

THE EARLY SETTLERS OF SAN FERNANDO

I. J. COX.

[The greater part of the documents used in the preparation of this article are to be found in the collection, now in possession of the State University, known as the "Bexar Archives." As these documents are still unclassified, it will be impossible to give exact references for the various points mentioned, but so far as possible, the title and date of each document cited and the name of some individual connected with it will be given. In addition to the Bexar Archives the writer has consulted the standard authorities, the Bexar county land records, and documents in the Archivo General in the City of Mexico. The documents in the Bexar Archives for the years 1730-'50, inclusive, consist, for the most part, of three kinds: (1) petitions from residents of the villa, presidio, or missions to the head authorities in Mexico, the viceroy and the bishop of Guadalajara, to the governor, and to the captain of the presidio, who acted as *justicia mayor* (general, or chief justice) for the province, and received petitions in the absence of the governor; (2) proclamations of the authorities to whom these petitions were addressed, together with those of the local *alcaldes* of San Fernando; (3) records of judicial processes, both civil and criminal; (4) land records and other transfers. In addition, reference is made to *Testimonio de un Paracer* as given in the appendix of Yoakum, Vol. I.

Citations are made also of the following documents in the History Section of the Archivo General, in the City of Mexico: Vol. 84, *Colonos para Texas*; Vol. 43, *Historia del Descubrimiento y Poblacion de la Provincia de Texas hasta el año de 1730. Escrita por el Pe. J. Melchor y Talamantes*; Vol. 28, *Representacion de la Villa de Sn. Fernando al Sr. Gobernador de Texas, Varon de Ripperdá*; Vol. 43, the report of *Caballero de Croix*, to the Viceroy Galvez in *Expediente sobre Comercio reciproco entre las Provincias de la Luisiana y Texas.*]



In every community there exists a tendency to bestow a certain amount of honor and dignity upon those families who claim the proud title of "first settlers." In a general way San Antonio offers no exception to this tendency, but in the matter of exact knowledge concerning those settlers, their names, their number, their character, where they came from, when they arrived here, and other kindred points, there exists a most profound ignorance. In our city the term "descendants of the first settlers" is loosely applied to almost every family of Mexican name, so that, on a small scale, these descendants remind one of those of the "first families of Virginia." The time even of the founding of the city is so uncertain that there is a difference of about forty years between the first and last dates given. The composite character of the early foundation of the city—military, political, and ecclesiastical as it was—is but imperfectly understood by those to whom it should be wholly familiar. One possible explanation for this condition of affairs lies in the fact that another stock than that of the founders now controls the affairs of this section, and, consequently, much that is really interesting and important in their early history is lost in the general feeling of indifference, if not of contempt, displayed by the dominant race toward its weaker predecessors. But even a Spanish-Mexican past may contain some lessons for an Anglo-American present and future, and an occasional jotting from the brief and relatively unimportant annals of another age may prove of interest and profit to the

people of the imperial State of today.

In the year 1718 the presidio of San Antonio de Béjar was established on the San Antonio river. During that same year, the mission of San Antonio de Valero was moved from the Rio Grande to the vicinity of the presidio. During the next decade, by the founding of San José and the removal of three missions from Eastern Texas, the number of religious establishments on the San Antonio was increased to five. The lack of success in peopling the province by means of the missions and presidios, led the Spanish government to take other measures, and, in 1730 and 1731, we have the momentous (for Texas) journey of the Canary Island emigrants¹ to people the villa of San Fernando, near the presidio of San Antonio de Béjar.

The story of their journey may be briefly told. After two preliminary decrees, one in 1722 and the other in 1729, a company of some fifty odd emigrants for Texas was gathered at the port of Santa Cruz, Teneriffe. In that port, on March 27, 1730, there was promulgated another royal decree, expressing the wish of the king that the viceroy of New Spain and all other officials who had to do with the new colonists should show them the kindest treatment possible.² This decree was probably published just before the sailing of the company. We next hear of them in Vera Cruz, where they arrived in the early part of June. Here Juan Cabrera, one of the party, died, leaving a widow, Maria Rodriguez, and three children. On September 9th they were at Quantitlan, a little village near Mexico, where a notary public made out a list of the families with a personal description of each member. On the fifteenth of November they left Quantitlan for their difficult overland journey to the San Antonio river. Their route, as mapped out for them, led them through San Luis Potosí and Saltillo.¹ In the latter villa, on the 29th day of January, 1731, the head men of the families appeared before a notary public, in order to attest the correctness of the lists of supplies furnished by Colonel Aguirre, the governor of Coahuila, or Nueva Viscaya, as it was then called.² Thence they continued their march, and, with a short stop at the presidio of San Juan Bautista on the Rio Grande, where they left their worn-out horses, they reached San Antonio de Béjar, March 9, 1731,³ having consumed the best part of a year in their arduous journey, and having cost the royal treasury so great a sum, that the authorities were unwilling again to undertake such a costly experiment. Thus, of the four hundred Canary Island families that had been mentioned as necessary for the "conservation" of the province, only sixteen, with an aggregate of fifty-six persons, had the opportunity to undertake this important task.

The mention of the number of families brings up one of the minor problems connected with the early settlement of San Fernando. It is almost impossible to harmonize the discrepancies in the various accounts, but it may be helpful to compare three lists of the heads of the families made in three successive years. The first was made in Quantitlan, September 9, 1730; the second, in Saltillo, January 29, 1731; and the third, in the presidio of San Antonio, February 22, 1732. They are as follows:

The early proclamations of Viceroy Casa Fuerte mention only ten families, and this is the number of families appearing on the Quantitlan list, although five single men are mentioned. The company at Quantitlan numbered fifty-two persons. In his later proclamations the viceroy makes mention of the number of families as fifteen, with fifty-six persons. The list as taken at Saltillo mentions the number of families as sixteen, but the total number is still fifty-six. The names of Antonio Rodriguez and

Joseph Padron are missing, and the four companions of the former still appear as "single men forming one family." Thus the increase in the number of the company cannot be accounted for by the marriage of four of the single men. A simple explanation would seem to be that, after the list was taken at Guantitlan, Francisco Arocha and Vizente Albares Travieso, with their wives, joined the company. These men acted as important officials for more than forty years, so it is natural to suppose that they were young men at this time. Perhaps the viceroy added them to the original company because of the lack, among its members, of suitable official material. At least the records do not show that Arocha was a native of the Canaries, and, although a later decree seems to hint that Albares Travieso was, it throws no light on the absence of his name from the Guantitlan list.

Of the other new names on the Saltillo list we may account for Joseph Cabrera as the son of Maria Rodriguez, widow of Juan Cabrera. Juan Delgado is probably the son of Maria Meleano, widow of Lucas Delgado. The names of Maria Melian in the first list and Marino Melano in the second are so similar as to give rise to the supposition that there may have been a mistake on the part of one or both notaries. At any rate the name of Marino Melano does not appear in succeeding records.

On the list taken in the presidio of San Antonio the name of Antonio Rodriguez again appears as one of the "heads of families." Perhaps he may have become such, in the meantime, or may represent himself and his companions, still regarded as "constituting one family." His absence at Saltillo, as well as that of Joseph Padron, may possibly be accounted for by their lagging behind the rest of the company or by carelessness on the part of the notary. Joseph Leal, the only new person named, is another son of Juan Leal Goraz. The names of the widows do not appear, doubtless because they were sufficiently represented by their sons. The number of families, as given on this list, is thirteen. As stated above, the number was variously reported as ten, fifteen, and sixteen, while still another document later gives the number as fourteen. The list was taken at San Antonio when the seventy-one horses that had been left at the presidio of the Rio Grande were to be distributed to the settlers.¹ It would seem that on such an occasion, if ever, all of the families ought to be represented. In view of such documentary evidence as we now have at hand, further speculation concerning names and the number of families seems useless.

So much for the Canary Island immigrants. But they were by no means the only bona fide settlers of the vicinity. Indeed, in a petition of 1745, Pedro de Ocon y Trillo claims that they have no right to the title of "first settlers"; that there were already a number of settlers gathered about the presidio and in their name he claims that they are "the true and most ancient inhabitants and conquerors of that territory," and that, too, at no expense to the royal treasury. The documents of the period often refer to residents (vecinos) of the presidio, as well as to soldiers, and it is only reasonable to suppose that many of the soldiers, on completing their term of service, would take up land as actual settlers.² Ocon y Trillo himself is spoken of in one document as a former resident of Saltillo, and was doubtless attracted to the vicinity by the fact that the captain of the presidio, Thoribio de Urrutia, was his brother-in-law. Very likely family connections with those in the presidio brought other settlers from various parts of Mexico. In later years, when earlier jealousies had been forgotten, presidial settlers were merged with the Canary Islanders, and new and old were styled alike "citizens of San Fernando." Among the new family names that appear in the villa records during the first two decades of its establishment, may be mentioned those of Hernandez, Valdez, Peña, del Valle, Flores, López, Castro, Nuñez, Treviño, Ximenez, Cavo, Menchaca, Urrutia, Gonzales, de los Santos Coy, Martinez, Guerrero (or Guerro),

Montes de Oca, Sanchez, Monte Mayor, de la Serda, etc., etc., and this list is by no means exhaustive.

At the same time, in the presidial records, are to be found among the names of soldiers and vecinos agregados, those of Carabajal, Bueno de Roxas, Estrada, Bacilio del Toro, Galvan, de los Rios, Calvillo, Ruiz, Ocon y Trillo, Saucedo, Garza, etc., etc. With greater research these lists might be more fully extended, but from manuscripts so far consulted, it would be impossible to make out an absolutely complete record. It would be equally impossible, at present, to give the exact date when each new family first appeared in the community. We can only note, as they appear on the records, the names of well-known families, and the accompanying dates, at best, would be only approximate.

Among other sources from which the new villa drew its population may be mentioned the Tlascalan Indians,¹ and the various Indian tribes of northern Mexico. The latter were first brought to the missions, owing to the lack of suitable native Texas material for these agencies of civilization, and afterwards gradually worked their way through these establishments into the villa. This process, although it consumed a long time, was encouraged by the original settlers, who were anxious to secure the neophytes as servants and laborers.

From the various sources mentioned, it will readily be seen that by no means all of the principal Mexican families of the present city are of Canary Island descent. But, from whatever source they came, the early settlers of the villa soon took on the same character—a character that will be briefly described in the following pages.

Before the arrival of the new colonists, the governor of the province was to have provided plans for laying out the new villa, setting specific portions for building lots, pastures, and labores, and to assign to each family a lot for residence and a labor for cultivation. Each family was to enjoy the use of the common pasture lands and of water for irrigation from the San Antonio or the San Pedro. The decree of the viceroy enjoining these preparations was to remain in the "strong box" of the cabildo for future reference.²

In the early part of 1732, about the time government aid to the colonists was withdrawn, the distribution of lots and labores was made, each head of a family receiving his title in the name of His Majesty. This record of individual assignments, known as the "Cartilla de Particion", together with the above decree of the viceroy, form the basis for the land titles of this section. Mention is made of both of these documents in 1762, at the time of the residencia of Governor Navarete, but they have long since disappeared. Some attempts have been made to get the originals from Spain, where it is supposed that they are deposited, but so far in vain. In many of the early transfers of which there is record, mention is frequently made of "the share and right of the original founders, as given by His Majesty."¹ Doubtless, by an exhaustive study of such real estate transfers of this early period as we have recorded, and by a careful comparison with later deeds and present maps, it would be possible to reconstruct, almost entirely, the original plan of the villa. This, however, would be a task of more than ordinary difficulty.

The land records seem to show that many changes had to be made in the viceroy's plans for laying out the city, he merely following the general regulations of the Laws of the Indies upon this point. General regulations had to yield to physical conditions imposed by the position of rivers, the slope of the land, etc., and by the still more

urgent necessity for an easily defensible position. Mention is made of a common pasture land, both north and south of the villa, instead of on all sides, and lying between the San Antonio and San Pedro. Very likely this division was adopted for the sake of greater compactness and ease of defense. In some cases the building lots are less than the 240 feet square provided by the viceroy. The many turns of the river also interfered with the regularity of the lots.² These and many other causes combine to render this task of the restoration of the plan of early San Antonio a truly arduous one.

The conditions that confronted the new colonists were not such as to promise great prosperity for the colony. Shortly before their arrival the presidial garrisons had been greatly reduced. As a natural result, the hostile Indians had been emboldened to break out into actual warfare, in 1730, just previous to their coming. With these hostile Indians the few soldiers of the weakened garrisons were utterly unable to cope. The very soldiers themselves were, in many ways, to prove a hindrance to the development of the villa, as they had been all along to the growth of the missions. The missions also were sufficiently near the new settlement to allow the mixing of herds and other pretexts for quarrels, of which all parties were only too ready to take advantage. Thus, instead of two warring factions, the authorities had now to deal with three, and the task, as time went on, by no means promised to lighten.

In addition to these discouraging surroundings, the means of simple existence were not wholly certain. A large portion of the finished materials for their houses, and of living necessities (for the time at least) had to be transported on pack animals from the interior of Mexico.¹ This was the case with supplies for the presidial garrison, and must necessarily continue for some time for the new colonists. The new settlers were supposed, ultimately, not merely to support themselves, but in addition, to produce enough of the ordinary crops to supply the various garrisons; yet their scanty crops of the first few years imperfectly fulfilled these expectations. Under such conditions we should hardly expect the most energetic of people, transported from an island home to the wildest of inland wildernesses, immediately to adapt themselves to their surroundings, and those from the Canaries showed little disposition to do so, either at first or shortly thereafter.

Perhaps it was because the authorities in Mexico realized these facts and felt a little uncertain of their colonists, that they early took precautions to lose none of the number by desertion. Late in 1731, Juan Leal Goraz appeared in the City of Mexico with a petition from his fellow-colonists for those horses that had been left at the presidio of San Juan Bautista. He succeeded in his object, but the viceroy took advantage of the occasion to rebuke the governor for allowing Goraz to leave the province, and forthwith issued an order that, thereafter, under no pretext, were the Canary Island settlers to be permitted to leave the province.²

Naturally the order caused some hard feeling on the part of the settlers and soon a specific case was brought before the authorities. Vicente Albares Travieso, the alguacil mayor, asked for permission to go to Mexico, or, at least, to Saltillo, to be cured of a severe illness from which he was suffering. He did not mention the disease, but, from his subsequent importunity, it must have been dangerous. There appeared to be no one in the province who could cure him. Although he claimed that the decree of the viceroy applied only to matters of business and offered to bring witnesses to certify to the truth of his statement, his petition was in vain.¹ The next year, the

other members of the cabildo came to his assistance and in a series of petitions asked the governor for the specific decrees by which he refused their associate's request. They spoke of the great injustice done them, in being the only settlers refused free departure from the province, and mentioned the obligation of the government to fulfill the promises by which they were induced to make their voluntary journey from their distant island home. Surely, they said, the authorities would not refuse the first settlers of the place license to leave the province, upon such a serious matter as seeking the necessary cure for diseases. With reference to the prohibition against leaving the province for commercial purposes they complained of the difficulty of maintaining themselves by means of their scanty products, with no opportunity to seek other markets.

What seemed to make this prohibition especially galling was the fact that the new settlers who had joined them, and all others of the vicinity, had the privilege of going freely, back and forth, for the purpose of trading, while the Islanders, the "voluntary first settlers," were restrained. They bitterly contrasted this with the fair promises made them before their departure and the considerate treatment they had received everywhere along the route of their journey. Here, in their chosen abiding place, they lived in a state of captivity, virtually worse than that of the galleys. Thus complaining, they sent their petition to Governor Sandoval, asking for copies of the orders concerning their detention, and desiring the governor to forward their petition and complaint to the viceroy, at his own expense.²

Although the good governor thought they had little cause for complaint, in view of all that had been done for them and in consideration of his uniformly just treatment of them, yet, at their request, he forwarded their petitions. By the next year the new viceroy, Bizarron, got around to consider matters relating to the far off province of "Texas, or New Philippines." He tried to improve the condition of the villa by ordering the captains of the various presidios to give preference to its settlers, when buying provisions, and to pay for the latter at the current market prices. Thus the infant city was early to begin its policy of depending largely for its maintenance on a military post. With reference to the petition of Vizente Albares Travieso, backed up by the representations of the cabildo, the governor advised that he be allowed to go to Saltillo for medical treatment, but that a special watch be kept at Vera Cruz, and that, if he attempted to leave the country, he be arrested as a deserter.¹ From this decree we should infer that Travieso was one of the Canary Island immigrants. Although there is no further reference to the fact, we may infer, from succeeding practices, that the severity of this restriction upon the movements of the "Islanders" was subsequently much relaxed.²

With the colonists safely settled on the San Antonio river, and with all necessary precautions taken to keep them there, attention may be given next to a consideration of their character. Upon this point there is a wide variety of testimony so conflicting in its nature that it is almost impossible to form a just estimate. In their own petitions and other papers, they show such an exaggerated idea of their own importance, and are so anxious to impress upon governor, or viceroy, or presidial captain the great favor they rendered His Majesty in coming to this remote frontier settlement, that we can place little reliance upon what they say. We must likewise make allowance for the interested statements of their enemies. Most of the earlier testimony is of one kind or the other. Fortunately, we have some later testimony of a more disinterested kind, to which we may add many unconscious touches from the earlier records.

One of their early enemies, Pedro de Ocon y Trillo, makes the statement that the immigrants were not of the best quality of the people of the Canaries, so it may be interesting to determine their position in the social system of New Spain. One of their leading members, Juan Leal Goraz, describes his occupation by no higher title than that of small farmer (*labrador*). Francisco de Arocha, the notary (*escrivano público y de cabildo*), and the person of greatest education in the company, acted as cashier (*cajero*) of the goods and rations served to the soldiers of the garrison. Many of the other settlers use the name *labrador* to describe their occupation. Evidently they were all of the lower laboring or farming class of their native islands, and we should naturally expect such to be chosen to people the Texas wilderness. Arocha, who seems to be an exception, did not appear among the other settlers at Guantitlan.¹

In contrast with a somewhat sparing use of the names denoting their occupation, is their use of their newly acquired titles. These may, indeed, fit like new garments and lack the cleaving qualities that come with long use, but they are very much in evidence upon every possible occasion. As a sample we may take this: "Juan Leal Goraz, Spaniard and settler [*poblador*] by order of His Majesty (whom may God guard) in this Royal Presidio of San Antonio de Vejar and Villa of San Fernando, Province of Texas, or New Philippines, and present senior Regidor of the said Villa, and farmer [*labrador*]." ² Perhaps the final word detracts somewhat from the previous title, but it will be noticed that it is inserted where it will do the least harm to its dignity. As if this were not enough, Goraz later adds: "I am one of the principal settlers, by order of His Majesty," etc.³ Two years later his title has undergone further change and he then appears as "Perpetual regidor of the first vote of the villa of San Fernando and ordinary *alcalde* of said villa, by His Majesty," etc.⁴ In that same year he gives a short review of his career and shows that a colonial judge of the Canaries selected him as head of the families bound for New Spain, that the viceroy had reappointed him to that position, and that the *cabildo* had also favored him by choosing him as *alcalde*.¹ He seems fond of the expression "principal settler," which often appears in his petitions, proclamations, etc. In another place he styles himself, "Spaniard, settler, and farmer, senior regidor for His Majesty, etc., and *alcalde* of the first vote." On the whole he appeared to have an abundance of titles for a petty justice in a frontier hamlet. Consequently it is not at all strange that his proud spirit should resent the term "Morisco," as applied to a man of his "grey hairs" and dignity by a disrespectful and quarrelsome young fellow-settler.²

The worthy Goraz, however, has his imitators. Antonio de los Santos speaks of himself as "a man well-born, and of the qualities and customs of good Christianity." Juan Leal Albares, son of Goraz, follows well in his father's footsteps by styling himself "regidor and settler." Antonio Rodriguez is content with simply linking the titles, "citizen and procurador." These few examples will serve to show the tendency of the colonists to make the most of their new titles.

A childish pride in long or high-sounding titles is not their only fault. Very early in the history of the villa, the viceroy pronounced them impertinent in their demands. This was on the occasion when Goraz came to the City of Mexico to ask for the travel-worn horses left at the presidio of San Juan Bautista. These horses belonged to the government and had merely been used for the transportation of the immigrants. According to the decree of the viceroy, November 28, 1730, the colonists were to be provided with other domestic animals, but no mention is made of horses. Very likely the good viceroy thought that enough had already been done for these people. He granted their request, however, and this was doubtless the important thing for them. At the same time he took occasion to forbid their leaving the province, under any

pretext, and also made mention of the daily assistance the colonists were to receive for a year after their arrival. This aid from the general government was to cease March 9, 1732, so the date of their arrival may be regarded as fixed, at just a year previous to the above date.³

Their petitions, or rather demands, for a parish church exhibit much of the quality of impertinence as well as helplessness in doing anything for themselves. There were two mission churches fairly near them and it seems that they could have arranged for services in one of these. But they could not be satisfied, save with an edifice of their own, and they thought that a contribution of \$24,000 from the royal treasury should be made for this purpose.¹ It will be observed that the date of this representation is about seventeen years after their arrival and ten after the probable laying of the corner-stone of the edifice. Evidently they had done very little to help themselves, in the interim, so the authorities donated only one-half of the sum asked for, but stated explicitly that no more need be expected. The government had set a bad precedent in paying all of the early expenses in settling the municipality.

As a partial excuse for the childishness and injustice of these settlers' demands we may mention their ignorance. In the earliest documents containing their signatures we find many who did not know how to write, for whom others must sign "by request." Thus Arocha, the notary, signs one document for Martin Lorenzo, the second alcalde, and Juan Curbelo, a regidor. In the same document Goraz asserts that he could find no person in the place, who was able to write enough to witness his papers; and he himself was so troubled with short-sightedness that he could not write a countercharge which he had to make against the three above mentioned. His signature, as well as that of the others who claimed to be able to write, shows a lack somewhere. Joseph Padron and Manual de Niz, both of whom later acted as alcaldes, must have some one sign for them. Francisco Delgado, Patricio Rodriguez, and Joseph Leal, all members of the cabildo, were under the same necessity. Juana de Urrutia and Plova de los Santos Coy request others to sign deeds for them. If this was the condition in the earlier days, educational matters must have been much worse in the next generation, with the still fewer advantages of a frontier hamlet. So we need not be surprised in the following years to find such a report as this: "The officers of San Fernando form a most ridiculous cabildo, because of the ignorance of all, and do many absurd and shameful things, because of the difficulty of appeal to distant superiors."² There appears to have been no attempt at public education, with the possible exception of efforts on the part of the village curate to instruct in a few simple religious truths. Aside from the curate there appears to have been, in the early days, no representative of the learned professions, not even a physician.¹

In the course of his report the Chevalier De Croix says: "All of the inhabitants [of San Fernando] live miserably because of their laziness, captiousness, and lack of means of subsistence, which defects show themselves at first sight, so that little time is necessary in order to know them." Their lack of the means of subsistence may readily be explained by their laziness, and, indeed, this characteristic makes itself apparent throughout the whole course of their history. But one can find much excuse for these characteristics of the colonists in the paternalistic policy of the government and its unwise fostering of their pride by specious promises and empty honors. In addition, the hard conditions of life that surrounded them would have discouraged any but the most resolute spirits, and no one pretends to say that these Canary Islanders ever exhibited any great craving for a strenuous life.

Again, in his report De Croix says "It is not difficult for them [the members of the cabildo] to confuse everything and to reduce to disputes and litigious discussion whatever is pleasing to them, and never to clear matters up." If the second generation of the villa settlers were plagued by litigation and private quarrels, it was because such methods had been so well taught them by the first. Scarcely had the new settlers received possession of their lands, before a quarrel broke out between Goraz and Padron about the exact limits of their respective allotments. The value of the land involved was infinitesimal, but it thoroughly stirred up the little villa during the year 1733, involving the greater part of the municipal officers, as well as the governor, and resulted in about six months' imprisonment for Goraz. At least, so he charges; but the imprisonment does not seem to have been more confining than to his own dwelling. The villa did not then have its own lock-up; but made use of the prisoner's house, in case of minor offenses, or of a private house and keeper, or the guardhouse of the presidio, in those of a more serious nature.

Two years later, Juan Leal Goraz is himself in power, as first alcalde; and in his attempts to reform certain public abuses, he encounters factitious opposition among his fellow-officers. Thinking that proper respect has not been shown him, in his official capacity, he orders the arrest of Martin Lorenzo, his associate alcalde; Juan Curbelo, regidor; and Francisco de Arocha, the notary. Then the governor is indeed overwhelmed with petition and counter-petition. There are complaints of undue severity, of imprisonment, and of insult to official position. There is the assertion of present official power and statement of the value of past services. There are quotations from the Laws of the Indies, reviews of past customs of the village, hints of malicious underhand dealings on the part of high officials, and threats of appeal to the viceroy. All of this consumes time, so there is a long imprisonment for the three offenders before the viceroy can order their release.

Goraz also has previously had some trouble with Patricio Rodriguez about some money Rodriguez's father owed him. Rodriguez not only injures his honor by calling him a "Morisco," but threatens more lasting damage with a gun. This leads to several months' imprisonment of Rodriguez, with petitions from his mother and full statement of charges by Goraz. Finally the village curate has to bring into requisition his good offices, and he secures the release of the erring young man. Juan Leal Alvarez wishes to recover a mule from Joseph Padron and invokes the aid of the law. There are a number of suits brought against various residents by merchants of Saltillo and elsewhere, to collect notes and bills of credit. With such a beginning the tendency to engage in law suits easily becomes a fixed habit in the municipality. This tendency betrays a quarrelsome disposition on the part of the residents. In the various cases mentioned above there are references to previous troubles and charges, even while upon their journey from the Canaries. It is charged that funds have been misappropriated, or that some one has uttered treasonable expressions against the king. The most serious charge of this sort is that of Goraz against Curbelo, who is accused in 1734 of making the statement that he would not obey the royal commands, and, as a consequence, suffers a short imprisonment in the presidial guardhouse. There seems to have been very little tendency on the part of these litigants to take the law into their own hands. Serious crimes, too, are very rare for a frontier village garrisoned by rather unruly and vicious soldiers.

More serious than their internal quarrels, however, was the tendency of the Island settlers to embroil themselves with the neighboring soldiers, settlers, and missionaries. The question of the pasturage of the presidial cattle and horses and of the preservation of the crops of the settlers offered a perennial source of dispute. The

settlers claimed that the cattle from the presidio and from the missions frequently ruined their crops. In return the others claimed that the crops should be fenced, and that the settlers killed or lamed their animals. In 1737 matters came to a crisis and the acting governor, Captain Thoribio Urrutia, who also acted as principal justice for the province, issued a proclamation against all illegal practices of this sort. The people of the villa responded through their cabildo, representing that they were too poor to build the necessary fences, and asking that no horses or cattle be pastured without a keeper. They also demanded payment for 400 fanegas¹ of corn, which they claimed the animals had destroyed. In his reply Captain Urrutia complained bitterly of the fact, that, when he had issued a proclamation that was just to all, the cabildo should answer in such a discordant manner, especially when it was necessary for all to live in peace and harmony in order to present a bold front to the enemy that surrounded them. Later he attended a meeting of the cabildo and read a statement that four presidial cattle had been killed during the year, and that the cattle had been five times in the settlers' corn, with a total damage of not more than fifteen or twenty fanegas, and for this he was willing to pay. He gave command to the soldiers not to injure the horses or crops of the "Islanders," and to the latter he represented the little cause they had for complaint. So for the future they promised to act with more discretion and justice.²

A few years after the members of the cabildo had some difficulty with Captain Urrutia, and even went so far as to send complaints of him to the viceroy. When the latter's reply was received, they patched up some sort of agreement with Urrutia, which they mutually pledged themselves, under penalty, to keep. As a sort of safeguard the alcaldes were given concurrent jurisdiction with the justicia mayor.

Not content with merely raising disturbances about matters in which they had some direct concern, the members of the *cabildo* even went out of the way to seek trouble with their neighbors. They made out a lengthy complaint about the missions and the missionaries in charge, as if the latter were in some way responsible for the miserable condition of the villa. They reviewed the whole of the missionary movement, dwelt upon the lack of success of the missionaries, and recommended the abandonment of the missions, with the possible view of obtaining an addition to their narrow population. The bishop of Guadalajara had previously written them a note expressing his sorrow at existing relations and promising an investigation,¹ but evidently the bishop's decision was not satisfactory to the settlers, for they wished their later complaint to be forwarded to the viceroy.² Those making this representation claimed that they did so because of the many complaints concerning themselves sent to Mexico.

As an example of contemporary opinion of the Island settlers may be taken the petition of Pedro de Ocon y Trillo. He makes his statements in behalf of his brother-in-law, Captain Urrutia, as a representative of the presidial settlers. The "Islanders" had made a lengthy complaint of the captain; and to this Ocon y Trillo replies that it is nothing but a mass of injurious reports, by which they are attempting to harm, not merely the captain, but all conditions of men living in the vicinity, and not even the sanctity of the mission fathers is safe from their venomous attacks. All this tissue of false reports lacks both substance and proof and only serves to make known the disdainful, caviling, and perverse qualities of said "Islanders." Elated with the title of "*pobladores*," they wish to be the only settlers of this land and look with depreciation upon those who were already gathered there. These latter, without any cost to His Majesty, were, and are, the true and most ancient settlers and conquerors of the land. There are five classes of people in the vicinity, the "Islanders," the collected

(*agregados*) settlers, soldiers, Indians, and churchmen, to which enumeration may be added the captain of the presidio and the governor of the province as head of all. It is a notorious fact that the "Islanders" complain bitterly of all the other classes, including the captain, whom all others praise. The captain had served under three governors, noted for their strictness, and they had nothing but commendation for him. Only these few upstart families bring their malicious charges against him. The paper ends abruptly at this point, but from a date quoted, we can easily imagine that the agreement mentioned above, between the *cabildo* and Captain Urrutia, was the outcome of this vigorous representation.

I may possibly have pursued this subject to an unprofitable length. The life of the early settlers of San Fernando was simple, crude, and unattractive in many features, but as an element in the early development of our State and its chief city, it may possess some phases of permanent interest. Oddly enough there is taking place in our country, today, a movement similar to the journey of the Canary Island immigrants. Porto Rico is sending her surplus laboring population to the Hawaiian Islands, just as the Canaries, nearly two centuries ago, sent a few families of this class to the wilds of Texas. It has seemed the tendency of Spain to fill up her island empire, in order to supply workers to the needy portions of the world, when the demand should come; and this process is going on when her islands have slipped from her grasp. Perhaps, in this insignificant earlier movement, there may be some lessons to be learned, some mistakes to be avoided, some suggestions to be followed, that will help to make the latter movement still more successful. As the Spaniard, by a century of struggle, helped in a measure to make Texas ready for the great Republic that was to absorb it, so may our new citizens, because of the previous example of a small company of their fellow countrymen, bear an important part in the expansion of the American people to the westward.



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