Fort Fillmore and occupied Mesilla that spurred more New Mexicans to enlist. New Mexico Governor Henry Connelly exploited the threat of the Texan invasion. Declaring a state of emergency, the governor visited towns and addressed crowds of native New Mexicans. He played on their longtime hatred of Texans as he called for volunteers to oppose the Confederate invasion. Connelly exhorted: "Do you want them to take away your lands? Didn't your fathers repulse the invaders...? Were not these enemies not [sic] taken in chains to Mexico? You are a fighting race. Fight for your rights and repel the invaders."56

As in California, New Mexicans awarded officer commissions signed up entire communities of relatives, friends, and fellow townspeople. By August 13, 1861, two regiments of New Mexico volunteers had been raised to pit against the Confederates. The First New Mexico Infantry Regiment was a 1,100-man unit of ten companies, four of which were mounted at their own expense. Native New Mexicans made up the majority of the soldiers and officers commanded by Colonel Christopher "Kit" Carson. Carson's son-in-law, Major Francisco Chaves, was second in command. Colonel Miguel Pino was in charge of the Second Regiment, and the Third Regiment of Volunteers was led by Colonel José Guadalupe Gallegos. By December, 3,500 New Mexican volunteers, excluding the militia and independent companies, were in active service.57

The First New Mexico Regiment suffered from poor equipment and lack of other supplies; it was originally equipped with Mexican War surplus ordnance. Other regiments had few government-issued weapons. The New Mexican volunteers bought their own uniforms from a clothing allowance. This circumstance had an impact on the already low level of morale among the men because of widespread racism by Anglo officers and soldiers toward them. The latter displayed condescension and contempt for the Spanish-speaking volunteers; the Anglos insisted the Mexicans were cowardly and incompetent, treated them as inferiors, and referred to them disparagingly as "greaser soldiers." Despite the racism, lack of pay, and substandard weapons, the First New Mexico regiment performed well in the field. The men of the Second and Fourth New Mexico Regiments soon proved indispensable in the Battles of Valverde and Glorieta Pass.58
Colonels Carson and Pino and Lieutenant Colonel Manuel Chaves set out to stop General Sibley's Confederate troops' attempt to take control of the New Mexico territory. Chaves, who had declined a Confederate commission, was a veteran Indian fighter, as were many of the Spanish-speaking soldiers under his command. The New Mexicans were aided by Major John Chivington's Colorado Volunteers, who were led over rugged terrain behind the Confederates by Colonel Chaves.

In February 1862, 4,500 battle-hardened rebel soldiers, including the Texan Mounted Volunteers, were moving into northern New Mexico with several artillery pieces. Union troops, reinforced by several battalions of New Mexico militia led by Colonel Edward S. Canby, clashed with the Texans north of Fort Craig at a ford on the Rio Grande known as Valverde. Valverde was a turning point in the Confederate effort to conquer the West. Many of the New Mexicans were brave and skillful Indian fighters such as Captain Rafael Chacón, but none had prior experience with large-scale military confrontations. Verbally insulted and physically abused by scornful Anglo officers and soldiers, the New Mexicans demonstrated loyalty and courage at Valverde. The New Mexicans performed well under fire and in hand-to-hand combat, inflicting great losses on the Confederate soldiers, but also sustaining heavy casualties. The New Mexicans were humiliating the Texans on their front when they were abruptly ordered to fall back to Fort Craig. Unable to seize Fort Craig from the New Mexicans, the rebel troops instead continued their march north. The New Mexicans pursued the fleeing Confederates, who were fast running out of supplies. Despite the conspicuous bravery of the New Mexicans in combat, Canby's report of the battle of Valverde accused them of cowardice and blamed them for losing the battle.59

The Confederate troops approached Santa Fe in early March, forcing Union soldiers from Fort Marcy to evacuate Governor Connelly to safety. The soldiers also moved military supplies and equipment from Fort Marcy to Fort Union to keep them from falling into enemy hands. Confederate forces entered Santa Fe on March 10 and occupied the capital for more than two weeks.

The Battle of Glorieta Pass was the pivotal battle of the Civil War in New Mexico. It began on March 26, 1862, when 1,342 Union troops from Fort Union, including New Mexico militia and volunteer infantry and cavalry from Colorado, fought the 3,500-strong Confederate army at Apache Canyon east of Santa Fe. For three days each side vied for control of this strategic pass. A Union raiding party led by Colonel Chavez attacked the Confederate rear positions and destroyed their train of provisions and ammunition. The loss of the supply train weakened the rebels; they had underestimated Union forces and were forced to retreat. The First New Mexico Volunteers Regiment harassed the exhausted rebel troops as they fled to Texas. Five hundred Texans died in combat or succumbed to smallpox and pneumonia, and an additional five hundred were reported missing or captured. The Confederates' threat to New Mexico ended, and the rebels were forced to abandon the campaign. The Battle of Glorieta Pass became known as the "Gettysburg of the West," the turning point of Civil War hostilities in New Mexico. By midsummer 1862, the Civil War in New Mexico was over. But in the East bitter fighting continued.60
The Confederacy’s 1862 Conscription Act in many instances was unenforceable in parts of the South, and many Confederate governors refused to share supplies or soldiers with Confederate armies not defending their own states. Many Tejanos were reluctant to become involved in the Civil War. Tejanos either joined Texas militia units, as they feared being sent away from their families, or avoided conscription by claiming to be Mexican citizens. The Tejanos also faced accusations of subversion and disloyalty because they were suspected of participating in the ongoing Cortina War along the border. All the South Texas counties with large Tejano populations voted for secession, though they were either misled or had been forced to do so by political bosses. Some Tejanos refused this call for help against the Union because they remembered all too well how the Texans had mistreated them. On April 12, 1861, one day before the surrender of Fort Sumter, Tejano rancher Antonio Ochoa with forty armed Tejanos took control of the third precinct of Zapata County. Most of the Tejanos were either Cortina sympathizers or veterans of the first Cortina War. Ochoa threatened to kill all the gringos in Zapata County and hang the sheriff if county officials swore allegiance to the Confederacy. Ochoa’s brief insurrection reflected the strong anti-Anglo sentiment in South Texas against the large landowners who ruled over them.44

Most Texas Confederate soldiers did not participate in campaigns east of the Mississippi River, but those who did engaged in some of the worst fighting of the Civil War. The four thousand Texans in the First, Fourth, and Fifth Volunteer Infantry regiments were organized into the Texas Brigade under the command of
Major General John Bell Hood. The Tejanos in Hood’s Texas Brigade participated in thirty-eight battles and skirmishes that included action in Virginia in the battles of Gaines’ Mill, Second Bull Run, and Antietam (fought and lost at a cost of 60 percent casualties); the defensive victory at Fredericksburg; and the Gettysburg and Wilderness campaigns. Those Texans who saw combat in the latter battle suffered 70 percent casualties. By October 1864, of the original four thousand Texans only three hundred remained to take part in the Appomattox Court House campaign. Tejanos from San Antonio, Eagle Pass, and the Fort Clark area served with John R. Baylor’s Second Texas Mounted Rifles that marched to the Mesilla Valley on the Río Grande created as the Confederate Territory of Arizona. These units were incorporated into three regiments organized at San Antonio and became the Army of New Mexico commanded by General Sibley. The Tejanos fought at Valverde, occupied Albuquerque and Santa Fe, and battled again at Glorieta Pass.62

By the summer of 1863, the Confederacy lost its military momentum to the Union forces. Tejanos from San Antonio who served in the Sixth Texas Infantry were involved in several of the extremely bloody eastern campaigns. They saw action at Chattanooga and Chickamauga, in the devastating defeats at Atlanta, and in the suicidal assault mounted against the Federal Army at Franklin; and they were obliterated at the Battle of Nashville in John Bell Hood’s invasion of Tennessee. Tejano officers who served the Confederacy included Captain Manuel Yturri in the Third Texas Infantry and Lieutenant Joseph de la Garza from San Antonio. De la Garza reenlisted in the Confederate Army in 1864 and was killed in the De Soto Parish in Louisiana in the same year in the Battle of Mansfield during the bloody Red River campaign in which both Confederate and Union armies sustained heavy casualties. More than three hundred Tejanos from Webb, Refugio, and Béxar counties served in the Eighth Texas Infantry. Joseph M. Peñaloza and José Ángel Navarro commanded the Eighth’s two all-Tejano companies. In mid-August 1862, these Tejano Confederate soldiers helped defeat a Union army in the Battle of Corpus Christi. Tejanos also served the Confederacy in the Tenth Texas Cavalry, the Fifty-fifth Alabama Infantry, and the Sixth Missouri Infantry.63

Tejanos and Mexicans made up most of the First Texas Cavalry, the first Confederate regiment organized in Texas. Among the Tejanos in the unit was Adrián J. Vidal, the adopted son of Anglo-Texan land baron Mifflin Kenedy. Vidal was born in Monterrey, Mexico, in 1840. After the death of his father, Adrián’s mother, Petra Vela de Vidal took him to Meir, Texas, where she met Mifflin Kenedy, whom she married in 1852. Adrián Vidal joined the Confederacy in San Antonio in October 1862 as a private in James Duff’s Partisan Rangers. Promoted to lieutenant and then to captain, Vidal was assigned to an all-Tejano Confederate cavalry militia unit and ordered to guard the Río Grande. Tejanos fought effectively against the invading Union forces. In July 1863, Vidal was recognized for bravery for capturing a Union gunboat.64

Captain Vidal’s Tejano unit undertook reconnaissance missions, harassed the enemy, fought small-scale skirmishes, and was constantly on the move despite inadequate equipment and supplies. The Tejanos also endured flagrant discrimination from Confederate soldiers. Frustrated, Captain Vidal complained to his commanders but got no reply. General Hamilton P. Bee sent two soldiers to recall
Captain Vidal and his militia to Brownsville. Fed up with the racism, Vidal and his men mutinied in October 1863 and crossed enemy lines to join the First Texas Union Calvary commanded by Colonel Edmund J. Davis, killing one rebel soldier and wounding another. The latter reported to Bee's unit that Vidal and his men were going to launch a nighttime attack on Brownsville. Following a short skirmish with Vidal and his men, Bee's troops retreated to Brownsville to wait for Vidal's attack, but it never came. The Tejanos instead passed within a mile of Brownsville, plundering the ranches upriver, and killing several Confederate sympathizers.\(^5\)

The Union army took occupation of Brownsville on November 6, 1866. Captain Adrian Vidal and his men were formed into the unit Vidal's Independent Partisan Rangers, which was attached to the Second Texas Union Calvary. The unit scouted for the Union Army along the Rio Grande Valley and north to the Nueces River. On May 30, 1864, Vidal resigned his commission. However, Union army officials cancelled Vidal's discharge, classified him as a deserter, and issued orders for him to be shot on sight. Vidal and his men had fled to Mexico and joined up with Juan Cortina and the Juárezistas. In June 1865, Vidal was captured by Mexican forces at Camargo on the border. Although Mifflin Kenedy offered a sizable ransom for the release of his adopted son, Vidal was summarily executed. Kenedy recovered his body and buried it at the family ranch in Texas. Discrimination led to Vidal's changing allegiance and his last alliance with Juan Cortina.\(^6\)

The most recognized Tejano participant in the Civil War was Laredo ranch-merchant Santos Benavides. Benavides was the highest-ranking Tejano to serve the Confederacy, rising to the rank of colonel and commander of the Thirty-third Texas Cavalry Regiment. With his two brothers Refugio and Cristóbal, both captains in the regiment, Colonel Benavides compiled a distinguished record of border defense against Union forces. Though ill equipped, frequently without food, and forced to march across vast expanses of land, the Thirty-third Texas Cavalry never lost a battle.\(^7\)

Born in Laredo on November 1, 1823, Santos Benavides was the great-great-grandson of Tomás Sánchez de la Barrera y Garza, the founder of Laredo. Like other prominent Mexican Americans, Benavides used political institutions to advance his private ends. His prominence in Laredo politics resulted from the influence of his uncle Basilio Benavides, who served three times as mayor of Laredo under Mexican rule and then as mayor and state representative after Texas annexation. Tejanos controlled Laredo city government, whereas Anglos dominated newly created Webb County. Santos Benavides was elected mayor of Laredo in 1856 and chief justice of Webb County in 1859. He joined a coalition of wealthy Laredo Tejanos and Anglos that pitted their privilege against the poor. The Tejano rancher-merchant also gained distinction as an Indian fighter by leading several campaigns against the Lipan Apaches. Santos Benavides fought for the Federalists during the Federalist-Centralist wars that swept the Rio Grande frontier in the 1830s and 1840s. During the Mexican War, the Tejano cooperated with Mirabeau B. Lamar, whose forces occupied Laredo. After the Mexican War, Santos Benavides joined his uncle in opposing the annexation of the Laredo area by the United States. When Texas seceded from the Union, Benavides with his brothers supported
the Confederacy. A pro-Confederate and slave owner, Santos Benavides and his brothers defeated a band of Tejanos led by Juan Cortina in the border battle of Carrizo on May 22, 1861.

Commissioned a captain in the Thirty-third Texas Cavalry Regiment and assigned to the Rio Grande Military District, Santos Benavides quickly gained a reputation for bravery. Benavides and his unit invaded northern Mexico several times in retaliation for Union guerilla raids into Texas. In November 1863, Benavides was promoted to colonel and authorized to raise his own regiment of partisan rangers. Benavides's greatest achievement was his defense of Laredo on March 19, 1864. With just forty-two troops, the Benavides brothers drove off two hundred Union soldiers from the First Texas Union Cavalry commanded by Colonel Edmund J. Davis. Davis had earlier offered Benavides a Union generalship. During the Union occupation of Brownsville, Benavides's regiment guarded the safe passage of Texas cotton to Matamoros and drove Union forces back from Brownsville in March 1864.

Two thousand Texans opposed to the Confederacy joined the United States Army, and Tejanos made up over half of these Texan Unionists. In addition to opposing slavery, these Tejano Unionists saw military service as an opportunity to strike a blow against Anglo landowners, attorneys, and politicians who defrauded them of their land. Tejanos and Mexicans recruited by Anglo-Texan and Tejano union officers from towns and villages along the lower Rio Grande made up the Second Texas Cavalry, commanded by Colonel John L. Haynes. Many of the Tejano recruits had enlisted while living in Mexico after being driven there by the Confederate occupation of the Rio Grande Valley. A significant number had fought with Cortina or were sympathetic to his cause. The Second Texas Cavalry saw duty along the Rio Grande and later in Louisiana. Tejano company commanders included George Treviño, Clemente Zapata, Cesario Falcón, and Mónico de Abrego. A number of Tejano Union soldiers provided invaluable service as guerillas on the Nueces Strip. The most famous soldiers of these defensive forces were Cecilio Balerio and his son Juan, who single-handedly fought Confederates at Los Patricios, fifty miles southwest of Banquete in March 1864.

Nearly one-fourth of the soldiers from Texas who fought in the Civil War died, half succumbing to their wounds and to disease. Tejanos proved their worth as military men. However, their wartime sacrifices got them little after the war; they did not receive land under the headright system. They returned to their homes, where most lived out their lives in poverty among the unfolding economic and political oppression of Tejanos. There were still Indians to subdue. Mexican Americans would be sent into the Southwest to deal with the Indian problem that was delaying settlement of some areas of the region.

MEXICAN AMERICANS FIGHT IN THE INDIAN WARS

Mexican Americans and the U.S. Army turned once more to halting the problem of Indian attacks. In New Mexico, the new Indian threat was an outbreak of warfare by Navajo, Apache, and Plains Indians. It fell on the New Mexicans of the First New Mexico Cavalry to undertake the task of rounding up and placing the territory's Indian tribes on reservations.
In 1863, after fifteen years of intermittent warfare, four hundred Mescalero Apache Indians were relocated to Bosque Redondo reservation at Fort Sumner on the Pecos River in eastern New Mexico. In 1865, the Mescalero Apaches left Bosque Redondo and returned to their home in the mountains of southern New Mexico. Another long period of warfare followed. Led by Chief Victorio, Mescaleros with other Apaches raided, plundered, and killed on both sides of the border and into Texas.

The Navajos resumed their generations-old practice of raiding the Mexican population of New Mexico. The Mexicans retaliated as they always had—by killing Navajos and taking women and children as captives. The First New Mexico Cavalry under General James H. Carleton was sent to pacify the Navajos and, in a brutal scorched-earth policy, destroyed their homeland. In the summer of 1864, nine thousand Navajos were force-marched from their ancestral lands on the Arizona border to the Bosque Redondo reservation.

The First New Mexico Volunteers saw duty against Kiowa, Comanche, Cheyenne, and Arapaho Indian war parties throughout New Mexico, Arizona, and Texas, as well as Oklahoma and Colorado. They were aided by three thousand African American troops, the famous Buffalo Soldiers, stationed at eleven of the sixteen forts of the New Mexico territory. Enduring long forced marches through blizzards, heat, and drought, the New Mexicans kept open the Santa Fe Trail, the Cimarron cutoff, El Camino Real, and the California Trail (the Butterfield Stagecoach route), byways prone to Indian attack. United States soldiers gained new respect for the New Mexicans after witnessing their accomplishments on the battlefield.

The Mexican population in Arizona grew as the social and economic links between the United States and Mexico evolved. Shortly after the end of the Civil War, 4,187 non-Indians lived in Arizona; most of them were Mexicans newly arrived from Sonora. The region was quickly repopulated as American investors developed the mines near Tubac. Mining would be the foundation of Arizona's economy, and it was based on the labor of Mexicans from both sides of the border. Former residents returned to work in the mines and smelter owned by the Sonora Exploring and Mining Company and later for the railroads. Within a few years the population of the Tucson-Tubac area grew from three hundred to almost two thousand residents. On April 30, 1871, Mexican Americans would plot and execute the massacre of defenseless Arapahoe Apache women and children camped outside Camp Grant.

Previously denied the vote in the 1850s, some Arizona Mexicans began to participate in politics after Arizona qualified for statehood. Ties of marriage and business between an emerging Anglo and an old-line Mexican elite characterized political and economic order in Arizona. This included fighting Indians. Jesús María Elias was a leading member of a prominent Mexican family that owned more than two hundred thousand acres of land. He served three terms in the Arizona House Legislature, and, with another veteran Indian fighter, William S. Oury, helped form the Committee of Public Safety.

Because Apache raids placed sharp restrictions on farming, ranching, and mining activity, Indian killing was the main occupation of Elias, who earned the
moniker "the boss of all wars." Apaches had recently attacked the Elias ranch, stealing cattle and killing two of Elias's brothers, Ramón and Cornelio, and a relative, Luis Elias. The most active promoter of the Committee of Public Safety, Jesús María Elias was elected as the commander of the committee that was made up of sixty Anglos, forty-eight Mexicans, and ninety-four Papago Indians. In the predawn hours of April 30, they assaulted Aravaipas Apaches camped on the San Pedro River. The men opened fire on the camp. The wounded, unable to escape, had their brains beaten out with clubs or were knifed or hatcheted to death in what became known as the Camp Grant Massacre of April 1871. It was all over in thirty minutes. Almost all of the 118 Apaches killed in the wanton slaughter were women and children. In addition, the assailants kidnapped more than two dozen Aravaipas Apache babies, who were sold into slavery in Mexico. The Camp Grant Massacre outraged the nation. More than one hundred of the men who participated in the massacre were put on trial. After less than twenty minutes of deliberation, the jury ruled for the release of the killers. The celebration of the not-guilty verdict lasted for days. The next month, Oury was elected alderman, and Elias, a leading figure in the murders, was elected town dog catcher.76

When the railroad arrived in 1880, Anglos increasingly became dominant in Arizona. However, the development of a mining economy dependent on a reserve of cheap labor is what subordinated Mexicans in Arizona and elsewhere in the Southwest.
CONCLUSION

Following the end of the Mexican War, American authority in the Southwest rested on the claim that Anglos were representatives of a superior civilization. Anglos were violently prejudiced against the hated Mexicans, a conquered people, losers in America's war of national destiny. The myth of the Alamo, combined with Anglo-Texan participation in the Mexican War, further increased the vicious racism found in Texas. Anglos empowered some Mexican Americans, and these individuals, such as Santos Benavides of Laredo and Tucson's Jesús María Elías, accommodated themselves to the new social order arising from the rapidly growing Anglo population. The Mexicans' decline was the result of numerical domination, racism, and Anglo control of political and economic institutions. Mexicans also experienced an American legal system as an instrument of injustice and oppression. Throughout the Southwest the ranchero tradition was all but extinguished. Land dispossession was accompanied by an immense amount of fraud, as well as violence. Anglos ended up owning almost all the land in the new Southwest region. Mexican Americans found themselves pushed into urban settlements as the foundation of their economic life was torn away.

Without recourse to local or state authorities or the law, Mexican Americans at times met force with force to defend their rights against armed vigilante groups incited by local politicians. The tensions exploded into the violence of ethnic cleansing. Mexicans in California such as Tiburcio Vásquez turned to banditry, whereas in Texas Tejanos such as Juan Cortina and Antonio Ochoa resorted to rebellion as a means of expressing grievances and frustrations with Anglo mistreatment. In their own way, the latter fought for justice, and their struggles had racism as their basis. Yet choosing violence as a response to violence usually generated more violence. Moreover, despite calls for revenge, most of these bandits and rebels could not see beyond their own individual needs. There were other memories of insurgency in the Southwest as Mexicans heroized rebels against law and property. In the end, none were able to escape the grasp of authorities.

Many Mexican Americans opposed slavery and secession, but others supported the Confederacy. About ten thousand Mexican Americans joined Union and Confederate armed forces and, despite various forms of discrimination, participated in dozens of military campaigns during the American Civil War. Mexican American officers and soldiers in the Confederate and Union armies met the test of combat and exhibited bravery under fire.

Victims of hard times and limited opportunities, Mexican Americans were condemned to a lifetime of menial labor. With the eventual expansion of commercial agriculture in California and the passage of the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1883, most of the displaced Mexican Americans became farm laborers. Their fate was sealed. They faced growing employment restrictions. As Mexican American men found themselves occupationally disadvantaged, more and more women began to work regularly outside the home as domestics, laundresses, and seamstresses. Children were also introduced to the world of work and, like the women, were more vulnerable to exploitation. Mexican Americans with wealth, social status, light skins, and a presumed Spanish identity did not escape the racism.
NOTES

1. Ceballos-Ramirez and Martinez, "Conflict and Accommodation," 136, 146–147; David J. Weber, Foreigners in Their Native Land (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1973), 140, 143. In 1850, Mexicans made up less than 10 percent of the total population of Texas and California but over 90 percent of the population of New Mexico.


4. Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, 205.

5. Ibid., 211, 216. In 1861, the northeastern portion of the New Mexico territory was attached to Colorado.

6. Truett, Fugitive Landscapes, 40; Reséndez, Changing National Identities, 99; Hall, Social Change in the Southwest, 228; Odie B. Faulk, Crimson Desert: Indian Wars of the American Southwest (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974), 142–145; Officer, Hispanic Arizona, 109, 150–151; Thomas E. Sheridan, Los Tucsonenses: The Mexican Community in Tucson 1854–1941 (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 1986), 18, 22. For example, the legislature of Chihuahua made "blood contracts" with bands of American adventurers and outlaws to kill Indians at so much a head. The price scale took into account age and sex.


9. Hall, *Social Change in the Southwest*, 211, 216; Weber, *Foreigners in Their Native Land*, 143–144. Some Americans claimed the United States had made a bad bargain by annexing New Mexico, the most heavily populated of Mexico's former territories. For example, Connecticut congressman Truman Smith remarked that it was a mistake to bring New Mexicans into the Union because of their low morals. South Carolina's Senator John C. Calhoun was appalled at the idea of making New Mexicans citizens of the United States because he claimed they were a "colored race" and that the Union was "a white race."


15. Ibid., 97–98; Act of April 30, 1855, ch. 175, § 2, 1855, Cal. Stat., 217; Weber, *Foreigners in Their Native Land*, 149.


17. Pitt, *Decline of the Californios*, 103.


19. Haas, *Conquest and Historical Identities*, 65–66; Monroy, *Thrown Among Strangers*, 204–205; Weber, *Foreigners in Their Native Land*, 156, 159. Land tenure for California Indians changed considerably after the Mexican War. When California became a state in 1850, land officially not in private hands became public domain. The state set up a Land Claims Commission in 1851 to adjudicate disputes, but because Indian people did not know of the Commission and the state of California did not enter a claim in their behalf, no one represented Indian claims. Throughout the state Indian leaders agreed to cede their traditional lands, comprising 7,488,000 acres, for reservations. California officials objected. U.S. Representative Joseph Walker McCorkle from San Francisco argued in Congress on March 26, 1852, that in some cases the land set aside for Indian people comprised "the most valuable agricultural and mineral lands in the state." California Governor John Bigler concurred. He wrote to Redick McKee on July 18, 1852, that not only are the lands included within the reservations valuable but that "I have the assurance of the united opposition of our delegation in Congress to ratification of the
treaties, and that their rejection by the United States may be regarded as beyond doubt."

He was right. The Senate refused to ratify the treaties.


26. Estrada, Los Angeles Plaza, 60; Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 70; Shelley Streeby, American Sensations: Class, Empire, and the Production of Popular Culture (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002), 277–278.


30. Thornton, Searching for Joaquin, 8; Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 80.


33. Thornton, Searching for Joaquin, 30, 88; Monroy, Thrown Among Strangers, 213. The legend of Murieta achieved notoriety in 1854 with the publication of John Rollin Ridge's Joaquin Murieta: The Celebrated California Bandit. In the book, Ridge describes Murieta as a peaceful miner who turned into an outlaw after Americans stole his claim and attacked his family. Chilean poet Pablo Neruda would later write a poem about Murieta. Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 82.

34. Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 256–257, 262.


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37. Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 216; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 56.
38. Pitt, Decline of the Californios, 75–76, 262. See also George Beers, California Outlaw: Tiburcio Vásquez (Los Gatos, CA: Talisman Press, 1960); John Rollin Ridge, California’s Age of Terror: Marieta and Vásquez (Hollister, CA: Evening Free Lance, 1927); Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 55.
39. Jerry Thompson, Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 2007), 20, 30, 34; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 41, 63; Weber, Foreigners in Their Native Land, 146.
42. Thompson, Cortina, 20, 32; De Leon, Tejano Community, 17; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 41; Weber, Foreigners in Their Native Land, 155–156.
43. Thompson, Cortina, Chapter 1; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 42; Charles W. Goldfinch, Juan N. Cortina, 1824–1892: A Reappraisal (Brownsville, TX: Bishop’s Print Shop, 1950), 17–24; Marquis Jones, The Raven: A Biography of Sam Houston (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1929), 394; Weber, Foreigners in Their Native Land, 231.
44. Thompson, Cortina, 36–47; De Leon, Tejano Community, 17–18; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 42; Weber, Foreigners in Their Native Land, 232. Cortina later moved his family to Mexico and gained a commission as captain and commander of a Mexican cavalry unit in Matamoros.
47. Thompson, Cortina, 202–204, 238–241; Rosenbaum, Mexicano Resistance in the Southwest, 45.
52. Ibid., 232; Brigadier General Richard H. Orton Records of California Men in the War of the Rebellion, 1861 to 1867 (Sacramento, California: Adjutant General’s Office, 1890), 304–306. In February 1865, Vallejo resigned his commission and was replaced by Major John C. Cremony.
53. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 243.
54. Ibid., 39, 52; Simmons, Little Lion of the Southwest, 176–178.
55. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 41, 390, fn 20; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Grey, 6. In a letter to the assistant adjutant general of the Western Department at St. Louis, Colonel Canby said about the New Mexicans: “I place no reliance on any volunteer force that can be raised unless strongly supported by Regular troops.” Josephy, The Civil War in the American West, 41.
57. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 42; Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 118–119, 122, 125–126; Simmons, Little Lion of the Southwest, 178. Several New Mexican captains who could afford the financial outlay paid for the horses for their men but never received reimbursement from territorial officials.
58. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 63.
60. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 78–92; Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 183; Simmons, Little Lion of the Southwest, 182–186.
62. Campbell, Gone to Texas, 247, 251–252; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 26–27.
63. Campbell, Gone to Texas, 249, 253, 257–258; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 26–27.
64. Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 71–72; Thompson, Mexican Texans in the Union Army, 19.
65. Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 72–74; Thompson, Mexican Texans in the Union Army, 19. A judge from the lower Rio Grande Valley, Davis had opposed Texas secession.
66. Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 75–79; Thompson, Mexican Texans in the Union Army, 19.
67. Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 8.
68. Ibid., 12; Thompson, Mexican Texans in the Union Army, 5–6; Gilberto M. Hinojosa, A Border Town in Transition: Laredo, 1755–1870 (College Station, TX: Texas A & M University Press, 1983), 68.
69. Campbell, Gone to Texas, 180, 223; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 60. At the end of the Civil War, Benavides twice served as an alderman of Laredo and three times in the Texas state legislature. His leadership built Democratic support among Tejanos in Webb County. Because of Benavides’s friendship with the followers of Benito Juárez, Porfirio Díaz selected him as an envoy to the United States. With the coming of the railroads to Laredo in the 1880s, Anglos challenged the power of Laredo’s political elite such as Santos Benavides.
70. Campbell, Gone to Texas, 264–265; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Gray, 85–96.
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71. Campbell, Gone to Texas, 261; Thompson, Vaqueros in Blue and Grey, 96.
72. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 277.
73 Ibid., 286; De Lay, War of a Thousand Deserts, 308.
74. Josephy, Civil War in the American West, 277, 284–286, 287–291; Simmons, Little Lion of the Southwest, 191, 195; Meketa, Legacy of Honor, 248.
75. Truett, Fugitive Landscapes, 41–42.