

ATLANTIC TEXAS:
EUROPEAN RIVALRIES, GULF COAST GEOPOLITICS,
AND THE BOURBON REFORMS ON NEW SPAIN'S NORTHERN FRONTIER
1685-1755

by

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In 1739 Carlos Benites Franquis de Lugo, the former governor of the Spanish province of Texas wrote an angry letter to the Crown. De Lugo detailed the abuses he discovered in the small frontier settlement of San Antonio de Béxar¹ upon his appointment as governor in 1736. He described the conditions of the trifold military, missionary and civilian community as “miserable and deplorable” and blamed Béxar’s decrepit state on the actions of the “corrupt and tyrannical government with which the inhabitants are afflicted.”² According to de Lugo the former viceroy Juan de Acuña, second Marquis de Casa Fuerte, was responsible for Béxar’s mess. He had failed to regulate the actions of the preceding governor, Manuel de Sandoval, allowing him to do “whatever he wanted” in the province of Texas “without fear of God or respect for the King.”³ De Lugo believed that Sandoval’s abandonment of the East Texas missions and presidios without permission in the early 1730s defied the Bourbon Crown’s efforts to centralize authority on the northern frontier of New Spain. Sandoval’s independent decision to move to Béxar to defend the jurisdiction from Apache attacks was viewed by many authorities as a reemergence of the leadership problems that defined New Spain under the Hapsburgs. These included de-centralized control, corrupt leadership and noncompliance of laws and orders issued by the

¹ The names of the various establishments at San Antonio can be confusing. San Antonio de Valero refers to the mission, San Antonio de Béxar to the presidio and San Fernando de Béxar to the civilian settlement established by the Canary Islanders in 1731. The term Béxar in this work is frequently used to refer to the entire locality.

² "Translation of copy of Benítes de Lugo's letter to Torreblanca, reporting unjust treatment by the Viceroy, the Viceroy's tolerance of corrupt and tyrannical practices of governing officials and inefficiency of soldiers, detriment to royal treasury, and encroachment by French." August 26, 1739. E_bx_001957_021. The Béxar Archives Online. The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University Of Texas at Austin, TX. 55.

³ Ibid., 55.

Crown. Now, at the end of the decade, de Lugo feared Béxar was functioning under these Hapsburg principles, existing in an unregulated state on the Texas frontier. In so doing, Béxar undermined the validity of the Bourbon principles on which its civilian town was founded, redefining the municipality in ways which fulfilled the unique needs of life on the isolated Texas frontier and in turn threatened the authority of the Spanish Crown.

In Sandoval's absence at Los Adaes, French explorers led by Louis Juchereau de St. Denis crossed the Red River boundary separating the northwest French and northeast Spanish portions of the respective provinces. Almost twenty years earlier, this same French threat encouraged plans for the establishment of a civilian settlement at San Antonio de Béxar. By the second decade of the eighteenth century, French encroachment into New Spain's northern frontier and Gulf Coast region prompted mapmaker-turned-provincial-leader Juan Manuel de Oliván Rebolledo to ask the Crown for an increase in Spanish defense fortifications throughout New Spain. Rebolledo's described fortifications would include "a garrison, a mission, and a settlement of Spaniards and Indians" to protect the province of Texas from foreign encroachment and Native American violence.⁴ Rebolledo recommended a fortification on the San Antonio River to serve as a strategic point for the center of the territory. The San Antonio de Béxar Presidio and adjoining mission and civilian settlement would utilize the trifold model implemented by other Spanish posts, but on a larger scale. If the Béxar community was successful, the Crown hoped they could follow the same design to create more civilian centers on the frontier to achieve their goal of a

⁴ "Translation of copies of Rebolledo's letters recommending establishment of presidios, settlements and missions in order to stop French incursions into Spanish territory. Accompanying documents are copies of the Fiscal's opinion on the suggestions, and Rebolledo's summary of Diego Ramón's letter and plans for checking French incursions into Texas." December 24, 1717. e_bx_001907_001. The Béxar Archives Online. The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX. 31.

permanent presence there. Thus, Rebolledo believed that “by their reciprocal aid, the benefits of time and the increase of settlers, they will be better defended than by the soldiers of the presidios which, ever increasing in number, impose a tax on the royal treasury for annual payment of soldiers’ salaries.”⁵

Spanish plans for Béxar echoed geopolitical goals within the larger Atlantic world sphere. Béxar would mark the beginnings of Spanish permanence in Texas while protecting Spanish territory from French advances and Indian threats. In conjunction it would serve the Bourbon Crown’s economic and centralization interests. When historians analyze colonization on the frontier through this broad Atlantic lens, it is clear that there was much more going on in the French and Spanish empires, making the struggle for Texas more complex. Within this context this research proposes to discover how Spain’s transition from the Hapsburg to Bourbon monarchies, and the Bourbon Crown’s subsequent appreciation of enlightenment thought, sparked changes in transatlantic policy that reached into small settlements on the Texas frontier, such as the trifold missionary, military and civilian settlement at San Antonio de Béxar. By examining the Béxar community, this study will illuminate our understanding of the Bourbon crown’s broad influence over Atlantic World policy and the ways in which these policies broke down at the local level. We can then re-contextualize why policies failed throughout this region of the New World, and the ways in which these new kinds of settlement re-shaped Atlantic World policy among the French and Spanish in the Gulf Coast region.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 31.

In the following decade the Spanish built up the mission and Presidio at Béxar. In 1731 the first civilian settlers arrived in the region, sixteen families of Canary Islanders. The Crown's choice to bring these pure-blood Spanish families to the Texas frontier, and make them the leaders of the community, was an attempt to control and shape the growing community in response to changes in political and economic goals of other colonizing European countries at this time. The Spanish Crown's transition to the House of Bourbon in 1700 led to an overhaul of their New World policies to eliminate corruption, gain greater economic revenue, and assert more influence over the territory through centralization conducted by European officials. The renewed importance placed on the purity of blood typified Bourbon philosophy and was exuded in an emphasis on *peninsulare* or European leadership. Therefore, the transportation of Isleño families, though initially more expensive than settling the area with families already in the New World, was seen as an investment for the future of the colony on Bourbon terms. Simultaneously, the French Crown, already belonging to the House of Bourbon, sought to assert more direct governance over their territories in the New World, and saw the economic benefits of colonizing, rather than simply investing in New France.

Historians have always focused on the rivalry of the French and Spanish over resources in Texas, from the French desire to locate mines in the northern frontier of New Spain to the Spanish involvement in Louisiana's efforts to profit from cash crops. The subject gained attention in the early twentieth century with large comprehensive studies such as George P. Garrison's *Texas; A Contest of Civilizations* (1903), and Herbert E. Bolton's *Texas in the Middle Eighteenth Century, Studies in Spanish Colonial Administration* (1915). In

1936 Carlos Castañeda, under the commission of the Knights of Columbus, published a seven-volume work titled *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*. Castañeda's work connected the missionary and military activities on Spain's northern frontier and succeeded in unifying the Spanish and French histories in Texas. Subsequent works such as Rupert N. Richardson's *Texas: The Lone Star State* (1943), T.R. Fehrenbach's *Lone Star: A History of Texas and the Texans* (1968) and Gerald Ashford's *Spanish Texas: Yesterday and Today* (1971) built off of Castañeda's work connecting the French and Spanish histories of the region, but in chronicling the history of Texas as a state overlook significance of Texas as a province within a larger colonial sphere.

In the late 1960s more focused studies emerged on New Spain's northern frontier. D.W. Meinig's study *Imperial Texas: An Interpretive Essay in Cultural Geography* (1969) detailed the isolation, dangers, and difficulties of establishing frontier civilian settlements in colonial Texas. Oakah L. Jones Jr.'s *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (1976) described the Spanish settlers as serving a dual purpose in colonial society. According to Jones, their position of authority in frontier communities, on the basis of their pure Spanish ethnicities, afforded them a dual identity as unofficial agents and objects of Spanish colonialism. Though these works significantly developed the historiography, they, and similar works of the time period, did little to examine the threat of French encroachment into the region through innovative perspectives.

Not until the mid-1980s did the historiography of the Franco-Spanish rivalry in the Texas region develop in more globalized ways. Historian Robert S. Weddle's book *Spanish Sea: The Gulf of Mexico in North American Discovery, 1500-1685* (1985) examined the

rivalry between the French, English and Spanish in the Gulf of Mexico and the Gulf Coast region as an entire geographical entity. His subsequent work, *The French Thorn: Rival Explorers in the Spanish Sea* (1991) devoted more attention to the Franco-Spanish rivalry on the Louisiana-Texas borderlands and detailed the connections between French desires to permanently colonize the Gulf Coast and Spain's buildup of defensive missions and settlements. By also examining the Gulf Coast as a region stretching from Florida to Mexico, not as one divided by colonial claims, Weddle brought historians closer to understanding history in the same geographical sense that the French and Spanish did. This interpretation allows for a re-examination of the entire locality through new geopolitical perspectives.

In the almost twenty-five years since Weddle's *French Thorn* numerous studies calling for a re-examination of French and Spanish rivalries in Texas have emerged. Donald Chipman and Harriet Denise Joseph's book *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (1992) linked the Spanish and French experiences with the Natives, though it did so within the context of Texas history, not within the history of New Spain as a whole. At the same time, localized studies of San Antonio and the Béxar community developed, combining Texas history with larger geopolitical themes. Gilberto R. Cruz's study *Let There be Towns: Spanish Municipal Origins in the American Southwest 1610-1810* (1988) was one of the first to consider the Spanish town as an integral part of Spain's colonizing institutions. This shifted the focus of future works from the mission and the presidio to the civilian experience of colonization. Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa's edited collection *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio* (1991) authors analyzed San Antonio de Béxar from political, economic and social perspectives to prove that Béxar's original settlers shared a common Tejano

identity. One contributor, Jesús De La Teja has written a number of books and articles concerning Béxar including “Indians, Soldiers and Canary Islanders: The Making of a Texas Frontier Community” (1990) and *San Antonio de Béxar, a Community on New Spain’s Northern Frontier* (1995). De La Teja’s research affirmed the individuality of Béxar as a frontier community. He argued that Béxar was able to achieve permanence as a town through “mutual dependence” which blurred the lines between racial, social and ethnic groups.⁶

Patricia R. Lemée also studied the blurring of racial, social and ethnic lines on the Spanish northern frontier in her article “Tios and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier” (1998). Lemée described French, Spanish and Indian trade interactions between Natchitoches and the Spanish mission of San Juan Bautista as “frontier trade cartels”⁷ influenced by the French. The kinship networks formed between French and Indian groups through trade opened up the cartel to the Spanish and other Indian groups, creating an interconnected economic sphere throughout Texas.⁸ A decade later Francis Xavier Galán made a similar argument from the Spanish perspective in his article “Presidio Los Adaes: Worship, Kinship and Commerce with the French Natchitoches on the Spanish-Franco-Caddo Borderlands, 1721-1773.” With these studies a shift in scholarly focus began to occur towards Native American perspectives. Juliana Barr’s

⁶ Jesús De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar: a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 31.

⁷ Patricia R. Lemée, “Tios and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier.” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 101, No. 3 (Jan 1998): 340-358.

⁸ Historian Daniel H. Usner Jr. introduced the term “frontier exchange economy” as a way to understand the economic interactions between the various social groups in the Mississippi valley region, including Native Americans, Europeans, and Africans. The works of Lemée and Galán build off of this theory. Please see Daniel H. Usner Jr., *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

groundbreaking work *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman, Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (2007) places Native Americans at the center of the European struggle and argues for an alternative encounter theory where the Natives, through methods of kinship, “dictated the terms of contact, diplomacy, alliance and enmity.”⁹

Geopolitical studies of the Franco-Spanish rivalry in the early eighteenth century have just begun to analyze colonization of the New World within the context of the Bourbon reforms. Though Gabriel Paquette’s edited collection *Enlightened Reform in Southern Europe and its Southern Colonies 1750-1830* (2009) touched on the effects of the Bourbon reforms in the Americas, the late-eighteenth century context of most of the works failed to challenge the existing historiography which places the beginning of the Bourbon reforms after 1750. However, Allan J. Kuethe and Kenneth J. Andrien’s forthcoming book *The Spanish Atlantic World in the Eighteenth Century: War and the Bourbon Reforms, 1713-1796* (June 2014) examines the effects of the Bourbon Reforms on Spanish America within an Atlantic World sphere. It appears that this work will question the established parameters concerning the era of the Bourbon reforms in the Americas, opening up the field for more detailed studies considering Bourbon influence upon colonization at the beginning of the eighteenth century.

In order to analyze the Spanish monarchy’s transition from the House of Hapsburg to the House of Bourbon, it is necessary to provide a brief overview of each. Roman law shaped Hapsburg ideology through the beginning of the eighteenth century and with foundations in moral interpretation, led the Spanish Hapsburgs to seek Christian perfection

⁹ Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman: Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 8.

through honorable and ethical behavior. All policies, particularly those pertaining to New Spain, aimed at fulfilling a religious principle or performing a spiritual mission. With the king ruling in the name of God and justice, he served a dual purpose as both the maker and preserver of the law. In acting as the earthly leader of worldwide Christianization and moral salvation, the king's religious goals legitimized Spain's presence in the New World.¹⁰ These responsibilities led the king to become a paternalistic symbol, accountable for the protection of all Christians in his kingdom. In turn, all Christian subjects seeking reparations or protection from the monarchy for issues concerning religion and justice could directly appeal to the king for help. This created a direct link between the monarch and his subjects, though a corrupt and complex administration system persisted within the colonial leadership structure.

This paternalist monarchical structure promulgated the idea that the empire was a "family united under the father king."¹¹ Tied together by Christianization and devotion to the monarch, the Hapsburgs viewed Spain's empire as culturally unified in their loyalty to the Crown and its interests. Loyalty in the colonies was rewarded with positions of governance to those who were often underserving and used their leadership positions to achieve personal gains. This quickly created a dishonest hierarchical system of authority in New Spain. These bureaucrats had no clear goals for their jurisdictions and largely failed to enforce the laws enacted by the Crown. The distance between the peninsula and New Spain also fostered this corruption, allowing appointed officials to often disregard laws

¹⁰ Jay Moreno, "The Spanish Colonial System: A Functional Approach," *The Western Political Quarterly* 20, no. 2 (June 1967): 311.

¹¹ Timothy E. Anna, "Spain and the Breakdown of the Imperial Ethos: The Problem of Equality," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 62, no. 2 (May 1982): 254.

implemented by the monarchy with little or no castigation. This defiance came to be defined as *obedezco pero no cumplo* or “I obey but do not comply,” a judicial principle that enabled appointed colonial leaders to disregard laws put into effect by the Spanish Crown which they felt were inconsiderate of the public’s best interests, as long as in so doing they affirmed their allegiance to the King.¹² This gave colonial elites a voice in the law-making process without undermining the king’s belief that he held centralized power and control. Thus, the Hapsburgs achieved flexible control over their territorial possessions and their inhabitants. The elasticity of governance between Spain and her colonies ensured that leaders on both fronts were satisfied with their level of authority, in turn making it possible for the Hapsburgs to assert their influence in the New World without force. These fluid notions of power ultimately resulted in widespread ambiguity concerning the Crown’s goals beyond the Christianization of New Spain. Unclear aims within the larger Hapsburg structure fed the system of leadership in New Spain characterized by exploitation, disconnectedness, struggles for internal power and the *obedezco pero no cumplo* philosophy. The lack of regulation this system produced led the Bourbons, upon their acquiescence of the Spanish throne in 1700, to overhaul colonial administration, ensuring a more centralized system of control and greater economic revenue for the Crown.¹³

Upon the death of the childless Spanish monarch Charles II in 1700, the Hapsburg line to the throne was left without an heir. In appointing a successor, the Spanish determined that Phillip V, the grandson of Louis XIV of France, had the strongest

¹² John Leddy Phelan, "Authority and Flexibility in the Spanish Imperial Bureaucracy," *Administrative Science Quarterly* 5, no. 1 (June 1960): 45-46.

¹³ In conjunction with the previously cited works of Moreno, Anna and Phelan, please see John Preston Moore, *The Cabildo in Peru Under the Hapsburgs 1530-1700* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1954).

genealogical claim to the throne and became King of Spain in November of 1700. With his ascension, Phillip V became the first member of the House of Bourbon to rule Spain. Fear spread throughout the continent that Spain and France would unite under a single Bourbon monarch, subsequently upsetting the balance of European power. These tensions resulted in the War of the Spanish Succession, a thirteen year battle over the Spanish throne's rightful heir. The resulting Treaty of Utrecht named Phillip V successor upon the renunciation of his position in line to the French throne, making a future union of the French and Spanish Bourbons impossible.

Colonial administration under the Bourbons during the first half of the century has been regarded as "satisfied to make the old system work in America, effecting small repairs as needed but not attempting a comprehensive overhaul of colonial policy."¹⁴ Indeed, changes in colonial policy did occur during the initial years of Bourbon rule; however, as this study will argue, they were much more substantial than the existing historiography suggests. An ideological shift occurred almost immediately upon the monarchical transition. The Bourbons recognized the benefits of centralization, and understood that sole authority over matters throughout New Spain must be concentrated in Europe for the empire to function efficiently. This included direct influence over local government in the colonies. Therefore, the Bourbon transformation of New World policy began with the creation of agencies that reduced the freedoms and powers of the established Hapsburg leaders and officials. This Bourbon ideology increased transatlantic accountability and created an environment in which economic gains for the Crown would be attainable. The Bourbon

¹⁴ Allan J. Kuethe and Lowell Blaisdell, "French Influence and the Origins of Bourbon Colonial Reorganization," *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 71, no. 3 (August 1991): 579-607.

model for overseas success rested on the achievements of control and economic stability. Spain desired to make its American territories more defensible, profitable and efficient, straying from the moral and divine priorities definitive of Hapsburg governance.¹⁵

To analyze these transitions, this work is divided into four major sections. Chapters two and three explore the larger Atlantic themes that led to the establishment of the settlement of Béxar. Beginning in 1685, chapter two chronicles the French encroachment into Texas territory and the Spanish response. The early years of Béxar and its inhabitants' interactions with the local Indian¹⁶ communities and Spanish administrators will be portrayed within the context of the late Hapsburg monarchy. Chapter three examines the broader effects of the transition from Hapsburg to Bourbon rule on Béxar: the relocation of Canary Islander families to Béxar in 1731, including both the Spanish Crown's and the Isleños' rationale for relocation, their own justifications for moving and the latter's impact on the Béxar settlement. Examining Béxar through this broad Atlantic lens will reveal the distinct ways in which Bourbon policy and enlightenment thought influenced the settlement's development.

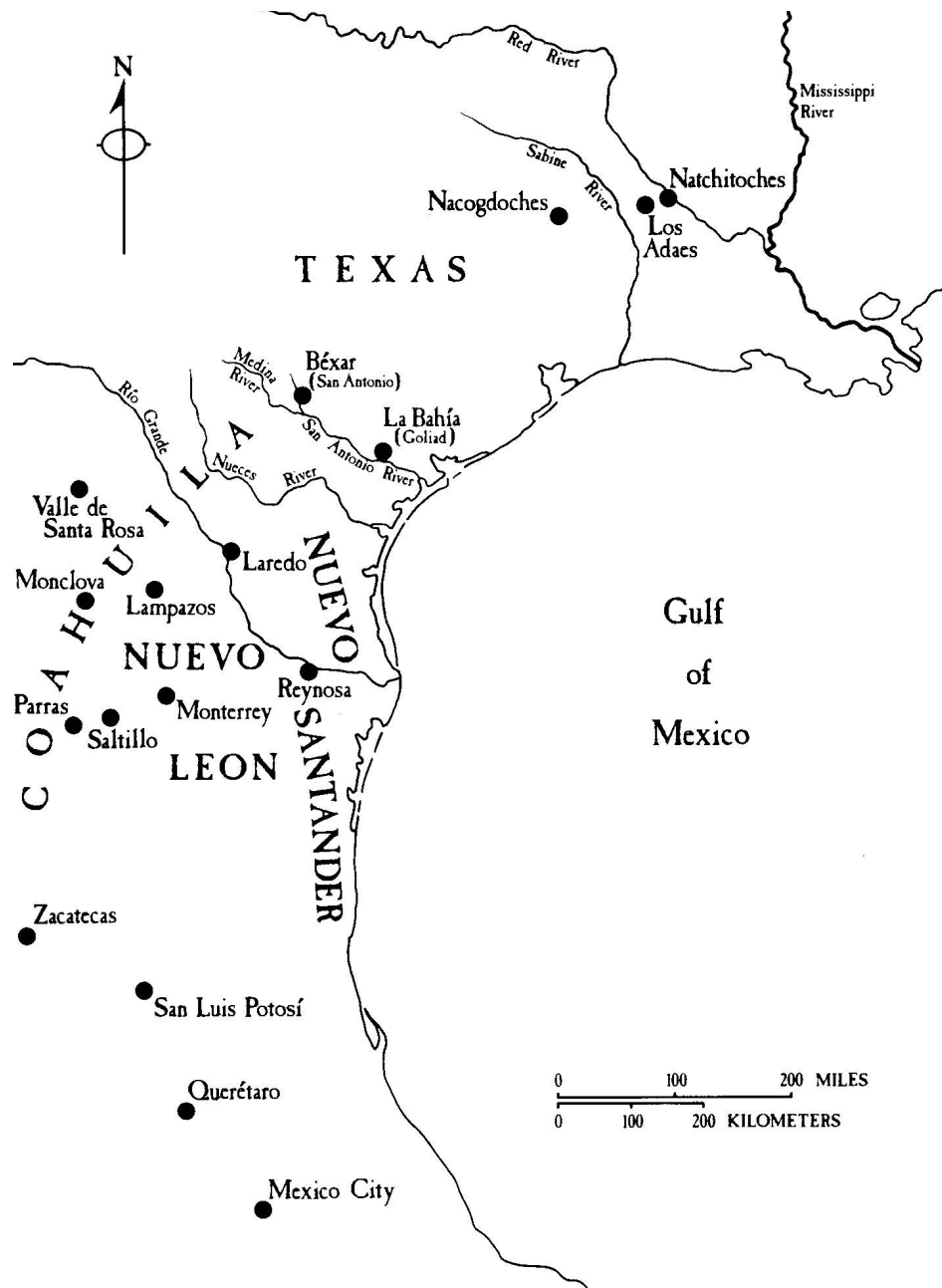
Chapter four examines the collapse of these Atlantic designs and Bourbon influences by concentrating on the community of Béxar at the ground level. It will explore the interactions of Béxar's various socio-ethnic groups including the Isleños, the native population, the military, the Creoles, and the emerging Mestizo population. The significance of Béxar's status as an isolated frontier community is also analyzed as a factor in

¹⁵ Ibid., 579-585. Please also see Iris H.W. Engstrand, "The Enlightenment in Spain: Influences upon New World Policy," *The Americas* 41, no. 4 (April 1985): 438.

¹⁶ The term *Indian* will be used throughout this work in conjunction with the terms Native, and Native American to describe the indigenous peoples of New Spain and New France. The word *Indian* is widely used in the historical profession and is accepted in academic contexts.

determining the settlement's development. Chapter five examines the influence of the Spanish *Reconquista*, the Christian reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula between the eighth and fifteenth centuries on New World frontier colonization policies and Spanish Atlantic ideology. It compares Béxar to other missions and colonies in Texas and Louisiana that evolved along similar lines, establishing connections between local and transatlantic patterns in New World settlement. It will place Béxar and the similar communities back within the framework of the larger Atlantic World in order to assess the impact of Atlantic policy on the local populations and the effects that these local populations had on the Atlantic World. It will also place the role of the local indigenous groups within the framework of the larger empires and the European conquest's desired design for the Americas.

Thus, the intent of this research is to examine the role that the Spanish Crown's transition from the Hapsburg to Bourbon monarchies played within the early years of civilian settlement on New Spain's northern frontier. The presumption is that larger Atlantic World influences brought about by both France and Spain's renewed focus on gaining economic revenue and centralized government control in the early eighteenth century affected the design of the Béxar community. However, on a local level, Spain's Bourbon influenced goals for the settlement were only briefly achieved; isolation and the struggle to survive on the frontier led to the breakdown of the town's original hierarchies and social distinctions. That having been said, the evolution of the trifold civilian, missionary and military settlement at San Antonio de Béxar, and other communities like it, succeeded in shaping Atlantic World policies and their future implementation on New World colonies.



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¹ Map of northeastern New Spain, found in Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa's edited collection *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1991), viii.

CHAPTER 2

FRANCO-SPANISH RIVALRIES AND HAPSBURG GEOPOLITICS IN THE GULF COAST

REGION 1685-1720

In 1685 news of French expeditions in the Gulf of Mexico spurred Spanish interest in occupying Texas permanently. Because of this impending threat and the foreign aggressions that followed, Spain worked to vigorously defend its claims to territory below the Rio Grande and in the hinterlands to its north. Though France's Fort St. Louis in Matagorda Bay was only temporary, French explorers continued to navigate the Mississippi River and the surrounding region establishing their first settlement there in 1699. The founding of these French posts on the Mississippi led Spain in the following decades to reoccupy Texas and renew their missionary activity in the region.² The French inhabitation of the lower Mississippi area over the next twenty years resulted in posts and settlements spanning from the Indian tribes of eastern Texas to the port towns of Biloxi and Mobile. These trading stations and small civilian communities allowed the French to quietly mold their colony into a wedge separating Spanish Florida from the northern frontier of New Spain, while Franco-Spanish tensions in the transatlantic arena subsided during the War of the Spanish Succession from 1701 to 1714.

This chapter explores the geopolitical events in the Gulf Coast region during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries which led to the establishment of Béxar and plans for its civilian settlement. The events of 1685 on the Texas Coast constitute the foundation from which an exploration of larger Atlantic themes will develop. This chapter

² Carlos E. Castañeda, *The Mission Era: The Winning of Texas 1693-1731*, vol. 2, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* (Austin, TX: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1936), 3.

examines the Spanish response to French encroachment into Texas through a discussion of territorial and trade disputes, Franco-Spanish-Indian economic alliances, and European interactions with the region's native populations. These cross-cultural connections led the Spanish to desire a stronger presence in the western portion of their territory, which resulted in the creation of the San Antonio de Béxar presidio and San Antonio de Valero mission. The early years of Béxar and its inhabitants' interactions with the local Native populations and Spanish administrators are portrayed within the context of the late Hapsburg monarchy. The exploration of Béxar's beginnings through a Hapsburg lens will reveal how structural and governmental problems, which developed by the middle of the 1720s, prompted a shift in administrative policies directed at Béxar. By the end of the decade Bourbon-influenced policies were implemented to better control the missionary, military and civilian branches of Béxar and increase European authority on New Spain's northern frontier. Enlightenment-influenced policies definitive of the House of Bourbon carry the discussion of Béxar's development into the following chapter.

From the French perspective, the institution of Fort St. Louis legitimized their claims to Texas' Gulf Coast, the connecting inland waterways and all lands accessible by those channels. Fort St. Louis was intended to serve as a base for forming kinship networks with Texas' Native Peoples. These networks in turn would allow the French to navigate rivers towards the frontier's interior, with the hope that they would lead to undiscovered mines or routes leading to the Spanish mines in northern Mexico. The French explorer René Robert Cavelier, Sieur de La Salle founded Fort St Louis in 1685, after two years of navigating the Mississippi River. Seeking an opportunity to promote the settlement of

western Louisiana and displace the Spanish presence there, La Salle's proposed plan contained "the deliberate distortion of the course of the lower Mississippi" falsely placing its outlet in Spanish territory.³ Believing the explorer's claim that the Mississippi reached the gulf about four hundred miles west of its true delta, Louis XIV granted La Salle the ships, supplies, and settlers necessary to populate the Texas Coast. Shipwrecked and stranded upon arrival, LaSalle and his French settlers were left with little food and few supplies with which to survive. Plagued by disease, faced with the threat of hostile Indians, and unable to acquire more supplies, the group was abandoned in the coastal wilderness, "looking anxiously for signs of the Mississippi."⁴ Their only stroke of luck in the first few months seemed to be that the Spanish were unaware of their presence. To gain aid for the isolated pioneers, LaSalle made three expeditions to seek out the Mississippi River but had no success. On his third expedition in 1688, a "desperate trip to seek help from Canada" LaSalle's men murdered him in the wilderness. Aid and supplies never made it to the coastal settlement.⁵

The Spanish gained knowledge of the colony in the summer of 1686. Viewing it as a threat, they spent three years searching the coast for the French incursion. By the time they reached Matagorda Bay, they had discovered only an abandoned fort, devastated by a Karankawa Indian raid which had killed the entire colony months before. Of the roughly three hundred members of LaSalle's expedition only eighteen survived the famine, illness, and Indian attack. Most of the survivors had deserted the expedition or abandoned the

³ Peter H. Wood, "La Salle: Discovery of a Lost Explorer," *The American Historical Review* 89, no. 2 (April 1984): 297.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁵ Robert S. Weddle, *Wilderness Manhunt: The Spanish Search for LaSalle* (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1973), 1-15. Please also see Wood's, "La Salle: Discovery of a Lost Explorer," 298-299.

colony upon arrival to live with the coastal Natives. The Spanish first encountered two Frenchmen living among the Indians shortly after the Karankawa massacre. Jean L'Archevêque, who had joined LaSalle on his second expedition for supplies, and Jacques Grollet, a deserter of the colony a year before the attack, gave the Spanish insight as to how the Natives entered the Fort St. Louis community. Knowing that the inhabitants of the post were struggling to survive, the Indians implied a false sense of security through the giving of food and other small gifts, which allowed them entrance into the community. Before long, French families at La Salle's base became dependent on the Karankawas for their aid. The Karankawas then utilized this position to initiate their raid, killing all of the adults and sparing the youngest children but taking them as captives. Of these captives, Spanish explorers found two children, brothers Pierre and Jean-Baptiste Talon, living among the Texas Indians; Pierre among the Hasinai and Ceni peoples, who resided about one hundred miles inland from the coast, and Jean-Baptiste among the Karankawa. Indian women saved the brothers and five other children, adopting them into the tribe and raising them as Natives for six years. Once liberated by the Spanish, the absence of the children caused the Karankawa women to cry over them as if they were losing a child of their own.⁶ As revealed in their subsequent interrogation by the French, the Talon brothers' unique place among the Indians in Texas had given them a priceless knowledge of the Native populations and their languages, the geography of the territory, and of the Spanish colonization occurring in the region. This information would be crucial for future French expeditions, and influenced the motivations for French excursions into Texas in the early eighteenth century.

⁶ R.T. Huntington, "The Interrogation of the Talon Brothers, 1698," *The Iowa Review* 15, no. 2 (Spring/Summer 1985): 104, 135-136.

Initially transported to Mexico City, the children lived with the Spanish Viceroy until they were old enough to enlist in the Spanish Army. While sailing to Spain, Pierre and Jean-Baptiste's ship was taken by a French naval vessel in the Caribbean and the brothers ended up in France. The investigation upon their arrival reveals details of the LaSalle mission, settlement and the destruction of the fort. Most importantly, the brothers recalled their time with the Indians, describing their habits and ways of life. Having spent considerable time with the Spanish, the Talon brothers' testimony also detailed the territory of northern New Spain, and Mexico. They described Mexico City and the mines at St. Louis de Potosy, noting that neither garrisons nor fortifications protected either one.⁷ The Talons attested to the fact that the mines of northern Mexico were easily accessible by land and that "it would not be too difficult for them to find the means of making this trip if they could find again the same nations with whom they had lived, for they still remembered enough of their languages to make themselves understood and to understand them also."⁸ This information, and the Talons' invaluable geographic and linguistic knowledge, led to their reemergence in Texas seventeen years later, accompanying the French explorer Louis St. Denis on his mission to reach the Spanish mines in northern Mexico.

The Talon brothers' experience as colonial intermediaries reflects the fluidity of cultural boundaries in the Gulf Coast region, despite the prevalent Franco-Spanish desire to assert geographic and economic dominance over one another. The Talons' ability to adapt to the cultural and social norms of various Indian groups, and gain acceptance into each

⁷ Robert S. Weddle, ed., *La Salle, the Mississippi and the Gulf: Three Primary Documents* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1987), 246.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 257.

community, reveals the beginnings of a unique frontier identity rooted in transculturation. The Talons' experience of existing within the French, Indian, and Spanish colonial spheres discloses the ways in which transculturation defined European colonization efforts. As the brothers' testimony reveals, the establishment of kinship networks with the Native Peoples was characterized largely by the mutual assimilation of European and Native cultures. This transculturation was crucial for permanent colonization. The Spanish, who valued their European heritage and their place at the top of a rigid racial hierarchy, projected a more savage view of the natives than their French counterparts exuded. Inter-marriage between Frenchmen and Indian women was more common than Spanish-Native inter-marriage, and greatly strengthened French kinship networks. Though the Spanish were not as adept at the art of kinship formation, they too had their own Indian allies gained through other means, namely Christianization. It is clear that transculturation permeated the boundaries between the French, Spanish, and Indian groups in the Texas region.

The first three decades of the eighteenth century witnessed significant growth for the populations and settlements of French Louisiana. The French Company of the Indies controlled all of Louisiana between the years of 1717 and 1731, managing the African slave trade and the tobacco industry. By this time, Great Britain had successfully monopolized the tobacco industry within its mid-Atlantic coastal colonies. France hoped to achieve the same economic feat. French success in Louisiana would depend on alliances with the region's Indian groups, who resided on sought-after lands and greatly outnumbered the European population. Weak diplomatic relations with the Natives in the Mississippi Valley hindered

France's ability to establish the relationships necessary to turn tobacco into an economically profitable cash crop.⁹

Detailed descriptions of French Louisiana, the Mississippi region and its peoples give insight into French economic desires and their contentious relations with the Natives living on sought after territory. Marc-Antoine Calliot, a clerk for the French Company of the Indies in Louisiana, describes in his memoir the terrain of the Mississippi Valley, the French establishments, and the characteristics of the native inhabitants. He focuses on the Natchez peoples, located approximately one hundred leagues from New Orleans. A small French town established in 1716, Fort Rosalie, existed among the Natchez with a garrison of fifty soldiers, a parish with a priest, a notary, and 160 occupants. Calliot estimated the Natchez population to be at eight hundred. They lived on the most fertile land in the Mississippi Valley, ideal for cultivating tobacco. The French had introduced a number of large tobacco plantations to the region on which mostly African slaves and French indentured servants worked. The tobacco produced by French planters was substandard in comparison to its British counterpart, and the Natchez tobacco plantations produced only one hundred and fifty thousand pounds of the product in 1728, the plantations' peak year. When likened to the British annual crop of thirty million pounds, the tobacco yield from Louisiana could not compete with that of the Chesapeake region. The crop's success ensured the growth of permanent settlement in the mid-Atlantic region, and Britain's tobacco-growing areas received an influx of colonists during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

⁹ "Pipe Dreams: Louisiana under the French Company of the Indies, 1717–1731," The Historic New Orleans Collection, last modified June 18, 2013, accessed March 3, 2014, <http://www.hnoc.org/pipedreams/>. See also Marc-Antoine Calliot, *A Company Man: The Remarkable French Atlantic Voyage of a Clerk for the Company of the Indies: A Memoir*, ed. Erin M. Greenwald (New Orleans, LA: The Historic New Orleans Collection, 2013), introduction.

The French, understanding the correlations between permanent occupation and economic profitability, aimed to replicate the British structure in the colonies of Virginia and the Carolinas so that they too would gain increased revenue and crown control over the region. The subsequent French colonizing efforts increased the European population in Louisiana; however, they were still overpoweringly outnumbered by the region's Native Peoples, a problem which would severely hinder the French efforts to make economic gains through the tobacco industry.¹⁰

Though the French attempts to cultivate tobacco among the Natchez lasted until 1731, the urgent need to make their North American colony lucrative led to simultaneous economic endeavors. Beginning in the early years of the century, the French proposed to utilize Louisiana as a base for trade routes into the northern frontier of New Spain. Through trading, the French hoped to establish kinship systems and alliances with the Natives in the region who could in return act as guides for the French as they explored the territory for gold and silver mines. The French were aware of the riches acquired by Spain from their mines in Mexico and Peru and hoped to make similar economic gains from mines in the northern frontier. If mines could not be found in the lands west of their Louisiana colony, the French intended to move south across the Rio Grande to explore the mines of Parral in the territory of Chihuahua and mines in Coahuila.¹¹ The French interest in mining, as it was with tobacco, lay in their desire to produce wealth quickly. This wealth would allow the

¹⁰ Calliot, *A Company Man*, xxvii, 89-91, 90n185, 90n186. Editor Erin Greenwald suggests that Calliot wrote his memoir in 1731 upon returning to France. This was approximately six years after first encountering the Natchez peoples. see pg. 90n187. Also see Allan Kulikoff, "The Economic Growth of Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake Colonies," *The Journal of Economic History* 39, no. 1 (March 1979): 276-277.

¹¹ Castañeda, *Mission Era: The Winning of Texas*, vol. 2, 20.

French to purchase quantities of goods to fulfill their goal of establishing a trade monopoly in the region.¹²

From the beginning of French colonization in Louisiana, explorers made the effort to establish alliances with the Native Indian groups. These Indians, who for centuries had been trading with other Native groups to the west, preferred to conduct trade through partnerships, formed on the foundations of kinship.¹³ Kinship networks acted as the foundation of the native social system and one's kin, whether blood related or through the adoption of outside peoples, was equal to that of family in many cases.¹⁴ While intermarriage and physical acculturation, such as tattooing, represented permanent kinship, fictive kinship was created through ceremonial exchanges like mutual gift giving or the smoking of a pipe, such as the *calumet*.¹⁵ French explorers in the seventeenth century understood the notion of kinship and its importance in the Indian community, especially as confirmed by the Talon brothers' testimony. Louis St. Denis, the famed French explorer of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, understood kinship and its importance in Indian society. The relationships he formed with the Indians were based on mutual assistance, securing the valuable alliances necessary for the French to venture into New

¹² Patricia R. Lemee. "Tios and Tantes: Familial and Political Relationships of Natchitoches and the Spanish Colonial Frontier," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 101, no. 3 (January 1998): 343.

¹³ David LaVere, "Between Kinship and Capitalism: French and Spanish Rivalry in the Colonial Louisiana-Texas Indian Trade," *The Journal of Southern History* 64, no. 2 (May 1998): 198.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 199.

¹⁵ The calumet is a ceremonial smoking pipe used by native groups in the Mississippi River Valley and Great Lakes regions. French explorers were often welcomed into native villages through a ceremony which involved the smoking of a long-stemmed pipe, deemed the calumet by French-Canadian explorers in the early seventeenth century. While the ceremony varied with each tribe, each ritual involving the calumet represented the adoption of the outside participants into tribal society. This established fictive kinship connections between different Indian clans or ethnic groups, which included Europeans by the second decade of the seventeenth century. A number of works concerning the calumet ceremony and its importance in colonial society exist, but for a brief and straightforward overview please see Donald J. Blakeslee, "The Origin and Spread of the Calumet Ceremony," *American Antiquity* 46, no. 4 (October 1981): 759.

Spain's northern frontier. After descending the Mississippi River in 1700, St. Denis established a Fort near Lake Pontchartrain around 1701. It was meant to be a location from which the French could move west by both land and sea to secure their claims to Texas. From Lake Pontchartrain St. Denis traveled westward, spending the next decade living among the Tejas, Choctaw, Natchez, and Nachito Indian groups. The Natchez and the French established a particularly strong trade alliance during these years and St. Denis learned a number of Native languages. By 1714 St. Denis had become the favored kin of the Tejas peoples, which included the Nachitos and Asinai. Through the Nachitos the French introduced European goods to other tribes in return for horses, animal skins, and salt. The Hasinai had adopted Pierre Talon almost three decades before, and were open to trade relationships with the French as well. With these connections the Tejas quickly became friends of the French, and guided them on their mission to locate mines throughout Texas.¹⁶

While the French worked to establish viable ties with the numerous Indian groups in the area, they concurrently planned a reoccupation of the Texas coast near to LaSalle's former colony at Matagorda Bay. These strategic moves were all part of a larger plan to establish a permanent presence in the gulf coast region. This would serve to push the Spanish out of Texas territory while erecting permanent colonies and ensuring economic profitability for the French crown.¹⁷ Upon learning of the French exploratory mission into Texas, Spanish interest in protecting the region heightened significantly. The Spanish realized that the French were hoping to use Texas as a base for establishing trade into

¹⁶ Castañeda, *Mission Era: The Winning of Texas*, vol. 2, 18.

¹⁷ Diana Hadley, Thomas H. Naylor, and Mardith K. Schuetz-Miller, eds., *The Central Corridor and the Texas Corridor, vol. 2, The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 361.

northern New Spain and sought to prevent the French from expanding their trade networks there. In 1714 a French expedition in search of Spanish mines led St. Denis and his men, including the Talon brothers, to the San Juan Bautista Presidio on the Rio Grande. The Spanish briefly arrested the French explorers for illegally entering their territory. However, St. Denis, still hoping to achieve his mining and trading goals for the northern frontier, declared he would guide the Spanish junta towards the Louisiana border with their captain, Diego Ramón. This excursion, begun in 1716, reasserted Spanish claims to the territory through the establishment of missions in East Texas “in the country between the Trinity and Red Rivers.”¹⁸ In conjunction with the missions, the Spanish also built presidios to occupy the region as quickly as possible. The Spanish constructed seven missions by 1717 with the final mission, San Miguel de Los Adaes, being located only seven leagues from the French post of Natchitoches on the Red River.¹⁹

St. Denis’ trade alliances led to a relationship of mutual assistance between the French, Spanish and Indian groups in East Texas. His personal relationships with the Natives served as a gateway to French and Spanish interactions on the frontier, exemplified in the close proximity of the Spanish and French missions of Los Adaes and Natchitoches, reflecting the inevitability of cross-cultural contacts on the frontier. The complex relationships that developed as a result bound the French, Indians, Creoles and Spaniards, economically, socially, religiously and politically for the remainder of the eighteenth century.

¹⁸ Charles W. Hackett, "The Marquis of San Miguel de Aguayo and his Recovery of Texas from the French," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 49, no. 2 (October 1945): 195.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 196.

These cross cultural interactions functioned extensively through the Spanish mission system on the northern frontier. Joined by the presidio and small civilian townships, the mission system's expansion into East Texas led to the growth of colonial interactions.²⁰ These interactions, while economically beneficial, increased awareness of French presence. This prompted the Spanish to seek out locations for new settlements and missions, preferably in locations which could serve as midway stations between the Mission of San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande and the missions in East Texas. In 1709 Fray Antonio de San Buenaventura Olivares ventured northward from the Mission of San Juan Bautista into Texas territory to make contact with the Tejas Indians on the Colorado River and establish a mission among them there. Spanish officials sent Olivares and his party, which included soldiers from the Presidio of the Rio Grande near the Mission of San Juan Bautista, to stop illicit French activities among the region's Native groups.²¹ The Spanish believed that a mission would Christianize these Indians and create a stronger alliance network than the one that already existed between the Tejas and the French, while justifying their claims to the region. The Spanish plan ultimately failed as the Tejas warned the French about the approaching expedition. However, the plan was revived when Olivares and his party crossed the upper San Antonio River. The "pleasingly spacious meadows"²² as well as oak, mesquite,

²⁰ These interactions will be discussed further in chapter five. For an in depth study concerning cross cultural interactions on the East Texas frontier, please see H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008).

²¹ Castañeda, *Mission Era: The Winning of Texas*, vol 2, [23]. The disputed activities in question concerned illicit French trading with the Natives.

²² Retta Murphy, "The Journey of Pedro de Rivera, 1724-1728," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 41, no. 2 (October 1937): 134.

walnut, cottonwood, and plum trees were reminiscent of a European countryside and prompted Olivares to begin planning for a mission and presidio settlement there.²³

The San Antonio de Béxar Presidio and the mission of San Antonio de Valero were established in this location on May 5, 1718, becoming the western most point of Spanish defense and religious activity in Texas. Béxar's presidial purpose was to serve as a halfway station between settlements along the Rio Grande and the Spanish missions in East Texas to protect Spanish land claims in the territory. The Franciscan run mission would convert the hostile Indians of the region. These Natives were Apachean-speaking peoples and connected to one another through their shared language. Their bands included Pharaones, Natajees, Gilas, Mescaleros, Coninas, Quartelexos, Palomas, Jicarillas, Yutas, and Moquinos.²⁴ While some of these tribes eventually entered the mission system at San Antonio, many, such as the Mescaleros, induced the regional violence that called for increased defense in the region. In the early years of the settlement, the presidio barely resembled a town, with no organization or civil form of government. In keeping with Hapsburg tradition, the Spanish justified their presence on the frontier through a religious obligation to Christianize the natives. Cooperative Christianized Indians held a distinct and generally accepted place within frontier settlement societies, and also proved to be an important factor in the development of presidios such as Béxar. The recruitment of Indian labor was accepted in Béxar and encouraged by the governor, and mission Indians worked to construct irrigation systems for the community. However, the threat of hostile Indian

²³ Along with the account translated by Murphy in "The Journey of Pedro de Rivera", Olivares' account has been annotated and translated by Benedict Leutenegger. Please see Benedict Leutenegger, Antonio de S. Buenaventura Olivares, and Benito Fernandez de Santa Ana, "Two Franciscan Documents on Early San Antonio, Texas," *The Americas* 25, no. 2 (October 1968): 191-206.

²⁴ Murphy, "Journey of Pedro de Rivera," 133.

groups remained constant, leading the Spanish to increase the Creole population of Béxar for defense purposes by the middle of the decade.

For the friendly Native Americans in the region, the growth of Béxar's mission and presidio facilities increased their chances of survival from both foreign and other Native threats. The Natives saw settlement as a means of allying with the Spaniards and used the mission as a "semi sedentary encampment where they could gather to acquire food, shelter and defense."²⁵ Indian occupation of the missions was fluid. Their nomadic lifestyle prevailed despite the structure of mission life, and often Native groups would leave the mission for months at a time, returning in the winter or when food was scarce. Though the Franciscan missionaries worked tirelessly to persuade the Indians to abandon their customs, the isolation of the frontier community forced the Franciscans to tolerate many aspects of the Native way of life. On an expedition to explore the northern frontier of New Spain in the mid-1720s, the governor of Tlaxcala, Pedro de Rivera, observed that it was often difficult to differentiate between friendly and hostile Indians because they would come and go into the community as they pleased since "they engaged in war and sought peace as their inclinations suggested."²⁶ Thus, in the first few years of its existence, Béxar had already begun its development into a diverse and unregulated socio-ethnic community with no established hierarchy and very little government leadership. Though the Franciscans' Christianization efforts brought some friendly Natives into the community, the civilian population including a growing number of Creoles, geographic isolation and lack of a

²⁵ Juliana Barr, *Peace Came in the Form of a Woman, Indians and Spaniards in the Texas Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 122.

²⁶ Murphy, "Journey of Pedro de Rivera," 133.

definitive social stratification led the community to evolve in its early years along the Hapsburg lines of *obedezco pero no cumplo*, the “I obey but do not comply” philosophy.

The Spanish, recognizing the need for a larger and more permanent populace in Béxar, recruited a small number of artisans to relocate from the provinces of Nuevo León and Coahuila in late 1718. These settlers, mostly families of Creole pioneers and transplanted Tlaxcallans from the Coahuila region of northern Mexico aided the Franciscan missionaries and soldiers in San Antonio to defend the region from the French and hostile Indians. As good Roman Catholic natives, the resettlement of Tlaxcallans in Béxar was intended to provide an example for the hostile Indian groups who were resisting conversion. This in turn would ensure friendly relations with the Indians in the region and their neighbors. The settlers from Coahuila who moved north to Béxar followed a Hapsburg pattern of settlement that was well established in the New World by the early eighteenth century. Under this pattern, settlers from the most recently established provinces were taken to pioneer frontier settlement. The relocation of the Tlaxcallans during this time period reflects Hapsburg settlement patterns throughout New Spain. The use of Native and Creole settlers from Nuevo Leon and Coahuila represents the fact that swift settlement and an increased population in the region were more important than the establishment of a distinct socio-ethnic hierarchy that later became a characteristic of Bourbon settled provinces. These settlers, particularly the Creoles and mixed blood Mestizos “either had passed through the frontier experience themselves recently or were still in that stage”²⁷

²⁷ Oakah L. Jones, Jr., *Los Paisanos, Spanish Settlers on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1976), 247.

giving them the advantage of experience in surviving in Béxar's isolated frontier community.²⁸

Aside from bringing frontier settlement experience to Béxar, these settlers, particularly the Creoles, brought with them distinct traces of New World society. These Creoles in living most of their lives in Nuevo Leon and Coahuila, had mastered the art of frontier ranching and practiced it successfully in Béxar. For the remainder of the eighteenth century, ranching served as the basic feature of economic growth in the region. Ranching proved to be a successful practice on the West Texas terrain and was also economically profitable despite Béxar's isolated location, offering Creole ranchers opportunities for social and economic advancement. Its significance to the development of Béxar upon the arrival of the Canary Island settlers will be discussed in the next chapters.²⁹

With little government organization in Béxar's first years, the presidial commander acted as the sole source of Spanish political authority. Land was for communal use by the military and missionaries in the settlement, though the Spanish Crown gave the Creoles limited farming and irrigation rights to specified lands, provided these lands were improved upon and brought revenue to the Spanish government. The lack of organization and leadership, coupled with the settlement's isolation on the frontier, led the presidio and mission to gain characteristics of Hapsburg governance in its early years and develop in a

²⁸"Translation of copies of Rebolledo's letters recommending establishment of presidios, settlements and missions in order to stop French incursions into Spanish territory. Accompanying documents are copies of the Fiscal's opinion on the suggestions, and Rebolledo's summary of Diego Ramon's letter and plans for checking French incursions into Texas.," December 24, 1717, e_bx_001907_001, The Bexar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX, 74. Rebolledo's reasons for choosing Tlaxcallan settlers will be discussed further in the next chapter.

²⁹ Sandra Lynn Myres, "The Development of the Ranch as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish Province of Texas 1691-1800" (PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 1967).

somewhat unpredictable manner. In 1718 Europe's War of the Quadruple Alliance, a dispute over the Treaty of Utrecht which ended the War of the Spanish Succession in 1713, put France and Spain at odds with each other in North America. In 1719 a French attack on the presidio and mission at Los Adaes led many of its Creole settlers and missionaries to temporarily flee to Béxar.³⁰ Increased tensions in East Texas between the French and the Spanish led to an upsurge in violence by the Natives, causing a number of Creoles to again briefly resettle in Béxar around 1720. Along with increasing Béxar's population, the relocation of Creoles to the region exacerbated the existing fluidity of the community's ever increasing socio-ethnic groups. The lack of a definitive socio-ethnic hierarchy accompanied by an increasingly diverse population by the middle of the decade led the Viceroy and other government officials to move towards restructuring the settlement at San Antonio on more organized and centralized terms.

In 1721, under orders from Viceroy Casa Fuerte, Don Pedro de Rivera, governor of the province of Tlaxcala, was ordered to inspect the military fortifications on the northern frontier to "rid New Spain of the financial dishonesty and wastefulness of officials [who were]... not only useless, but also a humiliating burden to the royal treasury."³¹ Rivera's investigation culminated in 1728 and deemed that the presidios and missions on the northern frontier of New Spain, including Béxar, were more costly than useful. He stated they desperately needed reforms to combat the defects and abuses of their

³⁰ Jesus de la Teja, *San Antonio de Bèxar: a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 18.

³¹ Murphy, "Journey of Pedro de Rivera," 126.

administration.³² The need for reform and an elimination of corruption was necessary for the presidio and mission to survive. Of particular concern to Rivera was the lack of military structure for a fortification intended to protect against the most hostile of Indian groups. The presidio at Béxar was little more than a garrisoned fort, consisting of roughly thirty-seven men and their families and the men were a part of colonial companies, not regular army units.³³ While Béxar's reliance on the civilian population to aid in defense of the settlement was an economically resourceful plan for the Crown, the lack of Spanish European leadership among existing civilian population only added to the undesired flexibility of San Antonio's social structure. The non-existence of a standing army reflected the New Spain presidio model under the Hapsburgs, whose desire to proselytize the Natives without the use of force theoretically rendered them unnecessary.³⁴

By the time San Antonio de Béxar's first decade as an isolated borderland settlement drew to a close in the late 1720s, the trifold civilian, military and missionary community existed in a state of socio-ethnic, economic and political instability. Discord and corruption were commonplace in the region, and the lack of leadership and communication with the Crown proved to be a drain on the royal finances. By the late 1720s problems at San Antonio de Béxar exemplified the failures of the Hapsburgs in New Spain, and these structural problems led the emerging Spanish Bourbons to seek a more centralized and organized form of government that would limit corruption and increase economic revenue and Spanish authority in the New World.

³² Ibid., 126.

³³ Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), 4.

³⁴ John Preston Moore, *The Cabildo in Peru Under the Hapsburgs 1530-1700* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1954), 55.

CHAPTER 3

BOURBON IDEOLOGY ON THE NORTHERN FRONTIER: THE DEVELOPMENT OF SAN ANTONIO DE BÉXAR

Fr. Olivares' 1709 plan for a mission and settlement on the San Antonio River received serious attention from officials in the province of Texas as French encroachment and Indian attacks escalated throughout the second decade of the century. In 1717, Juan Manuel de Oliván Rebolledo, a Spanish official in Texas, submitted a plan for colonizing and settling the Gulf Coast and frontier regions. Shielded under the guise of Christianizing the "pagan" Indians, Spain's main priority was in protecting their mining interests from the French and protecting the Spanish population there from Indian attacks. The Spanish viewed Texas as crucial for defending the Gulf Coast and Northern Mexico. Focusing on these interests, this chapter explores the transition from Hapsburg to Bourbon rule on Béxar and the effects of this transition on Béxar's residents. The relocation of Canary Islander families to Béxar in 1731 will be considered from a Bourbon perspective. This examination includes both the Spanish Crown's and the Isleños' rationale for relocation, their justifications for moving, and their impact on the Béxar settlement. Examining Béxar's origins and evolution through these Atlantic themes will reveal the distinct ways in which Bourbon policy and enlightenment thought influenced the settlement's development in the beginning of the 1730s.

Olivares' idea of settling the frontier around San Antonio was not new. As early as 1667, presidios had been used as bases for campaigns against Indians in the sparsely

populated frontier borderlands.¹ Though the Spanish were largely successful at driving off enemy tribes, they realized the difficulty of establishing permanent peace on the frontier. The nomadic nature of the tribes combined with the endemic inter-tribal warfare made pacification of the region nearly impossible. By the second decade of the eighteenth century the Apaches, having been forced from their northern lands by the Comanches, were moving into the region around San Antonio. The Apaches utilized their mobility to conduct quick raids on Spanish frontier settlements and the small regional presidios could not combat the Indian threat. The Spanish Crown deemed permanent settlements necessary to increase its defensive presence in the region.²

The expedition of Alonso de Leon in May 1690 led to the founding of the first mission in East Texas, San Francisco de los Tejas. However, in 1693, Native discontent and violence in the region led the friars to burn the mission and flee to Mexico.³ The Spanish would not occupy East Texas again until 1717. After St. Denis' capture and interrogation at San Juan Bautista in 1714, the threat of French encroachment and control of Texas was undoubtedly imminent, leading Diego Ramón, the presidio's commandant to state "... if His Majesty (who God protects) does not take warning and the Naquitoses [Natchioches] villages are not settled, the French will be masters of this land."⁴ Though aware of the

¹ James M. Daniel "The Spanish Frontier in West Texas and Northern Mexico," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (April, 1968): 483.

² Aside from Daniel's article, two other works which give a detailed analysis of Indian, particularly Apache, threats in the region during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries are William Edward Dunn's "Apache Relations in Texas, 1718-1750," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 14, no. 3 (January 1911), and Frank D. Reeve's "The Apache Indians in Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 50, no. 2 (October 1946).

³ San Francisco de los Tejas and other East Texas missions will be discussed further in chapter five.

⁴ Letter from Diego Ramón to Fr. Hidalgo, July 22, 1714, as cited in Donald E. Chipman and Harriet Denise Joseph, *Notable Men and Women of Spanish Texas* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1999). For a detailed overview of the first Spanish missions in Texas, please refer to Diana Hadley, Thomas H. Naylor, and Mardith K.

looming French presence in the region, the arrival of St. Denis to San Juan Bautista prompted the Spanish to take action. St Denis, along with Robert and Pierre Talon, accompanied Ramón and Fr. Isodoro Félix de Espinosa on their expedition to the east, serving as guides and supply conductors. St. Denis' arrest and interrogation at San Juan Bautista made it clear that Spanish economic interests in New Spain were at stake. On top of the economic threat, the mere presence of St. Denis and his French explorers on the Rio Grande indicated weaknesses in the existing Spanish defense and missionary system. As this chapter will posit, the Spanish Crown's transition to the House of Bourbon, and the changes in New World ideology and colonial policies that came with it, had a profound effect on the design of New World missionary and defensive settlements, even in isolated frontier areas such as Béxar.

The establishment of towns and civilian settlements was a multifaceted project intended to protect Bourbon imperial interests. The arrival of the Canary Island families at the villa of San Fernando de Béxar in 1731 served to bolster the defense of the existing mission and presidio, while simultaneously establishing a frontier hierarchy of *peninsulares*, or settlers from the Iberian Peninsula. A town council, run strictly by the Isleño heads of households, displaced the Creoles and military personnel in the region, reinforcing the Bourbon Crown's philosophy that placed pure blood Spaniards above Creoles. According to historian Gilbert R. Cruz, the town, along with the presidio and the mission, were the three most important agencies for making New Spain secure from both internal rebellion and foreign encroachment. Thus, reforms implemented as early as the second decade of the

Schuetz-Miller, eds., *The Central Corridor and the Texas Corridor*, vol. 2, *The Presidio and Militia on the Northern Frontier of New Spain* (Tucson, AZ: The University of Arizona Press, 1997), 317-358.

eighteenth century were rooted in the same enlightenment thought processes that historians have recognized as influential to the reforms of the late eighteenth century.

The Bourbons also aimed to strengthen military influence, particularly in the frontier regions where both dangerous Native populations and encroachment from other European countries posed threats. To save money, the Crown reduced armies and presidial garrisons in the region. Structured along the lines of European military organization, militias and other forms of civilian defense took their place on the frontier. The reinforcement of presidios in the 1720s and 1730s depended on the build-up of civilian populations. The frontier presidios that developed in the 1730s, such as that at San Antonio de Béxar, became frontier institutions of major significance, influencing the political, social, economic, and demographic progression of the surrounding environment.⁵

The influence of the Presidio, as a result of Bourbon reforms in New Spain, led to changes in the existing mission system and its Christianizing efforts. With the expulsion of the Jesuits in the late seventeenth century, the Franciscans, who were “thought to be more pliable than their Jesuit counterparts,”⁶ expanded their missionary efforts in New Spain. The Franciscans and their missions received increased support in New Spain during the first decades of the seventeenth century, reflecting the Bourbon Crown’s desire to expand and strengthen their presence in New Spain through controllable means. By supporting the Franciscans, the Bourbon Crown exuded as much control over the Christianization of the natives as possible. In conjunction, the growth of secular clergy in areas such as Béxar, a

⁵ John Preston Moore, *The Cabildo in Peru Under the Bourbons* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1966), 7.; *Ibid.*, Hadley, Naylor, and Schuetz-Miller, *Central Corridor and the Texas Corridor*, 475.

⁶ Jesús De La Teja, “Indians, Soldiers and Canary Islanders: The Making of a Texas Frontier Community,” *Locus* 3, no. 1 (1990): 84.

Bourbon preference over the ordered clergy also represented an increase of Crown control over the growing civilian settlements.

The Bourbon desire to strengthen the mission system on the northern frontier also denoted their desire to integrate the various frontier systems and groups of people. The Crown believed this integration would not only convert the Indians but would “make the Indians useful tributaries of the Crown” through trade with merchants from the civilian settlements, furthering the empire’s economic goals.⁷ Integration would also alleviate administrative problems, such as corruption and non-compliance with the Crown, which characterized Hapsburg organization in the New World. Simultaneously, this integration would allow the Crown to assert more influence on the frontier and establish a bureaucratic hierarchy which would give superior placement to the *peninsulares*, as seen in the relocation of Isleño families to Béxar.

In 1717 Rebolledo outlined the plans for founding settlements at both Béxar and Espiritu Santo Bay, near LaSalle’s failed Fort St. Louis colony, as well as among the Caddodache and the Hasinai Indian peoples, often referred to in primary documents as the Tejas. The latter mission and presidio, established shortly thereafter, became Los Adaes, while the Gulf Coast settlement at Espiritu Santo Bay became known as La Bahía de San Bernando. Rebolledo intended ultimately to build eight missions among the Tejas peoples, to buttress the Spanish against the French at Natchitoches (pronounced *Nak a tish*), only

⁷ Gilbert R. Cruz, *Let There Be Towns: Spanish Municipal Origins in the American Southwest, 1610-1810* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 1988), 56.

eighty leagues away.⁸

Rebolledo was aware that gift giving was necessary to create kin relationships with the Tejas. Trust was necessary for conversion to take place. Rebolledo insisted that a missionary be sent to bring the Hasinai and Caddos presents of livestock and European goods. Rebolledo suggested that Fr. Antonio Margil de Jesús, a Spanish born Franciscan, make first contact with the Tejas. The distribution of gifts would be under his sole discretion. Governor Alarcon was charged with exploring the region for French and other European settlers. Alarcon's expedition was also ordered to "make prisoners of [French] secular ecclesiastics and send them to Mexico" where after an interrogation the Spanish would force them to work with the Spanish missionaries in the region.⁹

Rebolledo's concern with secular French ecclesiastics adds a religious layer to the existing European rivalries in the region. Secular ecclesiastics belonged to a French diocese rather than a religiously ruled order. They were sent as chaplains or pastors specifically for the region's European settlers, leaving the ordered clergy solely responsible for the conversion of the natives and the operations of the missions. Therefore, Rebolledo knew that the discovery of secular ecclesiastics would undoubtedly correlate with French settlements in Texas. French secular clergy posed a threat to the Spanish on a number of levels. While it indicated the French desire to populate the region on a large scale, it also revealed a direct line of communication between the French colonies and the French Crown, because these secular clergy men did not operate under papal authority. This lack of

⁸ "Translation of Rebolledo's comments on Galvez' instructions to Domingo Teran with suggestions for the founding of settlements at Bèxar, La Bahía and among the Asinai and Cadodaches," 1917, e_bx_001909_001. The Bèxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center For American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX, 72-73.

⁹ Ibid., 78.

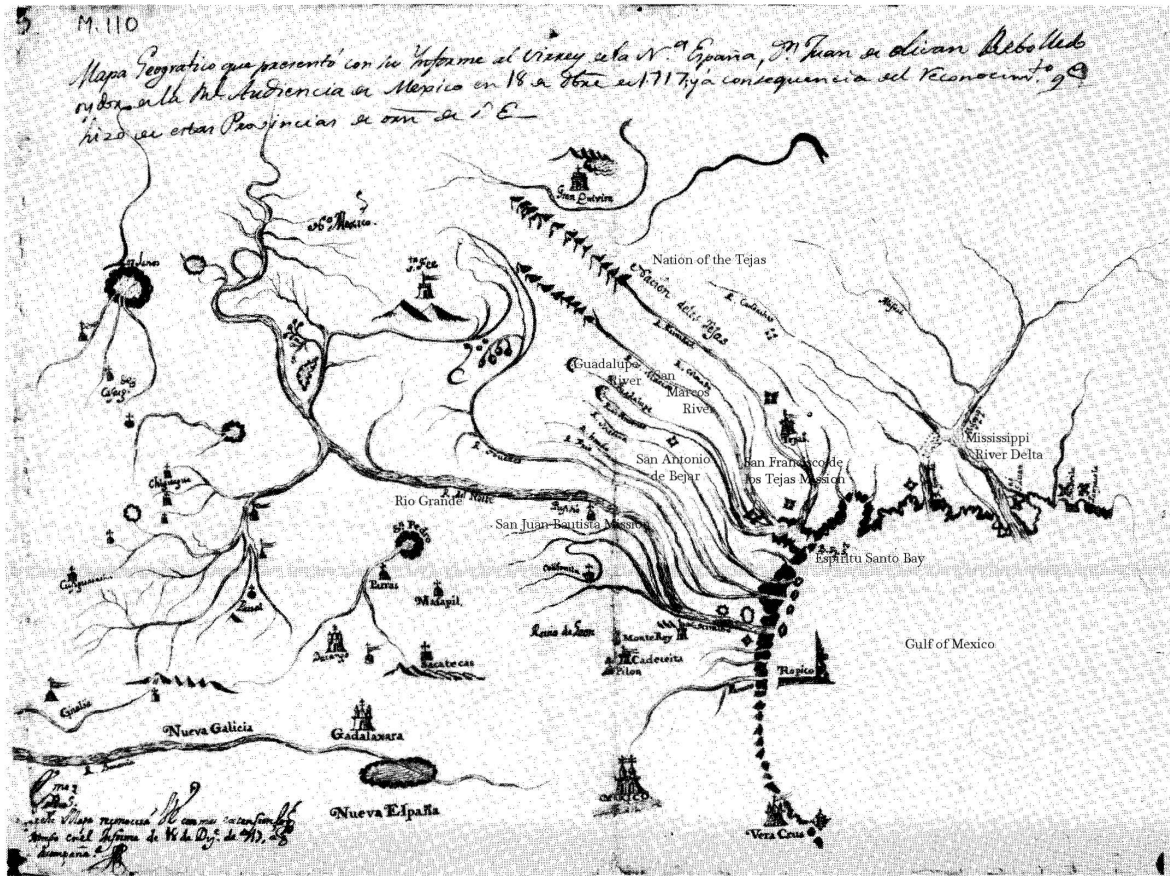
papal influence allowed the French crown to assert more influence over their missions and settlements in the new world direct line of control, a characteristic of Bourbon rule over their colonies.¹⁰

Though no Frenchmen were found living in the province, Rebolledo moved forward with his plans for settlement because of French living among the Indians there. Information provided by St. Denis after his arrest at San Juan Bautista also revealed details of the French settlement at the mouth of the Mississippi River, which gave them accessibility to Texas rivers via the Gulf of Mexico. The Spanish plans for fortifications at La Bahía on Espiritu Santo Bay proved incredibly crucial. If the Spanish failed to protect the coast and inland waterways, the French would gain missionary contact with Native tribes as well as transportation to the existing Spanish mines in northern Mexico. As stated by Rebolledo, "If foreigners take possession of [this bay], they will be able by sailing up the rivers flowing into it to become masters of the tribes occupying the lands between [these rivers] and can [thus] reach the kingdom of Leon and Guasteca."¹¹ The French could then "reach the most precious minerals of His majesty's dominions and by their commerce take from his offices the silver which is the soul of the prosperity of old and New Spain."¹² Rebolledo's assessment reflected the economic concerns of French encroachment and the importance

¹⁰ For a discussion of the differences between secular and ordered ecclesiastics and their religious goals in the New World see Robert E. Wright's "The Hispanic Church in Texas under Spain and Mexico," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 20, no. 4 (Fall, 2002): 15-33.; Also see Castañeda's widely cited seven volume work *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas*, Vol. 2, 306-307 and Vol. 3, 53-55.

¹¹ "Translation of Rebolledo's comments," 90.

¹² *Ibid.*, 87.



Juan de Oliván Rebolledo's Map of Northeastern New Spain, 1717.¹³

¹³ This map, drawn by Juan de Oliván Rebolledo in 1717 illuminates the Spanish Crown's limited knowledge of the northern frontier of New Spain. The diamond-shaped dot formations represent projected locations for Spanish forts to protect against foreign invasion from the Gulf of Mexico through the Espiritu Santo Bay. Details for the map were provided by St. Denis. Please see David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 164. I have added notations to the original map found in Weber's work to clarify certain locations.

placed on the economic revenue produced by the mines. The creation of a defense point at La Bahia was also crucial for the success of Béxar. The San Antonio River's tributaries (the Guadalupe and San Marcos) led directly to the Espiritu Santo Bay, giving the French easy transportation to Béxar and the center of Texas territory if they settled the bay first.

The details of Rebolledo's plans for fortifying and settling the bay offer a fascinating window through which we can examine the growing influence of Bourbonism, the increase of Crown control and enlightenment philosophies, on Spain's transatlantic policies.

Rebolledo suggested recruiting "the idle men and women of Mexico" as well as the vagrants and dissolute women of the region to construct and occupy Bahía and other frontier settlements, because their inferiority suited menial labor.¹⁴ He also recommended that a "colony of negroes" as well as Natives and Mulattoes, be taken from the pueblo of San Lorenzo for additional labor. Rebolledo believed that, in order for the colony to thrive, a central peninsular authority displaying Spanish power was necessary. According to Rebolledo, the stability of any Spanish town depended on a racially influenced social hierarchy where "some [will] serve as feet while the rest are destined to be the head of its government."¹⁵

La Bahía's defensive position on the coast was deemed essential for the subsequent establishment and success of Béxar. Following Rebolledo's aforesaid model for La Bahía, Bexar was also to be established under a hierarchical system. The first suggested settlers included Spaniards and Tlaxcallans, and marriage was a requirement for all settlers moving to the province. Rebolledo believed that a Catholic marriage would ensure population

¹⁴ "Translation of Rebolledo's comments," 81.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 90.

growth within their respective socio-ethnic spheres and eliminate the emergence of a Mestizo population in Bexar as much as possible. Matrimony would also lead the settlers to “take root more firmly” in the province.¹⁶ In conjunction, agricultural experience would ensure an improvement and investment in the lands over time, aiding in the Crown’s desire for a permanent settlement in the region. The settlers were also required to “know the mode and practice of warfare and arms that are used by the pagan [Indians] of the country” so that they could defend the province from French or Indian attack.¹⁷ Through mutual defense and aid, Rebolledo predicted, and hoped, that the Native population would want to become more like the Spaniards. The successes of these Indian settlers would in turn attract the region’s “pagan” Indians to conversion so that they too could live comfortably in emulation of the Spanish way of life. In true Bourbon form, Rebolledo’s plan for converting the Natives, expanding Spanish territory, and defending the Northern Frontier would be done “all without extra expense to the royal estates.”¹⁸ Rebolledo believed that if B exar’s success could lead to the establishment of nearby frontier settlements and an increase of settlers to the region, the frontier around San Antonio could be better defended than by the soldiers in the presidios. The reciprocal aid of the various communities would eventually allow the Crown to cut back on presidio soldiers, and their salaries, allowing the Spain to save even more money on regional defense.¹⁹

Official plans for B exar’s civilian development began in 1723, after the expedition of the Texas governor, Don Jos e de Azlor y Virto de Vera, the second Marqu es de San Miguel

¹⁶ Ibid., 84.

¹⁷ Ibid., 84.

¹⁸ Ibid., 92.

¹⁹ Ibid., 92.

de Aguayo, into East Texas. The expedition transpired as a result of a Franco-Spanish clash over the terms of the Treaty of Utrecht which had ended the War of Spanish Succession a few years before. The Spanish Bourbon monarch Phillip V, concerned with Spain's standing among other nations on the continent of Europe, invaded Sardinia and Sicily in an effort to regain territory lost at Utrecht. A "quadruple alliance" of Great Britain, France, Austria and the Netherlands, defeated Spain, giving the short-lived war its namesake. Its significance however carried over into the New World, affecting the relationship between the French and Spanish in the province of Texas, prompting the Viceroy to order Aguayo to seek out the French and drive them from Texas soil. With eight companies of five hundred men, Aguyao made his way east from San Antonio and was at the presidio of Los Adaes when it came under the French attack discussed in the previous chapter. Though most of the Spanish and Creole settlers fled from the entire region to San Antonio, Aguayo vowed to drive out the French. He feared they would seek to occupy Los Adaes and then move along the coast to re-occupy LaSalle's Fort St. Louis near where the Spanish proposed to construct La Bahía. Over the next two years Aguyao worked to re-establish the Spanish presence in Texas by re-occupying abandoned missions and building new ones along the routes of the Trinity, San Marcos, San Antonio and Guadalupe Rivers. While Aguyao and his expedition camped along the Trinity in August 1721, a French messenger sent from St. Denis reached them asking for a meeting on the Frenchman's behalf. The French Captain explained that the war in Europe had ended and asked for a truce with the Spanish, stating that the attacks at Los Adaes were not condoned by him. St. Denis also agreed to abandon all French claims in Texas. Aguayo had no choice but to accept the truce. By orders of the king, Aguayo could

only conduct his expedition in the name of defense.²⁰

The elimination of the French in East Texas did not eradicate Aguayo's plans for defense of the northern frontier. Aguayo's reports of the expedition recommended that the Crown approve the settlement of Spanish families in Texas to effectively colonize the province in the event that the French reneged on their truce. These families would contribute to the Bourbon plan's success by reducing the expense of maintaining large troop garrisons, altering the nature of the presidio on the northern frontier. Aguayo also suggested transporting 200 families from the Canary Islands or Galicia in northwest Spain. In 1723 the process of gathering volunteers began with the issue of two important *cédulas* from the Spanish crown. The first, issued on March 28, was a proclamation published in the Canary Islands recruiting volunteers to settle near the Texas Gulf Coast. The second *cédula*, issued in May of that same year, ordered the governor of Yucatán to supply the Isleños with everything they might need while they awaited their passage to Veracruz, then northward to Texas. The *cédulas'* detailed orders demonstrate the Crown's interest in the welfare of these Isleno settlers and their interest in quickly settling them in Texas territory.²¹

Early plans for Béxar also reveal the desire for pure-blood Spanish settlers on the frontier. In 1715 Fr. Olivares, the founding missionary at Béxar's San Antonio De Valero mission, stated his desire for *peninsulares* to settle the area. He feared that Mulattoes, Mestizos, Lobos (African and Indian descent), and Coyotes (offspring of Mestizos who were three quarters Indian and one quarter European) would overtake the frontier community in

²⁰ Charles W. Hackett "The Marquis of San Miguel de Aguayo and his Recovery of Texas from the French," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 49, no. 2, (October 1945): 193-214.; Eleanor Claire Buckley, "The Aguayo Expedition into Texas and Louisiana, 1719-1722," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 15, no. 1 (July 1911): 1-65.

²¹ *Ibid.*, Cruz, *Let There Be Towns*, 58-60.

the absence of a *peninsulare* settlement. Olivares described these mixed-race settlers as “people of the lowest order, whose customs are worse than the Indians.”²² This reflected the widespread discontent of both the Crown and New World officials over the growing racial fluidity of Béxar throughout the 1720s.

Canary Islanders were chosen to settle in Béxar to prevent the spread of racial mixing on the northern frontier. While they were still considered European, the location of the Canary Islands off of the west coast of Africa made the Isleños geographically closer to the New World than the Galacians or other Iberian provinces. Canary Islanders were used in other Spanish colonization efforts and had been successful as settlers in those areas. Columbus brought Isleños with him on his second voyage to the Americas in 1493 where they settled in Puerto Rico. Throughout the following century a number of Canarians, mostly low class farming families, migrated to the Caribbean Islands, bringing sugar cane to the region. Throughout the next century Spain recruited Isleños to colonize areas of modern day Central America, Venezuela, the Greater Antillies, Colombia, Uruguay, the west coast of South America and parts of the Yucatán peninsula.²³ These Isleños immigrated to the Americas to “improve one’s fortune.”²⁴ The Canary Islands’ population remained relatively small in comparison to the colonized Caribbean Islands, however, the Canary Islands remained overpopulated. Wealth discovered in Mexico and Peru debilitated Spanish

²² Jesús de la Teja, "Forgotten Founders: The Military Settlers of Eighteenth Century San Antonio de Béxar," in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, 27-38, excerpt from *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio* (Austin, TX: The University of Texas, 1991). De la Teja cites “Autos sobre diferentes noticias que se han participado a su Exa. De las entradas que en estos dominios hacen los Frances por la parte de Coahuila...1715,” AGN, PI, vol. 181.

²³ James J. Parsons, "The Migration of Canary Islanders to the Americas: An Unbroken Current Since Columbus," *The Americas* 39, no. 4 (April 1983): 451-452.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 450-451.

investment in the Canary Islands from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, fostering Isleño emigration.²⁵ Following this pattern, over four hundred Isleño families volunteered to immigrate to San Antonio and welcomed the chance to create a new life in a province filled with fertile lands and opportunities to gain wealth through agriculture. Few were literate and most were impoverished, making this relocation a once- in-a lifetime opportunity for the Isleños.²⁶

Though the plans for Isleño community in Béxar began in 1723, the policies for their resettlement were not put in motion until 1730. For seven years leaders in the province debated the details of Aguayo's Isleño colonization plan, particularly its cost. Brigadier General Pedro de Rivera, who explored the region during these intermediate years, believed that an intense defense policy against the Apaches should be enacted within Béxar and the other western presidios. However, de Rivera was concerned about the expenses involved and "questioned the number of families needed in Texas and whether the money, always an important factor to the viceroy, expended on so many town settlements was warranted."²⁷ Nevertheless, plans moved forward in 1730 for the Isleños arrival at Béxar in the following year. The delay however did not come without consequences. In the seven years of deliberation, the original four hundred family proposal had dwindled to sixteen, roughly fifty-six settlers in all. With a group of this size, the first generation of Isleños was a much smaller presence in Béxar than many studies suggest. The incentives however served to place the Isleños at the top of Béxar society, creating a distinct social structure that

²⁵ Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm: The Failure of Spanish Medieval Colonization of the Canary Islands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 3 (July 1993): 529.

²⁶ Cruz, *Let There Be Towns*, 80.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 62.; Please also see Castañeda,, *Mission Era: The Winning of Texas*, 280.

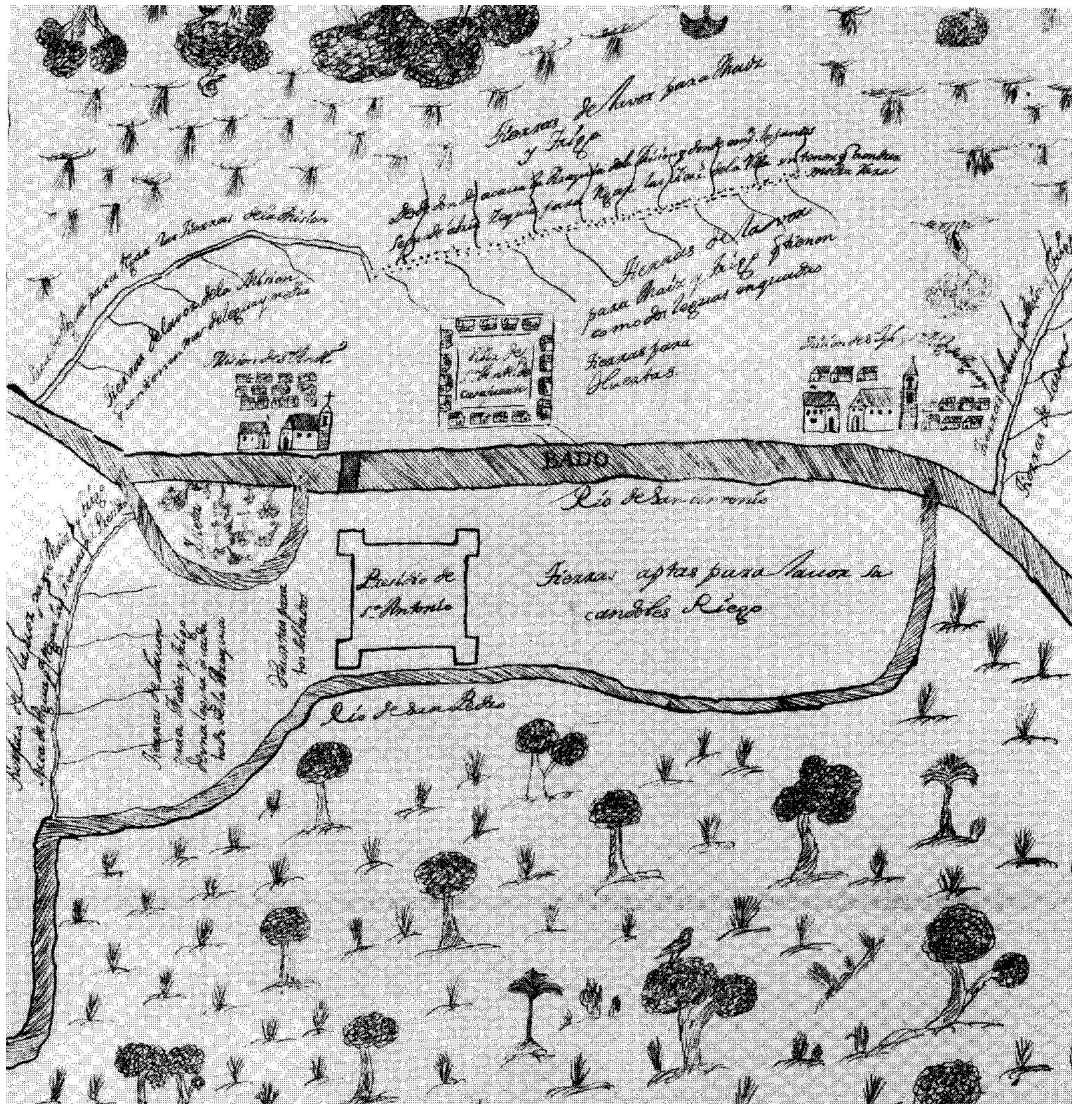
displaced the existing civilian population.²⁸

The Canary Islanders were to receive a number of social benefits, aside from the chance for a new beginning and opportunities for economic advancement. The heads of household were appointed to the noble ranks of hidalgo and received rights as “first settlers”, even though their occupancy was predated by Creole settlers almost ten years before. According to the Laws of the Indies, the Isleños were “Spaniards by birthright,” which granted them a place in society of more importance than the American born Creoles.²⁹ A *cabildo* or town council was formed and six Isleño heads of households appointed to serve life terms as its officers. Only members of the *cabildo* could elect local leaders to serve in other town offices including that of sheriff and official secretary. The Isleños’ monopoly of the town council often rendered the Creole settlers and presidial population useless in their legal attempts to fight against viceregal rulings that did not work to their advantage. This monopoly over the *cabildo* further exacerbated the disparities between the Isleños and the Creoles in the region, severely limiting the legal power of the latter.³⁰

²⁸ For a set of detailed instructions from Viceroy Casa Fuerte concerning the Isleños arrival and what they would receive for settling San Antonio see: Translation of certified copy of Casafuerte's instructions to Bustillo y Bustamente concerning arrival of Canary Islanders, e_bx_001917_001, B  xar Archives Online, Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas, Austin, TX.

²⁹ Casta  eda,, *Mission Era: The Winning of Texas*, 280.

³⁰ Gerald E. Poyo, "The Canary Islands Immigrants of San Antonio," 1991, in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, ed. Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1991), 43-46.



Sketch of the Villa, Missions, and Presidio at San Antonio, 1730.³¹

The Isleños' farming and agricultural backgrounds were used to reshape the physical

³¹ This prospective map for the villa, missions and presidio at San Antonio de Bèxar are surrounded by wheat and cornfields, as drawn by the marqués de Aguayo in 1730. The top of the map faces the east. The San Antonio River and San Pedro Creek in actuality run north/south. The presidio is sketched between the San Antonio River and the San Pèdro Creek and the villa de Bèxar is sketched above the San Antonio River, with the Valero mission beside it to the reader's left. The San José y San Miguel de Aguayo mission is located on the other side of the villa, to the reader's right. However, the map contains errors. The villa actually developed beside the presidio, to the reader's right, because of irrigational interests and the mission San José is drawn on the wrong side of the river. Please see David J. Weber, *The Spanish Frontier in North America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), 165. The map is also included in Jesus de la Teja's *San Antonio de Bèxar a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 54.

makeup of the existing settlement, supporting the Bourbon's desired design of an agricultural community. Each family was given a daily allowance for the first year of settlement and the seeds to plant their first crop. In addition, the Isleños received a plot of agricultural land cleared by Indian mission workers, a plot of arable land for future crops, and a lot near the town plaza on which to build their homes. Their farmland was situated closest to the San Antonio River and its tributaries, such as the San Pedro Creek, ensuring that the Isleños' crops would be the most profitable if sold at the town market. According to the presidial soldiers, the Canary Islanders displayed an "exaggerated idea of their own importance" upon their arrival to New Spain.³² They often recruited mission Indians to work for them on their lands, exacerbating the existing socio-ethnic disparities. Disagreements concerning Indian labor, land ownership, debts, matters concerning public records, the grazing of livestock, and the establishment of a parish church, often occurred between the Isleños and Béxar's other groups.³³ Matters of irrigation were also a source of tension during the first few years. The Isleños rights to water and irrigation ensured their monopoly over a scarce resource in a community which relied mostly on subsistence farming. This monopoly warranted a stratified social structure, further displacing the existing settlers in Béxar, particularly the Creoles.³⁴

The arrival of the Isleños did more than simply disrupt the social status of Béxar's existing populations; it significantly altered the ways in which the community and its

³² Jones, *Los Paisanos: Spanish Settlers*, 52.

³³ *Ibid.*, 52. The Béxar Archives at the University of Texas in Austin holds the records pertaining to these conflicts. Translated documents can be accessed online at:
http://www.cah.utexas.edu/projects/bexar/gallery_doc.php?doc=e_bx_001921

³⁴ Translation of certified copy of Casa Fuerte's instructions to Bustillo y Bustamente concerning arrival of Canary Islanders.

members functioned on a daily basis. Throughout the 1720s, Béxar operated self-sufficiently. Though this eliminated governmental expenses, it also led to isolation from the Crown, enabling the town's military officials and inhabitants to act upon their own wishes in running the community. Béxar, particularly the farmland, had also been a communally run settlement with soldiers and Indians working together to aid in the construction of irrigation ditches and in clearing lands for planting. Though the settlement received imported products, food and supplies, the cost of shipping these goods to the frontier was high and occurred rarely. Frontier isolation necessitated that these groups work together to make Béxar fulfill its function as a defensive outpost. Isolation and local provisions also allowed those who worked on the land to determine their own land and irrigation appointments, however, local provisions ensured some specific irrigation rights for the missions. Upon the Isleños arrival these local provisions were contested by Viceroy Juan de Acuña Bejarano Marqués de Casa Fuerte, whose implementation of Crown controlled reforms for the water situation in Béxar significantly altered the community in the early 1730s.

Conflicts over water and irrigation were the basis of Béxar's problems, particularly between the missions and the Canary Islanders. The latter felt they had done the Spanish crown a great favor in relocating, and deserved all of the rights and privileges they had received upon arrival to Béxar. When the existing settlers and missionaries opposed the sharing of waters from the Arroyo and San Antonio Rivers, Viceroy Casa Fuerte fought back. In December of 1731 he wrote to Gabriel de Vergara, a Franciscan missionary at the Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción de Acuña Mission, one of five in the Béxar area. The Viceroy stated that he would "divide and distribute the water [from the San Antonio and

Arroyo Rivers] giving both the [five] missions and the Islander families a share in it.”³⁵

Although the existing local provisions leaned in favor of ensuring water only for the missions, Spanish law, according to Casa Fuerte, deemed that the King owned the water in trust for the benefit of all peoples under its jurisdiction.³⁶ The Viceroy asserted that the Crown’s law was “more decisive than all the provisions and applicable to the case.”³⁷ He justified his actions on the basis that none of the existing settlers, soldiers, missionaries or Indians in the community would be harmed by sharing water with the Isleños. However, not providing the Canary Islanders with water rights “would be a lamentable thing” since the Crown had spent much money transporting and resettling these families. “[If] they should be abandoned and should be left without water [it] would be the same as having brought them to perish.”³⁸ The Viceroy reiterated the Isleños importance by reminding Fr. Vergara that these Canary Islanders were directly chosen and appointed by the king himself to establish the civilian settlement. Thus, the welfare of the missions was dependent on the welfare of the Isleños; the missions “will not fail to experience many advantageous results from the proximity of the settlement to the missions.”³⁹

Viceroy Casa Fuerte’s decision regarding the Isleños and the distribution of water exemplifies the extension of Crown policies to frontier settlements in New Spain. It demonstrates an increase in Crown control over isolated areas. The viceroy’s assertion that

³⁵ "Translation of Casafuerte to Vergara, concerning apportionment of waters of San Pedro Creek and San Antonio River among the missions and Canary Islanders. 12/25/1731," December 25, 1731, e_bx_001918_001, The Bèxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, Austin, TX, 1.

³⁶ Charles R. Porter, *Spanish Water, Anglo Water: Early Development in San Antonio* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M Press, 2009), x.

³⁷ "Translation of Casafuerte to Vergara," 1.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 2.

Spanish law overrode local provisions indicated Bourbon notions of centralization in New Spain. Furthermore, concern for the welfare of the Canary Islander families supports the theory that the Spanish crown saw their relocation and successful settlement in Béxar as an investment. The Isleños arrival to Béxar and the privileges that came with it restructured the fluid community within Bourbon parameters. With pure-blood Spaniards at the top of the social hierarchy and acting as leaders of the community, the Crown theorized that they could assert control through a constant European presence in the region.

The Isleños were aware that their European heritage brought them an elevated position in society, and often used their superior status as justification during legal arguments and property claims. The Isleños often clashed with the missionaries, Indians, soldiers, and presidio dependents who challenged the Islanders' rights as outlined by the Crown in their resettlement plans. Before the Isleños' arrival, the communal nature of Béxar made this factor irrelevant. However, with the arrival of new settlers and an increase in missions, conflicts over limited resources exacerbated community stress. In the immediate years after the Isleños arrival in Béxar their socio-ethnic monopoly persisted and re-shaped the community in ways that correlated with Bourbon desires. Their control of the *cabildo*, their irrigation rights, the grants of desired land close to the San Antonio River and its tributaries, and other previously outlined incentives ensured their privileged status in Béxar, and supported the Bourbon's desired frontier settlement structure. Though their exclusivity successfully Bourbonized the frontier during the first years of Isleño settlement, their social monopoly could not last. As the next chapter shows, internal conflicts within the Islander population brought changes which forced their integration with the larger community. The

economic and social realities of isolated frontier life challenged the exclusivity of the peninsular social structure in Béxar, and proved that daily life in the community often differed from the desired design.

CHAPTER 4

BORDERLANDS OUTPOST: THE DECLINE OF EUROPEAN INFLUENCE AT BÉXAR AND THE SHAPING OF A UNIQUE FRONTIER IDENTITY 1733-1755

By the mid-1730s the Isleño monopoly in Béxar had begun to break down on all levels. The community as a whole was exceptionally poor. Most settlers lived in huts called *jacales* and constructed no public buildings due to a lack of time and funds. Surviving on the isolated frontier, defending their community from hostile Indians, and ensuring a steady food supply were the primary goals of the populace. The European qualities, so evident in the plans for the trifold settlement at Béxar, were becoming less prevalent and pertinent as the 1730s came to a close. A number of feelings driven by the inability to maintain exclusivity, internal conflicts within the Isleño community, economic and religious integration through the adoption of Creole ranching, and the building of a community church combined to undermine the Bourbon Crown's original intentions.

This chapter will detail the decline of the Isleño hierarchy in Béxar from its origins shortly after the establishment of the San Fernando community through the subsequent decades. It seeks to prove that the struggle of surviving in isolation on the frontier forced Béxar's various socio-ethnic groups to work together and interact on multiple levels to form a distinct community defined by its racial and ethnic fluidity. Social status and European heritage became less important as economic security dwindled and poverty became more widespread. Racial mixing and economic alliances among members of Béxar's various groups, by the 1740s and 1750s, proves that while Bourbon influences shaped the design of the town, these plans on a local level failed to fulfill their intended goals. The resulting

makeup of Béxar reflected the larger phenomenon of racial mixing throughout New Spain. Béxar's racial, ethnic, economic, and social amalgamation reflected what occurred in communities throughout New France and other Spanish settlements in the greater Atlantic world.

As one might expect with frontier communities, intermarriage between Isleños, Creoles, Indians, and Mestizos played a central role in ethnic integration. The first intermarriage in Béxar occurred in 1733 between the daughter of an Isleño cabildo member and a presidial Creole soldier. By 1760 at least twenty seven intermarriages involving Isleños occurred. Isleños married one another in only five recorded marriages throughout that time period. The small size of the Canary Islander community necessitated intermarriage with American-born Spaniards, almost immediately diluting the first generation's claims to a pure European ethnicity. The Spanish deemed Creoles inferior because of their American-born status, as the Laws of the Indies legally consigned Indians, free Africans and Mulattoes to an inferior place in society, regulating their rights to arms, property, and marriage. However, Isleños often over-rode the Laws of the Indies by witnessing Indian marriages, serving as godparents to Indian children, and even marrying Indian wives. The emergence of the Mestizo as a result of these Spanish and Indian relationships complicated the existing structure by creating a legally inferior group whose members could "pass" in many settings because of their Spanish descent. The door lay open for the blurring of racial, ethnic, and social lines in Béxar. Though the Bourbon ideal settlement would promulgate the existence of the pure Isleño hierarchy, racial mixing aided in the reemergence of *obedezco pero no*

cumplo among the multifaceted Béxar population as social distinctions on the frontier began to merge.¹

The Isleño presence in Béxar was the Bourbon Crown's attempt to achieve racial colonization on a local level while also achieving territorial colonization on a large scale. The Spanish based their notion that Creoles occupied a lower status in society than the emigrated Spaniards or *peninsulares* upon the belief that "the New World's natural and cultural environments produced American Spaniards who were inferior to those of the metropolis."² Spaniards treated Creoles as racial cousins who needed European control.³ The emergence of a Mestizo population after the first generation of settlement in the New World reinforced the substandard status of the Creole, categorizing them alongside other inferior racial groups. With a legitimate Spanish paternal lineage, the Mestizo threatened the New World racial structure by acquiring the social identity of a Creole. As reflected in the official church and town records of the time, racial "passing" became so common among Mestizos in settlements such as Béxar, that a racialized hierarchy became impossible to recognize. The family records of Francisco de Urrita and Catarina Valdez offer a glimpse of this racial fluidity. Upon the births, baptisms, and deaths of their children, both Urrita's and Valdez's racial designation and the races of their children changed with every entry made. The parish priest listed Francisco as *Mestizo* in the birth and death records of the

¹ The San Antonio Bicentennial Heritage Committee, comp., *San Antonio in the Eighteenth Century* (San Antonio, TX: San Antonio Bicentennial Heritage Committee, 1976), [78-79].; Jesús De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 25.

² José Cuello, "Racialized Hierarchies of Power in Colonial Mexican Society," 2005, in *Choice, Persuasion and Coercion: Social Control on Spain's North American Frontier*, ed. Jesús De La Teja and Ross Frank (Albuquerque, NM: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 203.

³ *Ibid.*

couple's first child in 1744. The birth and death records of their second child, identified as *Mestizo* in the church archives, listed Francisco and his wife as *Coyote*. The baptism of their daughter in 1760 signified the entire family as *Español*, while four years later the baptism records of another daughter list the entire family as *Coyote*. Though these records offer just one of many examples of racial fluidity in Béxar, they represent the arbitrary nature of the ethnic and racial social structure on the frontier in the mid-eighteenth century. These ever-changing socially-imposed racial designations created an environment which accepted racial miscegenation. Not only did widespread miscegenation allow relatively easy "passing" for all of Béxar's racial groups, with the exception of Africans, but after the first generation of Isleños had comfortably settled on the frontier, their children and subsequent generations seemed to care little about their European status or racial hierarchy. While racial mixing contributed to the dilution of European blood and established interracial connections within the community, internal conflicts exacerbated the breakdown of Béxar's Isleño hierarchy more by clashes among the Isleños themselves than did the increasing socio-ethnic and racial fluidity in the community.⁴

Historians have traced the friction among the Canary Island settlers back to their homeland origins on the Islands themselves. The Isleños originated from a number of different islands including Lancerota (Lanzarote), La Palma, Grand Canary, and Teneriffe. Each island was largely autonomous from the others, each with its own cultural distinctions. In the early years of colonization, explorers and slavers used the islands exclusively as a way

⁴ Ibid., 203-206; Please also see De La Teja, *San Antonio de Béxar*, 25-27, as well as Jesús De La Teja, "Why Urbano and Maria Trinidad Can't Get Married: Social Relations in Late Colonial San Antonio," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 112, no. 2 (October 2008): 129.

station and trading post en route from Africa to the New World. They also received a large number of immigrants from Portugal and Spain as well as Dutch speaking peoples. Due to each island's isolation within the larger band, the Isleños did not share a common ethnic identity before arriving in New Spain. Because of the islands' distance from one another, the immigrants arrived in the New World separately, the first group landing in Veracruz, the other going to Cuba before landing in North America. Upon their arrival at Béxar the only identity these Isleños shared was their position at the top of the frontier social structure. However, clashes among the Isleños undermined the expected unity of those expected to lead the community.

The first official evidence of conflict appeared in July 1734 when Juan Leal Goraz (often spelled Goras), the oldest male settler, filed a complaint demanding that José Padrón, another Isleño settler, repay him for damages to his land, his honor, and his status as a leader of the Isleño community. According to Goraz, a native of Lancerota, Padrón, a native of LaPalma, caused him damages by "entering my lands, picking a quarrel, and causing me to be imprisoned for six months, my property sold at auction and delay in my plowing and settlement."⁵ Goraz's testimony reflects his outrage that Padrón had not only settled on parts of the land in Goraz's absence, but had begun to plow it, ignoring the governor and *alcalde's* (municipal magistrate's) orders not to do so. Padrón denied entering Goraz's lands and argued that he would not pay Goraz for the lands in question. Though settled privately, with no document detailing the results, this conflict gives insight into the

⁵ "Translation of Juan Leal Gorás vs. José Padrón, demanding damages because Padrón caused Leal Gorás imprisonment.," July 12, 1734, e_bx_001928_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX., 92.

internal side of the land and irrigation disputes that plagued the Béxar community. Goraz's charge that Padrón's actions damaged his name and honor is also significant in the examination of the Isleño community's dissolution. These charges are the first of many filed by Goraz and others to bring about legal proceedings concerning slander and defamation.⁶

In August of that same year, Goraz filed a complaint due to insults and threats made against him, this time by Patricio Rodríguez Galano, another Isleño in the villa of San Fernando. The slander occurred during a dispute over a debt Galano's late father owed Goraz. Galano denied Goraz's charges, stating that it was unjust and disrespectful to ask a son to pay the debt of a deceased father. As the dispute escalated, Galano pulled his knife against Goraz, and with "little fear of God and less of justice" accused Goraz of being a Morisco and told Goraz's son "that he could go to hell." Goraz testified that Galano left Goraz's residence briefly, only to return with a carbine, yelling that "if anybody wanted to collect the debt he could come outside." Goraz asserted that Galano relentlessly accused the family of Morsico ancestry, a charge that he states is "detrimental to my good name and the reputation that I have always enjoyed."⁷

In calling Goraz a *Morisco*, Galano accused the former of possessing impure lineage tainted by Moorish blood. The term Morisco dates back to the *Reconquista*, the Spanish reconquest of the Iberian Peninsula from the Muslims, and denoted a Muslim who converted to Christianity rather than leave Spain or Portugal after the Spanish crown captured Granada, the last Iberian Muslim kingdom, in 1492. The Catholic monarchs feared

⁶ Ibid., 92

⁷ "Translation of Juan Leal Gorás vs. Patricio Rodríguez Galano, demanding satisfaction for insults and threats made against him.," August 29, 1734, e_bx_001929_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX.

that the newly converted Moriscos would taint the old Christians, leading the sixteenth-century Hapsburgs to ostracize Moriscos until they could prove that they had accepted the Catholic “Truth” through their actions.⁸ By challenging Goraz’s status as an “old Christian,” Galano’s assertions not only offended him but insulted his entire family and ancestral lineage. This defamation carried significant cultural weight within the Spanish community and led to formal charges against Patricio Galano that resulted in his imprisonment. The conflict between Goraz and Galano proves to be another instance of internal opposition among the Isleños, weakening their monopoly over racial and social superiority in Béxar. Galano’s insult highlights religious conflict, a key dimension of Spain’s European expansion and overseas colonization efforts during the Hapsburg era. Insults, slander, and defamation represent weaknesses in the social structure that were more emotional than disputes over property or land. In particular, this dispute reveals that not only was pure Isleño heritage not enough to band these newcomers together in the ways Bourbon officials had hoped, but that Isleños challenged the purity of blood, their mutual claim to social dominance, on an individual level within their community.

Subsequent disputes between the Isleño settlers concern land and property conflicts and represent the dire economic situation of the peninsulares in the settlement. In 1735, a group of Isleños failed to comply with orders from Governor Sandoval mandating that they supply horses for herding cattle and contribute an amount of money correlating with the number of cattle they owned to pay the *vaquero*, or cowboy, recruited for the task of herding. An insubordinate group of Canary Islanders failed to comply because they could

⁸ James B. Tueller, "The Assimilating Morisco: Four Families in Valladolid prior to the Expulsion of 1610," *Mediterranean Studies* 7 (1998): 168-169.

not afford the twelve pesos a month and two *almudes*, or roughly five and one half liters, of corn per week to do so. These men stated that the condition of their farms and livestock was so bad that they did not have enough cattle for herding and should not have to comply with orders that would fail to benefit them in any way.⁹

Proceedings filed the next year concerning land and water regulations in Béxar also reflected the escalating poverty among the Canary Islanders. The 1731 appropriation determined equal water distribution, a privilege for the Isleños that restructured Béxar within Bourbon regulations and control. By 1736, however, it was clear to all factions of the community that the system of distribution, which allotted water to the Islanders once every twenty days, failed to provide enough for irrigation of their fields. The Isleños had to plant less, and even still they “found themselves obliged, in order to cultivate their crops and make them mature, to rent four days of water belonging to the villa lands”¹⁰ The cabildo argued that these water restrictions were taking away the privileges granted to the Isleños as first settlers and giving them to newly arrived Creole settlers who did not deserve them. Governor Sandoval thought that the Canary Islanders’ claims were derived from greed, and that “now and forevermore, whenever they have any claims to make, they should confine themselves to what has been granted to them and, not what they would like to have.”¹¹ The Governor’s failure to defend the Isleños’ request marks the first instance of the Crown’s

⁹ "Translation of proceedings concerning Juan Leal Gorás' report to Sandoval that some settlers have refused to furnish horses for herding cattle." May 7, 1735, e_bx_001934_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX.

¹⁰ Translation of copy of proceedings concerning the Cabildo, Justice, Town Council and settlers of San Fernando vs. Sandoval, charged with failure to comply with regulations relative to the distribution of lands and water and other rights to settlers.," January 24, 1736, e_bx_001940_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX. 3.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 14.

failure to protect the Islanders' interests and ensure their economic and social well-being. Disunited among themselves, and losing their privileged position, the Canary Islanders began integrating within the larger community on levels beyond intermarriage and racial mixing.

As Béxar's population grew, the self-sustaining community ideal became obsolete. Though the Isleños originally envisioned themselves as an agricultural elite who could gain from residential expansion by selling their goods to marginal members of society, their own lack of resources induced a poverty that displaced them economically and socially. As poverty increased and resources remained scarce, the Isleños began ranching. The original decree had provided the Islanders with livestock, but the Creole population in Béxar actually mastered the art of ranching, a skill learned by many who had relocated from Nuevo Leon and Coahuila. Throughout the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, Spanish officials in the mining provinces of northern Mexico introduced livestock to the Texas frontier as a component of their colonization strategy. Ranching by Béxar's first Creole settlers on lands designated for the purpose aided in the development of the frontier. These Creole settlers and soldiers, soon joined by missionaries, assumed the first ranching duties in Texas. These three groups ranched out of economic necessity and their success aided in the growth of missions and presidios throughout the frontier. By the 1730s, cattle made up most of the missionary wealth in the region, including at the Mission of San Antonio de Valero.¹²

The Isleño adoption of ranching in Béxar signifies the beginnings of an economic integration that led to a restructuring of the community on multiple levels. Upon realizing

¹² Sandra Lynn Myres, "The Development of the Ranch as a Frontier Institution in the Spanish Province of Texas 1691-1800" (PhD diss., Texas Christian University, 1967), 34.

that agriculture was not as economically profitable as other professions, the Isleños set out to find new, more profitable sources of revenue. Poor irrigation and Indian hostilities impeded agricultural expansion. Even if agricultural expansion was possible, Béxar's isolation caused a lack of available markets in which to sell crops. Ranching however required relatively little capital, had lucrative markets throughout Texas and into Louisiana, and required relatively few workers. Most importantly, cattle's mobility allowed the industry to evade Indian hostilities including raids that threatened the agricultural industry.¹³

The mixing of Creoles, missionaries, and Indians within the ranching economy is the first instance in which we see the hardships of frontier life and the struggle to survive in the face of isolation overpowering the Bourbon-designed hierarchy. The Isleños' full adoption of ranching as a profession is significant on two levels. By doing the work of a Creole, the Canary Islanders reduced themselves to that population. The common work shared by these "lesser" and "superior" peoples every day reduced the physical and emotional divisions between these various groups and facilitated an environment conducive for the sharing of cultures. Thus, the Béxar community could no longer justify the economic and socio-ethnic disparities that served as the basis for Isleño hierarchy within its social structure.

Though most of the Isleños spent the first five years of settlement working to reinforce the Crown's determined caste system, a few members of the group looked outside of their own community for economic prosperity almost immediately upon their

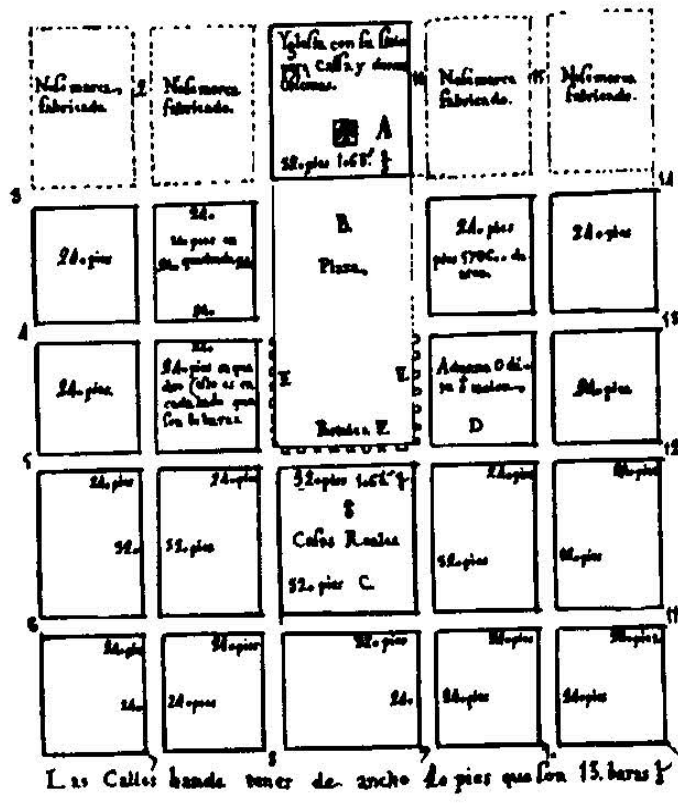
¹³ Gerald E. Poyo, "The Canary Islands Immigrants of San Antonio," 1991, in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, ed. Gerald E. Poyo and Gilberto M. Hinojosa (Austin, TX: The University of Texas Press, 1991), 49.

arrival to Béxar. Antonio Rodríguez Mederos, a member of the cabildo, quickly abandoned the agricultural sector in favor of a more economically profitable career that relied on his involvement with other groups in the community. Mederos became involved in land speculation, which led to his direction of irrigation and home construction in Béxar. His customers and employees were Isleños, Creoles, Mestizos, and presidial soldiers.¹⁴ Medero's entrepreneurial skills in the nascent villa De San Fernando proved early on the potential economic gains farmers and ranchers could achieve in the arena of economic integration.

This form of economic assimilation also reshaped the physical boundaries of the community, leading to the spatial integration of Béxar. The original layout of the town designated fields near the San Antonio River for the Isleños' agricultural sites and plots of land around the Villa's central plaza to build homes. The Isleños set up sixteen lots along the perimeter of the plaza so that each family would have a residential lot facing the town center, reflective of how the Spanish nobility often arranged their residential lands. San Fernando de Béxar was almost a mile from the mission and presidio, marking a distinct separation between Béxar's social groups. As Béxar grew however, the geographic separations disappeared. The settlers situated the Villa of San Fernando to the east of the San Pedro Creek because the west side of the creek was often subject to Indian attacks. The presidio was also on the east side of the creek, to the north of the villa. As the population grew, descendants of the original Isleños moved north towards the presidio as did descendants of the original Creole settlers from Nuevo León and Coahuila. By the end of the

¹⁴ Ibid., 51.

PLANO DE LA POBLACION.



The Spanish Crown's Plan for the San Fernando de Béxar Civilian Settlement, 1730.¹⁵

¹⁵ This map for the civilian settlement at Béxar reflects the Bourbon Crown's desire for order within the community. Plots for private homes surround a central plaza while space is designated for a granary, and a customs house. Block A (located directly north of the plaza) was designated for the community church. In actuality, Béxar barely resembled this design. Accounts describe Béxar as "a settlement with tortuous streets, poorly constructed and run-down buildings, and an almost complete lack of form." Please see Jesús De La Teja's, *San Antonio de Béxar: a Community on New Spain's Northern Frontier* (Albuquerque, NM: The University of New Mexico Press, 1995), 70-71.

eighteenth century, most of Béxar's families, of various ethnicities and mixed races, lived north of the villa's Plaza, eliminating the original separation.¹⁶

Changes in cabildo membership reflect integration on a political level as well. The nature of the cabildo itself changed as social, ethnic, and political distinctions blurred. By the mid-1740s, a number of the original cabildo members who held lifelong positions had died, leaving their seats open for the election of new officeholders. Many of these new, younger officeholders benefitted from their interactions with the wider community, as reflected in their actions as councilmen. Not only were soldiers, Creoles and Mestizos participating more in Béxar's affairs, but by the 1750s soldiers could become members of the cabildo. Intermarriage and economic interactions between Isleños and soldiers fused the two groups together into Béxar's second decade of existence, leading to a broader acceptance of more widespread cabildo membership. Upon his appointment as a senior councilman in 1745, Antonio Rodríguez Mederos allowed soldiers to participate in San Fernando's affairs and gave military members the opportunity to express formal grievances and concerns to the viceroy. Tomasa de la Garza, the widow of a presidial soldier, petitioned for a residential lot in San Fernando de Béxar in January of 1745. Describing herself as a *vecina agregada*, or a settler who was added to the community of San Fernando, de la Garza stated that her husband had served in the military for many years until illness forced his retirement three years previously. At that time, the family of ten moved to San Fernando de Béxar where they lived on a lot owned by Joseph Miguel de

¹⁶ Poyo, "The Canary Islands Immigrants," in *Tejano Origins in Eighteenth Century San Antonio*, 48-49; Please also see James E. Ivey, "A Reconsideration of the Survey of the Villa de San Fernando de Béxar in 1731," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 111, no. 3 (January 2008): 261-265.

Urrutia. After three years, Urrita wanted his land back, displacing the de la Garza family.

Tomasa de la Garza believed that as a *vecina agregada* she and her family were members of the growing San Fernando community, and could claim the same rights and protections by the law as the Isleño settlers. Francisco García Larios, the governor of Texas, ordered that the cabildo examine the petition and strongly advised that they give her the property she asked for; the cabildo subsequently granted de la Garza the land.¹⁷

The use of *vecina agregada* and its acceptance by the cabildo reflects the fluid nature of Béxar's various groups by the mid-1740s. It also proves that "passing" occurred not only among Béxar's different racial groups, with the exception of Africans, but among Béxar's different social groups as well. By describing herself as a *vecina agregada* de la Garza attested to her membership in the San Fernando de Béxar community and deserving all rights held by residents of the Villa, even though they were a presidial family. De la Garza's petition as a *vecina agregada* is of even more significance when one analyzes Béxar's fluid nature from a gendered perspective. Women on the frontier of New Spain enjoyed all rights and privileges as stated in the Laws of the Indies and the *Siete Partidas* or "Seven-Part Code" instated during the reign of Alfonso X of Castile during the thirteenth century. The laws only applied to widows or married women whose husbands traveled away from the settlement for long periods of time. These women could buy and sell property on their own, provided that they renounce all laws favoring women. Women also could be held and hold others to their contracts, make and execute wills, grant power of

¹⁷ "Translation of proceedings concerning Tomasa de la Garza's request for town lot in San Fernando.," January 16, 1745, e_bx_001972_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX.

attorney to others to conduct business in distant communities, and often serve as witnesses in both civil and criminal trials, where the court valued their testimony just as much as that of men. They could also be tried for both civil and criminal offenses.¹⁸ With Béxar's men often traveling far distances to conduct business in other settlements or fighting hostile Indians in the wilderness, the women in Béxar knew their rights and exercised them frequently. As interactions increased among Béxar's different socio-ethnic and racial groups, women from Creole, Mestizo, and Indian backgrounds gained an increased awareness of their rights under the Laws of the Indies and began to execute them in ways similar to Tomasa de la Garza.¹⁹

Political integration overlapped with religious integration in the planning of a church and parish for the Isleño settlers. Religious integration existed in Béxar from the arrival of the Canary Islanders in 1731; however, it was not by choice. The Isleños were granted the right, by the crown, to build their own parish in San Fernando with permanent secular clergy upon their arrival. More so than simply granting the Isleños the right to their own space for worship, this grant promulgated the Bourbon Crown's secularization efforts throughout the northern frontier, decreasing the support of the missions that was so definitive of Hapsburg rule and turning over the administration of spiritual matters to the secular clergy. Viceroy Casa Fuerte's instructions outlining provisions for the Canary Islanders stated that the settlers could attend mass and other religious services at the Mission de San Antonio Valero until a church was built for them. In the early years, the

¹⁸ Jean A. Stuntz, *Hers, His and Theirs; Community Property Law in Spain and Early Texas* (Lubbock, TX: Texas Tech University Press, 2005), 72.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

mixing of Isleños and Indians proved difficult, and the Friars at San Antonio de Valero asserted their rights to separate the Indians and Isleños as justified by the Laws of the Indies.²⁰ As a result, many of the Isleños began attending mass with the soldiers in a chapel in the San Antonio de Béxar presidio.

This provisional church, though under the direction of secular priests, was even more inadequate than the Valero mission for mass and religious services. It was a small room in the military barracks adjacent to the soldiers' quarters, described as "filthy and unsightly, with an impoverished altar set upon a pile of clods of dirt, with no ornaments of any kind, with no baptismal font, and not even a lock to the place."²¹ Construction of the parish church, dedicated to Our Lady of Guadalupe, began in 1738 but soon gave way to the harsh reality of too little money and too few laborers.²² Because they could not afford to contribute much to the building of the church, the Isleños tried to gain royal aid, and plead that the Crown granted them the rights to a private parish and church as one of their privileges for settling the province. Their efforts to gain Crown support suffered from the Isleños relentless poverty, which made it impossible for the cabildo to travel to Mexico to personally petition for aid. Aside from monetary donations, the construction of the church required physical participation on behalf of the settlers as well, a requirement the Isleños also failed to fulfill. Despite their poverty, the small size of the Isleño population in Béxar demonstrated the impossibility of attaining the necessary funds and workers.

²⁰ Adán Benavides, "Sacred Space, Profane Reality: The Politics of Building a Church in Eighteenth Century Texas," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 107, no. 1 (July 2003): 10.

²¹ Carlos E. Castañeda, *The Mission Era: The Missions at Work*, vol. 3, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* (Austin, TX: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1938), 95.

²² Benavides, "Sacred Space, Profane Reality," 11.

Community politics between the Isleños and the missions undoubtedly affected the construction of the church at San Fernando. As highlighted in the disputes over land and irrigation rights, divisions between secular and ordered clergy, and the Isleños' decision to worship at the presidio instead of the Mission de Valero, the Canary Islanders and the Franciscans struggled to get along during B exar's first few decades. The Laws of the Indies regarding Spanish towns stated that three parties, the royal treasury, the town residents and the *encomenderos* of Indians would support the construction of a church.²³ Because B exar did not have an *encomienda* system in place, the Isleños wanted to hire mission Indians at a daily wage. The missions opposed this idea, and viceregal rulings throughout the 1740s continually granted the Isleños' their wishes, and then reversed their decisions in favor of the missions. The missionaries, who rightly sensed their impending displacement through Bourbon means of secularization, struggled to maintain their importance within the community through the Hapsburg notions of Christianization and paternal protection of the Indians. With these political disagreements hindering progress, the villa did not receive any royal money and the construction of the parish church hinged on the small donations made by residents. By 1745 these funds could only cover approximately a quarter of the total cost of construction. Fed up with the impossibly slow progress, First Alcalde Antonio Rodr guez Mederos ordered all civilian and military residents of San Fernando to aid in the construction of the church to prove to the crown that their money was necessary for the project's completion. Mederos' 1745 decree chastised the residents of San Fernando for

²³ Ibid., 13. The *Encomienda* system was created by the Spanish crown as an effort to control and regulate the Indians during the colonization of New Spain. An *Encomienda* is a grant of Indians, given to a Spanish leader, or *Encomendero*, from whom they could get tribute from, usually in the form of labor, in exchange for protection and Christianization.

intentionally contributing nothing in the hope that the king would build the church for them. With the royal funds still not arrived and the presidial church decaying by the day, Mederos ordered all settlers to aid in construction “under penalty of twenty-five pesos and fifteen days imprisonment for any one who fails to obey,” with the fines applied to the construction of the church.²⁴

The community’s mandated participation secured the royal funds necessary to complete the task in 1748 and the church, dedicated the church to Our Lady of Guadalupe in 1755. As the missionaries suspected, the creation of a secularized parish weakened their already dwindling authority in the region and succeeded in making the mission system on the frontier essentially obsolete by the end of the century. Significantly, the parish would also celebrate the feast days of San Fernando Rey de España, the patron Saint of the Villa, Our Lady of Candlemas and the feast of St. Anthony of Padua, symbolically joining together the different socio-ethnic and racial segments that made up the San Fernando community by 1755. The Mesitzos and Creoles as well as the relocated presidial families who resided in San Fernando identified with Our Lady of Guadalupe, the patron saint of Mexico. The Isleños identified with the canonized namesake of the Spanish Heir Ferdinand VI and with Our Lady of Candlemas. All those in the larger Béxar community celebrated the feast of St. Anthony of Padua, the namesake of the entire settlement. This religious unification of

²⁴ "Translation of Rodríguez Mederos' municipal ordinance concerning completion of church by settlers." October 2, 1745, e_bx_001977_001, The Béxar Archives Online, The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History, The University of Texas at Austin, TX. 81-82.

Béxar's various groups upon the completion of the church reflects the unification of the larger community and the emergence of a unique frontier identity within Béxar.²⁵

Despite the widespread poverty that crossed over socio-ethnic and racial lines and the internal conflicts that redirected the Crown's initial plans for the Isleño settlers, the original trifold settlement had transformed to meet the needs of the frontier. This transformation occurred because those in the community whose needs were not being met by the Crown adapted to their surroundings and to each other in order to rewrite the trajectory of their role as pioneers on the frontier of New Spain. Those who did not adapt and contribute to the formation of this unique, distinctly American frontier community, such as the missions, did not survive in the isolated environment. The community which emerged was unique, and formed in response to its surroundings. As the next chapter will show, the impact of the frontier on Spanish ideology, identity, and settlement structure was not new. The transculturation which defined many New World communities and social spheres can be traced back to the Spanish *Reconquista*. The influence of the frontier during the *Reconquista* and on the formation of towns and communities like Béxar illuminates transculturation's European, and specifically Iberian, roots.

²⁵ Benavides, "Sacred Space, Profane Reality," 26-27.

CHAPTER 5

RECONQUISTA IDEOLOGY AND THE FORMATION OF FRONTIER IDENTITY IN NEW SPAIN AND THE ATLANTIC WORLD

The complex relationship between Europeans and the Native Peoples throughout Spanish America shaped the design of missions, presidios, civil settlements, and other New World institutions. Many of the religious justifications that defined Spanish-Indian interactions throughout New Spain have their origins in the *Reconquista*, or the Christian reconquest of Spain from the Moors between the eighth and fifteenth centuries. Transculturation among the disparate religious groups, driven by the economic and social necessities of the frontier, was definitive of the *Reconquista* in medieval Spain. Within the struggle for religious dominance on the peninsula, constant shifts occurred in social connotations, cultural notions, and administrative institutions. Christians, Muslims and Jews were often forced to adapt to the ever changing economic and social climate in ways which fostered tolerance and interdependence over religious lines. As the era of Christian conquest moved across the Atlantic from the Iberian Peninsula, transculturation came with it, shaping how the Spanish conceptualized and justified their interactions with the Natives and their colonial policies in the Americas.¹

¹ Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo describes Spain's transition from the medieval period to the colonization period as "the Inter-Atlantic Paradigm." He believes that Spanish colonization in the Mediterranean, the Eastern Atlantic (mainly the Canary Islands) and in the Indies was affected by medieval notions of colonization that developed during the *Reconquista*. This Inter-Atlantic Paradigm concept is formulated from acculturation theories which have developed significantly within Reconquista historiography. Please see Anthony M. Stevens-Arroyo, "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm: The Failure of Spanish Medieval Colonization of the Canary and Caribbean Islands," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 35, no. 3 (July 1993): 515-543. For a discussion of the acculturation theory within *Reconquista* historiography please see Thomas F. Glick and Oriol Pi-Sunyer, "Acculturation as an Explanatory Concept in Spanish History," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 11, no. 2 (April 1969): 136-154.

This chapter will explore how the Spanish ideologies and identities that formed during the *Reconquista* carried over to the New World and influenced colonial procedures and interactions with the Indians. An analysis of the *Reconquista* will illuminate the significance of the frontier in producing a unique Hispanic identity through economic, religious and political means. It will then show how this Hispanic identity characterized colonization efforts in the Americas. A study of New Spain's northern missions and presidios as well as other European settlements on the Texas and Louisiana frontiers will reveal how the *Reconquista* influenced Atlantic World policy and how those policies impacted the local populations. Finally this chapter will examine how these institutions and communities, which evolved similarly to Béxar, affected the larger Atlantic World, revealing how local cultural interactions shaped the larger European design for the Americas.

Economic, political, and social dimensions characterized the Christian reconquest, which depended on population growth and permanent occupation of the frontier for its survival. Populating the frontier was politically necessary in helping the Christian effort gain strength against the Muslim forces, as territorial gains were being made faster than the Spanish could populate them. Colonization became extremely important for the lower classes, who saw repopulation as an opportunity for social mobility. Land grants for these groups presented personal economic opportunities while supporting the Crown's plan for permanent frontier settlement and investment. Land ownership and financial success also brought opportunities for increased social status in society and the chance to reach noble status through knighthood, a feat achieved upon the acquisition of a horse and armor. The nobility who came to occupy the Iberian frontier did not have traditional European roots,

but were self-made noblemen who had survived the warfare and struggles of the reconquest to reap the benefits of their service to Christianity and the Crown. Within this quickly changing political, social, and economic context, the frontier became the foundation upon which distinct societies developed through the unique notions of social mobility and transculturation.²

As Christian Spain conquered and inhabited more Muslim lands through the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, settlement within reclaimed cities, such as Toledo, increased, and their defense became more important. Religious orders under papal authority began to occupy and defend large stretches of the countryside, and rural society became more militarized as the crown incentivized service to defend the frontier. Population concentration in the cities inevitably led to a monetary economy, further increasing social mobility for Christians who chose to resettle in the urban areas. As Christian forces moved further south and their pioneers chose to remain in large towns, the Spanish Christians found it economically beneficial to maintain the existing Muslim populations instead of expelling them. Economic coexistence between the two groups became necessary during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The Spanish divided reconquered territory into large estates among the Christian nobility. *Mudejars*, poor Muslims who could not afford to leave after the reconquest, kept their lands to continue farming and herding. The Spanish Crown however subjected the *Mudejars* to a tribute system to maintain control and gain financial

² Joshua Prawer, *The Crusaders' Kingdom* (London: Phoenix Press, 1972), 60-93. In his analysis of the frontier during the *Reconquista*, historian Angus MacKay positions the frontier as the protagonist around which uniquely formed societies develop. On this frontier, traditional structures of feudal organization did not apply, as the demand for permanent occupation outweighed preserving the established social hierarchies. Please also see Angus MacKay, *Spain in the Middle Ages: From Frontier to Empire* (New York, NY: St. Martin's Press, 1977).

benefits for the Crown. The Crown allowed rights of residence and property protection to all Muslims living on Christian lands in exchange for a tax payment. The *Mudejars* were permitted to peacefully live and produce on their lands while stimulating the Christian economy with goods and monetary funds. While the tribute system allowed the Islamic presence to exist, it did not allow it to prosper, ensuring that a Muslim economy could not survive independently after the reconquest. In conjunction, the tribute system legitimized a socio-ethnic and religious hierarchy on the peninsula in favor of the Christian population.

The economic and social transculturation of the Christian and Muslim populations on the peninsula from the eleventh to the fifteenth centuries resulted from a dominant Christian presence on the frontier. Limited acceptance of Islamic existence in exchange for profit allowed both the Church and Crown to maximize their control over an inferior population while fostering a system of economic interdependence that favored the Christians and necessitated the integration of the Muslim populace into the Spanish economic system.³ Because of the adversities of life on the frontier, the remaining Moors had to make alliances which would ensure their survival in a Christian Spain.⁴ French participants in the *Reconquista* also played a role in the centuries of transculturation on the peninsula, influencing social, economic and religious developments on the frontier. In an effort to bolster repopulation, the Spanish Christians gave privileges, including commercial opportunities and property rights, to French Christians. The French presence in northern Spain strengthened the ideology of the reconquest by bringing with it the support of

³ Stevens-Arroyo, "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm," 518.

⁴ Roberto Marín-Guzmán, "Crusade in Al-Andalus: the Eleventh Century Formation of the Reconquista as an Ideology," *Islamic Studies* 31, no. 3 (Fall 1992): 297.

Christian Europe and centralization of the church under the pope.⁵ The establishment of French feudal institutions, including monasteries, helped to spread ideas promulgated by the papacy and unified all European Christians against Islam. Pilgrimages, specifically the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostela in Spain's Northwest province of Galicia, emphasized this ideological unity. Papal involvement in the pilgrimage allowed the Catholic Church to flood the peninsula with financial support for the religious journey, which in turn permitted Rome to finance the Christian struggle against Islam. Papal support and financial assistance from Rome strengthened Christian armies, gained international Christian support for the crusade against Islam on the Iberian Peninsula, and justified the struggle in the name of God.⁶

Population of the frontier and the establishment of institutions there proved to be a difficult task during both the *Reconquista* and the colonization of Spanish Texas. In both cases, the struggle to survive led to transculturation and the emergence of unique communities and identities shaped by an isolated and dangerous borderlands lifestyle. The Iberian frontier created a Spanish identity defined by social mobility and opportunities for leadership and wealth. The frontier environment produced a new "self-made nobleman" whose desire for affluence and upward mobility characterized subsequent generations of Spanish frontiersmen who would eventually become New World conquistadores. Roman law, which came to impact *Reconquista* ideology with papal influence in the thirteenth century, justified the acquisition of wealth and the subjugation of the Moors on the peninsula by dedicating these actions to the glory of God and the preservation and

⁵ *Ibid.*, 298.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 290.

promulgation of the Catholic faith. The House of Hapsburg inherited the designs of the *Reconquista* with its ascension to the Spanish throne in 1506, influencing Crown designs for repopulation, settlements, and Spanish interactions with the Native populations in the New World.

The self-serving behavior, exploitative practices, and desire for cultural, ethnic, and religious superiority characteristic of the nobility in Europe and the conquerors of the Americas have led historians to argue that Spain replaced the tribute from the Muslim population of the Peninsula with that of the Indians of the Americas after 1492. The New World tribute systems, which evolved into the institutions of the *repartimiento*, *mita*, and *encomienda*, originated from the tribute practices instated upon the Moors as early as the twelfth century, and served Spanish economic interests in the same way. The Spanish decision to assimilate and convert the Native populations rather than exterminate or expel them upon first encounter also reflects Spanish treatment of the Moors; if the subordinate populations could remain docile and contribute to Spain's religious and economic aspirations then their existence on the frontier would be advantageous to the Crown. As this philosophy spread throughout New Spain during the Hapsburg era, it became clear that Spanish administrators were more concerned with rapid population than they were with the ethnic and racial backgrounds of the occupiers. The resulting cultural encounters necessitated Hispanic and Native transculturation. The Natives' religious, and to a certain extent economic, assimilation compelled their conversion to Christianity to ensure individual survival. In return, Béxar's Hispanic population and Bourbon administration assimilated to Native parameters. The Crown's inability to provide the Natives with proper

protection, food, and housing in exchange for conversion forced the missions to tolerate the persistence of Native practices.

The conversion of these Indians to Christianity and its justification through Roman law and *Reconquista* ideology illuminates how the Spanish formulated their conception of a “just war” with the Natives. While the Spanish notion that the Moors had knowledge of Christ and rejected him legitimized their crusade against Islam, Spain’s encounter with the Native populations was complicated by the fact that these Indians had never been exposed to Christianity. Therefore, Spanish justification for violence against the Indians had to be redefined. Within the Spanish created hierarchy for the Americas, the Indians were divided into two groups. War could not be justified against the nonviolent Indians, often referred to as “indios,” who willingly converted to Christianity and lived peacefully under the Spanish Crown. However, war could be justified upon those Indians who refused conversion and inflicted violence upon the Spanish and other Native inhabitants, by the same religious justifications that legitimized the reconquest. The Valladolid debates of 1550 concerning the treatment of Indians in the Americas addressed the justifications of war against the Natives and revealed oppositional views regarding colonization and notions of “otherness.” However, war against the Indians continued to be vindicated if the Natives were violent, or refused to convert, assimilate, or abandon any cultural practices the Spanish deemed sub-human.⁷

⁷ Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda, “Sepúlveda, Just War Against Barbarians,” in *The Spanish Tradition in America*, by Charles Gibson (New York, NY: Harper and Row, 1968), 113-120. For more details concerning just war and the Valladolid Debates, see Eduardo Andujar, “Bartolomé de las Casas and Juan Ginés Sepúlveda: Moral Theology Versus Political Philosophy,” in *Hispanic Philosophy in the Age of Discovery*, ed. Kevin White (Washington DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 69-87.; Please also see Daniel R. Brunstetter “Sepúlveda, las Casas and the Other: Exploring the Tension Between Moral Universalism and Alterity,” *The Review of Politics*, Vol.

The Crown's outlawing of Indian slavery among converted Natives in conjunction with their justifications for war "stripped the entrepreneurial nobles of the source of income they needed to finance colonization."⁸ However, the implementation of the feudally designed tribute and *encomienda* systems warranted Native work in exchange for church protection and evangelization.⁹ This led to increased missionary activity throughout New Spain, particularly on the northern frontier. Papal support, motivated by their desire to spread Catholicism throughout the world and gain more Catholics through Indian conversion, supported Spain's colonization efforts just as they had supported the Reconquista. Missions run by Franciscan, Dominican, and Jesuit orders began to dominate the landscape in the sixteenth century, controlling Spanish interactions with the Native populations and supporting territorial expansion through religious means. The expansion of the mission system into Texas at the end of the seventeenth century was driven by these political and religious ideologies which came to define Hapsburg administration on the frontier of New Spain throughout the previous years of the century. With the transition to Bourbon rule in 1700 the Spanish crown attempted to assert their control through a reorganization of the Texas mission system. By grouping missions together, as seen in the San Antonio region, the Bourbon hoped to increase Crown influence on a larger scale while emphasizing Spanish permanency in the region. However, Texas' isolation from Mexico City, the viceroy and the Crown led most of these missions, like Béxar, to develop unique frontier identities that often did not coincide with the Bourbon Crown's wishes. Lack of Crown

72, No. 3 (Summer 2010), 412. The most widely referenced sub-human practice among "barbaric" Indian groups was cannibalism, observed by Spanish explorers among the Karankawa peoples of the Texas coastal region.

⁸ Stevens-Arroyo, "The Inter-Atlantic Paradigm" 522-523.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 522-523.

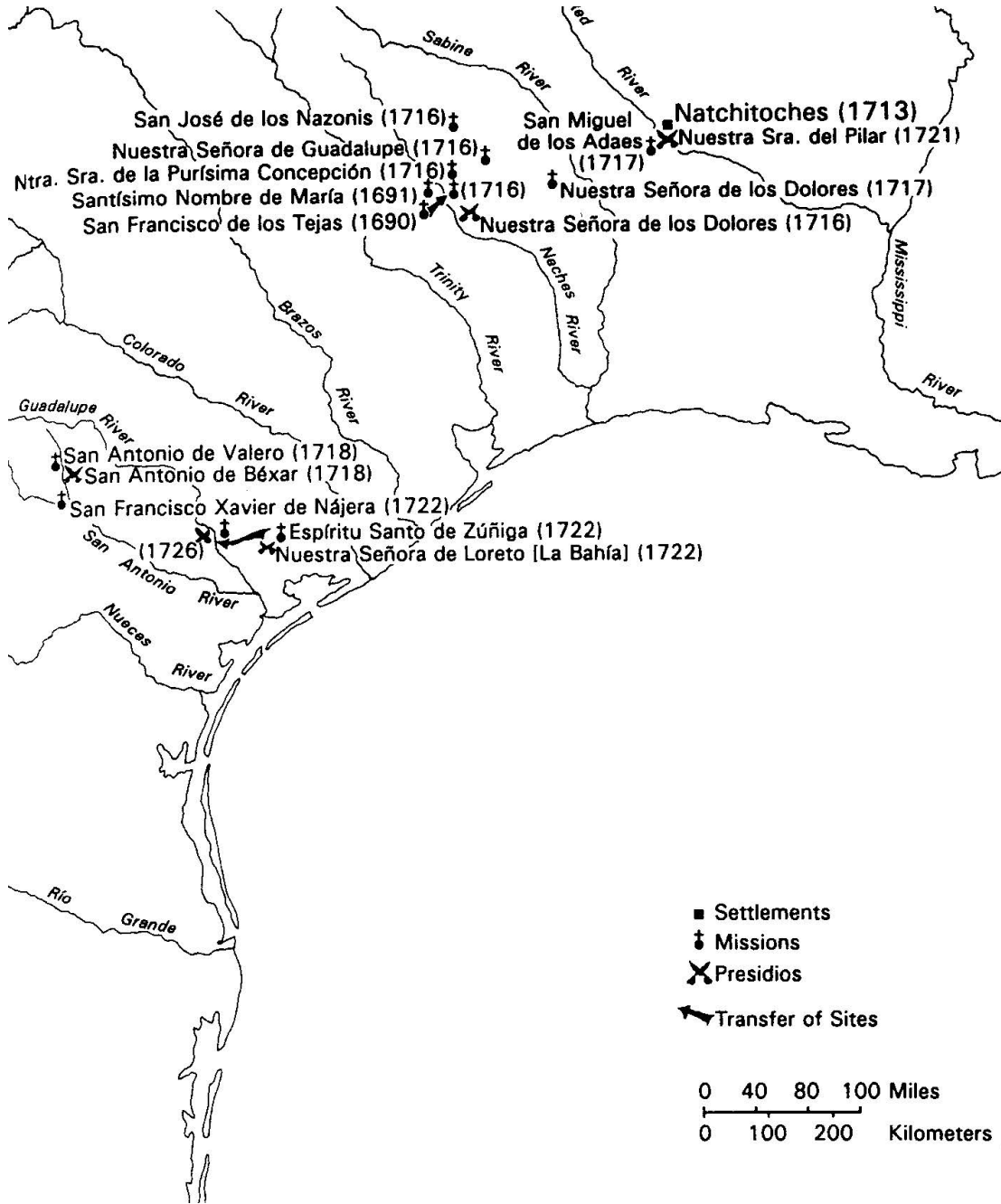
support and the ever persistent hardships of life on the borderlands led to economic, social and political acculturation reminiscent of the Reconquista's frontier society.

Most of the twenty six missions that dotted the landscape from the Rio Grande near El Paso to the French Louisiana border either chose, or were forced through economic necessity, to forge relationships with the Natives that extended beyond their religious goals. Drought and disease led crops to fail and hunger to be a constant problem for many of these missions. The Spanish quickly became dependent on the Natives for crops, game, and animal hides, reversing the economic roles intended by the mission system. At the same time, Franco-Spanish relations proved to forge over both economic and religious lines, creating a frontier environment that depended on the interconnectedness of its French, Spanish and Indian spheres for mutual survival. Along with the Spanish mission system, French institutions in Louisiana territory also refrained from following Bourbon models of civilian settlement in favor of methods which would hinder their progress from nascent frontier outposts to permanent civilian communities. While the settlement at Béxar is a rich example, these other communities and trifold mission, presidio, settlement complexes prove that colonization on the northern frontier of New Spain and in French Louisiana had more success under the adoption of *obedzco pero no cumplo* and other Hapsburg philosophies than they did under the Bourbon structures emphasizing centralized control and Crown organization.

These Spanish missions and French settlements shaped unique identities for themselves by adapting colonial policies to fit their frontier needs. In each case, isolation from Europe and New World political centers caused these communities to adopt new

philosophies subjective to each outpost and the conditions of its inhabitants. Often, outposts forged connections across, economic, religious and political lines despite existing rivalries, in order to ensure their survival. For both the Spanish and the French, the desire to establish a permanent, lasting presence in the region overpowered the structural limitations outlined by the Bourbons. This isolation left room for *obedezco pero no cumplo* to persist through the early eighteenth century without repercussions from the respective crowns. Distance and decreased crown control often altered the relationship between Europeans and Natives, in many cases flipping the traditional relationship of dependency, as was the case at the Los Adaes mission in East Texas. The Spanish inability to provide adequate food, housing and clothing for the Natives weakened the mission system and ultimately caused its extinction in that region. For those missions which relocated to San Antonio, resistance against hostile Natives led to an increased dependence on mission Indians for protection and defense. Bourbon efforts to save money by decreasing military influence put the bulk of frontier defense on the Indians, again reversing the roles of protection originally intended by the Franciscans and the Spanish. This also served to undermine the mission system's religious justification as it weakened their claims to protecting the natives, who willingly converted to Christianity, from external threats.

Franciscan operations among the Spanish missions were split into three districts during the eighteenth century, that of East Texas, San Antonio and the El Paso. The first Spanish mission in Texas was San Francisco de los Tejas, founded in 1689 when the Spanish discovered the abandoned Ft. St. Louis in Matagorda Bay. Upon encountering some Caddoan and Hasinai peoples in the area, the Spanish built the mission in East Texas on the



*Eighteenth Century Missions in the Gulf Coast Region, Including Central Texas, East Texas, and Louisiana.*¹⁰

¹⁰ Donald E. Chipman and Harriet Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas 1519-1821* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1992), 151.

Neches River. The first three years for the Natives at San Francisco de los Tejas were inundated with disease and suffering as an epidemic killed half of the Hasinai population. The Indians grew convinced that the plague was the missionaries fault, and fearing an Indian revolt the missionaries burned San Francisco de los Tejas in the fall of 1693 and fled to Mexico.¹¹ Though a few Spanish missions were founded in East Texas in the last decade of the seventeenth century, the San Juan Bautista mission and Presidio del Rio Grande, founded in 1699, changed the nature of the Spanish mission system through its position as the gateway to Spanish Texas. San Juan Bautista was deemed the parent mission to those in both Texas and Coahuila, including the string of Alamo missions surrounding San Antonio de Valero and the larger Béxar community. For the first decade and a half of the eighteenth century, San Juan Bautista was the most progressive of the missions in the Spanish system, pioneering the trifold mission, presidio and civilian complex that would come to define Spanish colonization on the northern frontier. The mission's location on the Rio Grande attracted travelers because of its two vital river crossings at the Paseo de Francia and the Paseo Pacuache. These passages were used by the Natives to cross the Rio Grande before the Spanish arrived, and continued to be the Natives' only means of entering Texas territory after European contact. Due to this constant interaction with the Native peoples in the region, the San Juan Bautista mission grew quickly. Many of the region's other Indian groups also agreed to convert to Christianity, necessitating the construction of other missions in the area. Fray Olivares envisioned The San Juan Bautista mission complex as the

¹¹ Juan Alfaro, "The Spirit of the First Franciscan Missionaries in Texas," *U.S. Catholic Historian* 9, no. 1/2 (Winter/Spring 1990): 56-66.

base from which the Franciscan missionaries could expand into Texas and establish rightful claims to the territory through conversion.¹²

Two months after the establishment of San Juan Bautista the Franciscans and Diego Ramón, soon to be commander of the Rio Grande Presidio, erected another mission at the same location, that of San Francisco Solano. Shortly after Solano's completion however, Indian hostilities in the region increased, mainly at the hands of the Toboso tribe, grouped in northwestern Mexico. The Tobosos had attacked Spanish settlements and missions in northern Mexico from their earliest encounters with the Spanish, and Toboso inflicted violence included kidnapping, stealing of crops other foodstuffs and livestock raids in order to dissuade the Native tribes in the area from converting. After only one year Toboso violence succeeded in pushing friendly Coahuiltecan Indians, including the Jaram, Papanac and Payaguán bands, from the Solano mission. The height of the violence occurred shortly after with a string of murders at Solano and two other missions in Coahuila, Nuestra Señora Guadalupe and Santa María de los Dolores. The murders prompted Olivares to travel to Guadalajara to request an increase of military protection for the Rio Grande missions to defend the Natives, Franciscans and civilians there.

The serious native threat at the Rio Grande missions proved that strong defenses, ideally from a presidial structure, were necessary for the frontier settlements to survive. Though it proved to be costly to the Spanish Crown, this trifold model was replicated throughout Texas in the first three decades of the eighteenth century, particularly at San

¹² Robert S. Weddle, "San Juan Bautista: Mother of Texas Missions," *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 71, no. 4 (April 1968): 542-549; Please also see Frederick C. Chabot, *San Antonio and its Beginnings* (San Antonio, TX: Artes Graficas Printing Co., 1936), 36.

Antonio de Béxar. The Béxar model was unique however because unlike its predecessors, the civilian settlement was comprised of more than just the families of Spanish presidial soldiers and relocated Creoles. Béxar's resettlement of Isleños represents Spain's first planned and purposeful civilian settlement on the frontier. This trifold model pioneered by San Juan Bautista allowed for missions to spread throughout Texas and more missionaries to be assigned to the northern frontier. Eventually the declension of natives at the Solano mission resulted in its move to San Antonio around 1718 to become part of the way station missions between Bautista and East Texas. Shortly thereafter San Francisco Solano was absorbed into the newly founded San Antonio de Valero Mission which would serve as the dominant mission in the region for the remainder of the century.¹³

As the construction of missions increased and Franco-Spanish tensions escalated, a need for an East Texas mission and presidio complex persisted. Though the Los Adaes mission was originally founded in 1717, the War of the Quadruple Alliance and tensions in Europe between the French and the Spanish overflowed to the colonies by 1719 and French-initiated violence led to the mission's temporary abandonment that same year. Its inhabitants, including military and Creole civilians, sought refuge at Béxar and its missions, and the Los Adaes stood vacant until the Marques de Aguayo re-founded the post during his East Texas expedition in 1721. From its beginnings, Los Adaes and the adjoining Nuestra Señora del Pilar Presidio were in poor condition. The barracks and military structures were in disrepair, and the soldiers' families were so poor that their ragged clothing was considered inappropriate for Sunday mass. The soldiers were often found wearing animal

¹³ Ibid., 36-37.; Please also see Herbert E. Bolton, "Spanish Mission Records at San Antonio," *The Quarterly of the Texas State Historical Association* 10, no. 4 (April 1907).

skins for lack of warm attire and went shoeless through the winters. The shortage of food in the mission and presidio proved to be even worse. Corn and beans were constantly in short supply and floods and droughts in the late 1720s destroyed stored foodstuffs regularly. Game was scarce, and even the Indians struggled to kill deer and bear around the end of Los Adaes' first decade. Exposure, malnutrition and the struggles of living on the frontier resulted in death for many of the soldiers and their families, and disease took its toll on the Native population as well. To the mission's advantage, the Indians in the region proved to be friendly, allowing the crown to reduce the garrison at Nuestra Señora del Pilar by the end of the post's first decade. Accounts of the presidio and mission from the 1730s describe the complex as "a cattle pen more than anything else."¹⁴ Holes perforated the walls of the fort and of the mission church where the original wood had rotted away and most of the stationed defense weaponry was unusable. Its distance from other Spanish settlements made it impossible for the settlement to obtain food or supplies quickly if needed, necessitating trade with the neighboring French and native peoples. The lack of food and unappealing conditions at the Los Adaes made the mission system unattractive to the Indians. Contrarily, the Spanish at Los Adaes and the adjoining presidio were more dependent on the natives for food, necessities, and protection than the Natives were on the Spanish, reversing the European social hierarchy and ignoring Bourbon designs.¹⁵

Built only seven leagues from the French post at Natchitoches (pronounced *Nak a tish*), the close proximity of the French and Spanish on the frontier led the two to become

¹⁴ Carlos E. Castaneda, *The Mission Era: The Missions at Work*, vol. 3, *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas* (Austin, TX: Von Boeckmann-Jones Co., 1938), 78.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

interconnected with one another on religious, economic and cultural levels, resulting in a mutual dependence and economic acculturation. The region's Indian peoples, mainly the Caddos, linked the two groups together by participating in the Franco-Spanish trade and the interactions of these three groups grew to define everyday life on the Spanish Texas and French Louisiana border, even after Diego Rivera outlawed trade between the two groups in 1727.¹⁶ St. Denis' early establishment of trade networks with the Caddos served as the original catalyst for the region's inter-colonial dependency. This dependency soon expanded to incorporate religious interconnectedness between Los Adaes and Natchitoches, which validated their often illicit trade practices with one another. From the mission's beginnings in 1721, a Spanish priest would travel to Natchitoches on Sundays, feast days and holy days to say mass for the French settlers who had no priest of their own.¹⁷ The administration of sacraments deepened the religious and spiritual connections between the two groups, as baptisms and marriages bound together French and Spanish families. Spanish soldier-settlers from Los Adaes often became godparents to French residents and served as witnesses for French weddings. Inter-marriage between French and Spanish residents also occurred as religious connectivity developed, though they often were motivated by economic incentives. In 1754, Spaniard Manuel DeSoto married St. Denis' daughter, and soon after the pair embarked on a number of legal transactions involving land and African slaves.¹⁸

¹⁶ For a detailed study of these interactions please see Francis Xavier Galán, "Presidio Los Adaes: Worship, Kinship and Commerce with the French Natchitoches on the Spanish-Franco-Caddo Borderlands, 1721-1773," *Louisiana History: The Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 49, no. 2 (Spring 2008).; For supplemental information please see Castañeda, *Mission Era: The Missions at Work*, 78.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, Galán, "Presidio Los Adaes," 194.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 197-200.

In French colonial Natchitoches, established in 1714, African slaves made up a significant portion of the two thousand person population, comprised of several ethnic groups. Almost all of the free population were of French ancestry and were either first generation Creoles or had emigrated directly from France. As the community grew, Natives and civilian Spanish settlers also joined the growing town which was rapidly becoming defined by French creole culture.¹⁹ Overall, Natchitoches was accepting of outsiders moving into, or marrying into, the town, provided they accept and assimilate to the French Creole way of life. This ideology of cultural assimilation defined French colonization in the Louisiana and Mississippi valley region and was employed in the creation of other settlements at the same time. By the end of the century Natchitoches found success in cotton cultivation and livestock ranching, however, in its early years the community depended on trade with the Caddos and other native groups for subsistence. Attempts to cultivate tobacco among the Natchez peoples on the Mississippi River in the 1720s stimulated this trade market, though, as previously discussed, tobacco plantations in the Mississippi valley proved to be widely unsuccessful. These plantations, the French use of native lands, and the epidemics that came with it angered the Indians in the region, resulting in a number of violent attacks on French outposts through the 1720s. Most of the attacks, including one on Natchitoches, were carried out by an alliance of African slaves and Indians, such as the Natchez, confirming the fears of the French, who were greatly outnumbered in population by the two groups. French isolation on the frontier prompted the settlers there to re-confirm their allegiances with the Caddos, Hasinai and other

¹⁹ H. Sophie Burton and F. Todd Smith, *Colonial Natchitoches: A Creole Community on the Louisiana-Texas Frontier* (College Station, TX: Texas A&M University Press, 2008), ix-xi.

friendly Indians on the Texas- Louisiana borderlands by fostering strong trade and kin relationships. This in turn linked the French to the Spanish mission system throughout East Texas, creating the interconnected and multifaceted sphere of acculturation which came to define the region politically, religiously and economically.²⁰

Throughout the 1720s the Caddo peoples recognized their key position between the two groups and used it to their advantage. When possible the Natives positioned the Spanish and French against one another economically to gain what they wanted in trade negotiations, though their connections established with the French by St. Denis often proved stronger. The interconnectedness helped to maintain relative peace in the region, diminishing the need for presidios. The poverty, lack of military structure at Los Adaes, and the mission's distance from administrative centers in Mexico necessitated Spanish integration into the established French- Caddo trade system, reflecting the Christian-Muslim economic structure that emerged through *Reconquista* tribute systems. This native allegiance to the French ultimately led to the failure of the mission system in East Texas and aided in the decision to move many of these missions to the San Antonio River in the early 1730s.²¹

One of these East Texas missions relocated to the Béxar area in the early 1730s was the Mission de Nuestra Señora de la Purísima Concepción. Originally serving the Hasinai Indians, Mission Concepción, like Los Adaes, struggled in East Texas because it was too far from Mexico to get supplies with which to build adequate housing for the Natives. Droughts plagued the mission with starvation during its first year in 1717 and disease ravaged the

²⁰ Ibid., 8-11.

²¹ Galán, "Presidio Los Adaes" 200-203; Please also see Castañeda, *Mission Era: The Missions at Work*, 78.

Hasinai population. Pedro Rivera's financial concerns prompted the mission's move To San Antonio in 1731 to serve the Tacane and Sanipaos peoples. These Natives were given weapons and training with which to defend their mission against the violent Apaches, doing so successfully. With no civilian settlement, the Natives and friars were responsible for generating income which the Indians did mostly through weaving and ranching. The lack of military presence and protection from the Crown at Concepción made the Indians responsible for defending the mission from hostile Apaches, stimulating Native dissatisfaction and creating niches for Hapsburg ideologies such as *obedezco pero no cumpro* to reemerge.

As was the case with almost all of the missions on the Northern Frontier, Texas' Native Peoples at Concepción failed to receive the protection and provisions promised to them in exchange for their devotion to the Christian faith. Discontent led these Indians to seek personal opportunities beyond the mission system, creating networks of mutual dependence outside of Bourbon control. The Roman laws and religious ideologies of the Reconquista which justified the development of the mission structure in New Spain also led to its failure. The system's inability to uphold its promise of caring for the Indians in conjunction with converting them underscored Spanish and Catholic legitimacy among the Native populations, leading them to abandon the missions in favor of more lucrative opportunities made available by the increase of European settlers populating the Texas hinterlands. These actions, in conjunction with the socio-structural breakdown at Béxar, weakened the validity of the Bourbon design for the northern frontier. The communities which emerged from the Bourbon collapse prospered under limited crown control and

restrained Catholic influence in the second half of the eighteenth century, allowing networks of socio-ethnic interdependence to develop unrestricted across economic, cultural and political lines. As Béxar and other frontier communities evolved after 1755, they redefined themselves through methods of acculturation, and thrived on the frontier through the re-adoption of the *obedezco pero no cumplo* philosophy. The resurgence of Hapsburg ideology throughout these Texas missions, presidios and settlements proved that acculturation and assimilation were necessary for successful and permanent population of the frontier. It was through the adaptation to a distinct environment along an ever-changing frontier that the inhabitants of San Antonio de Béxar developed their unique cultural identity and reshaped the structure of communities throughout the Atlantic World.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

The concepts of transculturation and mutual assimilation which shaped the design of Atlantic colonization by the second half of the eighteenth century demonstrated the predominance of Hapsburg ideology over Bourbon policies and philosophies on the frontier. Transculturation and assimilation also defined French colonization efforts in the Mississippi Valley a decade before the existence of San Fernando de Béxar, and aided in establishing French permanence in the region. The French and Spanish Bourbons had similar goals for their territorial conquests in the New World; however, while both Crowns sought to increase economic profitability as well as control, their approaches were slightly different. The Spanish Hapsburgs left the Spanish Bourbons a vast amount of territory settled by several well-established Spanish and Creole families who did not want to give up their own positions in society to make the empire more efficient. The French also met resistance from local French populations; however, this resistance was more about practicality than dissatisfaction over social hierarchies. For the French settlers in Louisiana, transculturation and economic interactions with Native communities for trade benefits were preferential to the fledgling and largely unsuccessful occupation of cash crop farming. French Bourbon economic goals made sense in an Atlantic perspective, but failed to match the local capabilities. While the Spanish designs were feasible economically, they upset the local balance that helped maintain decades of loyalty to the Crown.

Both the Spanish and the French Bourbons struggled to successfully apply their philosophies to work within the parameters of life on the New World frontier; however, the

French Bourbons recognized the benefits of socio-ethnic transculturation before the Spanish Bourbons did, and successfully applied it to a string of New World settlements. Known as the “German Coast”, the French Crown established a number of small communities settled by German immigrants along the Mississippi River in the early 1720s. These settlers were to cultivate tobacco for the emerging French tobacco industry. By forcing German and Swiss immigrants to assimilate to French culture before settling territory in Louisiana, the administrators of the French Company of the Indies, like the Isleño settlers at Béxar, modified Bourbon Atlantic settlement designs to ensure that their colonies would become permanent and economically successful. The German assimilation to French culture also served to alter the frontier dynamics in favor of the Europeans, making it impossible for the Native groups to pit the region’s new settlers against each other economically as they had done through the trade networks at Los Adaes and Natchitoches. Whereas the Spanish and the French were competitors, creating more opportunities for indigenous groups to gain political and economic power, the lack of inter-European disputes in Louisiana due to acculturation reduced German dependence on the Native populations. This weakened the Natives’ position as colonial intermediaries, and diminished their agency on the frontier. The Franco-German settlements in French Louisiana, and their implementation of acculturation strategies, illuminate how the French Bourbons achieved both their economic goals and their desires for permanent colonization on the frontier.

These Franco-German settlements were unique because the French required that these German recruits assimilate culturally, socially, and ethnically to French society before

immigration could take place. German and Swiss immigrants would be permitted to move to Louisiana provided they were Catholic and would change their names to those of French origin. It was expected that the immigrants would immediately assimilate to French culture, learn the French language and adopt French-Creole ways of life.¹ Upon acquiring their monopoly over the lower Louisiana territory in 1717, The French Company of the West, soon to be the French Company of the Indies, sought to “furnish the immense territory with a European population to undertake its development.”² Though excluding foreigners from colonization efforts was characteristic of French Bourbon repopulation efforts, Company commissioners understood that German farming families could better improve the land than their prospective French recruits, who were mostly criminals and indentured servants. Though the plan’s aspiration to gain as much economic revenue as possible through French resettlement was of Bourbon origin, the German-populated colonies on the Mississippi River exuded the dominance of *obedezco pero no cumplo* from its beginnings. The acceptance of foreign Francophile settlers paired with European-Native trade interactions proved that these settlements, like B  xar later in the century, achieved the Bourbon-designed goals by altering Crown structures to local environments. The planning and development of four localities, two north of New Orleans, one among the Natchez, and another on the Mississippi delta known as English Turn, occurred before the Isle  os arrived to B  xar; however, their development in discordance to Bourbon desires reveal the ways in

¹ John Hanno Deiler, *The Settlement of the German Coast of Louisiana and the Creoles of German Descent* (Philadelphia, PA: Americana Germanica Press, 1909), [10-12]. Please also see Rene Le Conte and Glenn R. Conrad, "The Germans in Louisiana in the Eighteenth Century," *Louisiana History: the Journal of the Louisiana Historical Association* 8, no. 1 (Winter 1967): 70.

² *Ibid.*, 70-72.

which early colonial struggles and Franco-Spanish tensions on the frontier began to reshape Atlantic colonization policies.

The eventual success of these Louisiana communities, later mirrored by Béxar and its fellow Spanish institutions, proved that acculturation, flexibility, and control on the local level were necessary for European communities to exist permanently in the region. Their growth through the eighteenth century attested to this defiance of Bourbon policy, and allowed for the emergence of strong local governance and the subsequent reshaping of the Bourbon frontier design. In conjunction, Atlantic colonization strategies shifted to create more multiethnic and economically diverse communities on this frontier. As seen in the development of the Franco-German settlements, the growth of the Béxar community, and the mutually dependent populations of Los Adaes and Natchitoches, cultural interdependence came to shape successful and permanent New World institutions and aided in their economic, social, and political evolution.

The localized breakdown of Bourbon policies in the Atlantic regions of Texas and Louisiana can be attributed to the frontier environment in which the Spanish and French implemented them. As seen in the Spanish *Reconquista*, the isolated and dangerous frontier environment necessitated economic and social acculturation, resulting in networks of cultural interdependence. The economic, political and social dimensions which shaped the reconquest almost identically shaped the Spanish conquest of the Americas and the European struggle for territorial expansion in the Atlantic World. During both the reconquest and the development of Béxar, transculturation and assimilation led to the creation of a new Spanish identity, influenced by the frontier lifestyle. Transculturation

called for a reinterpretation of the traditional parameters defining nobility, and produced a new generation of self-made “noblemen”. As illustrated in the community of Béxar, those Isleños who chose to economically interact with the Indian, Mestizo, Creole, military, and missionary facets of the settlement were the most financially and politically successful. They identified with the self-made nobleman of the reconquest, shaped by the unique structure of the New World environment in which they lived. Paired with the inevitable increase in intermarriage of European and Indian, Mestizo and Creole settlers in the region, frontier acculturation successfully fulfilled the economic, political, religious and territorial desires of the Bourbons through means that had been characteristic of the Hapsburg monarchy.

Undoubtedly, colonial policies throughout the Atlantic World were influenced and shaped by their environment and by the individuals who lived them. The complex philosophies surrounding Bourbon imperialism in the Atlantic World and the larger conquest of the Americas were intertwined in Catholic ideology, economic profitability, and the promulgation of European superiority within a racially defined hierarchy. However, the various groups on the frontier, namely the Europeans, Creoles, military, missionaries, and Indians, each contributed to the reshaping of Bourbon policies by crossing social, religious, political and economic boundaries to ensure mutual survival in the hinterlands of Texas and Louisiana. Despite the transculturation and assimilation which occurred throughout settlements on the northern frontier, the Spanish Bourbons achieved many of their goals for Texas by the end of the eighteenth century as communities grew and the mission system’s influence in the region declined. Therefore, the realization of Bourbon goals on the frontier of New Spain and New France was possible through the pervasiveness of Hapsburg

philosophies in a transitioning society. Flexibility, transculturation, and decision-making on a local level ultimately led to permanent occupation and economic profitability for settlements throughout Texas and Louisiana. The transculturation of the Bourbon and Hapsburg philosophies which emerged through these multifaceted frontier environments reshaped Atlantic policies by forcing both the French and Spanish Crowns to accept local successes outside of the control of the Bourbon administration, even if those local accomplishments achieved Bourbon goals through alternative philosophical and ideological means. Thus, local frontier populations came to shape Atlantic World policies by the end of the eighteenth century; Atlantic World policies did not shape the frontier. The unique frontier identity formed through transculturation over political, economic, and social lines inevitably led to the mutual assimilation of Hapsburg and Bourbon philosophies. A new form of colonization shaped by local environments and life on New World frontiers emerged in the Atlantic Gulf Coast region, and influenced European colonial designs for the remainder of the eighteenth century.

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ABSTRACT

ATLANTIC TEXAS:
EUROPEAN RIVALRIES, GULF COAST GEOPOLITICS,
AND THE BOURBON REFORMS ON NEW SPAIN'S NORTHERN FRONTIER
1685-1755

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Historians studying early eighteenth century Gulf Coast colonization have focused on the Franco-Spanish rivalry over resources in Texas, and the economic benefits of territorial expansion in the New World. Atlantic World studies have only recently begun to develop in more globalized ways, and have barely analyzed colonization within the context of the Bourbon Reforms. This work examines the effects of the Spanish Crown's transition from the Hapsburg to Bourbon monarchies within the early years of civilian settlement on New Spain's northern frontier. Analyzing San Antonio de Béxar, it shows that on a local level Spain only briefly achieved its Bourbon influenced goals for the settlement; isolation and the struggles of frontier survival caused the breakdown of the town's original hierarchies and social distinctions. As a result, the transculturation that occurred between the town's

various frontier groups succeeded in shaping Atlantic World policies and their future implementation on New World colonies.