The Other Side of the Alamo

Art Against the Myth

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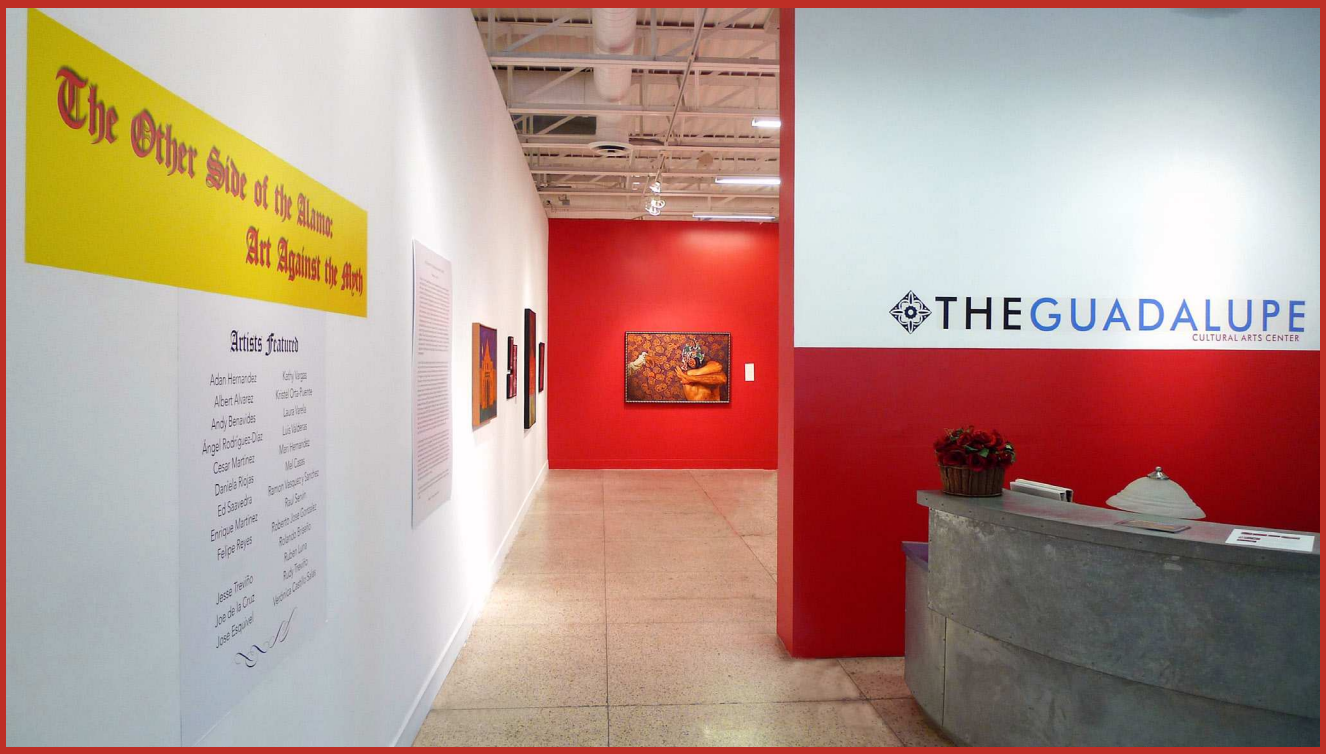

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Back cover: Daniela Riojas, *We Built It, We Will Dismantle It* (detail), 2018, photograph, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of the artist.

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The Other Side of the Alamo: Art Against Myth

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Foreword

The Texian Revolt—and the Battle of the Alamo in particular—are bitterly contested subjects. Interpretations of them are not infrequently based on sheer fantasy and wholesale misrepresentation, which, unfortunately, dominate treatments of these topics in popular culture. As Paul Andrew Hutton (1995: 15) observes, writers who treat the Alamo "have often repeated false stories recounted in books, articles, and newspapers." Consequently, I thought the Alamo would be an ideal topic for an exhibition and catalog during San Antonio's Tricentennial in 2018. In the following essay, I have sought to counter dominant narratives, and, in particular, to examine and shine light on specific issues that are particularly misunderstood. Given the degree to which Texas history has often been badly distorted and misrepresented, I have made unusually extensive use of quotations and citations. As Walter Lord (1968: 20) observes: "folklore has always flowed through the saga of the Alamo…." My objectives are to disentangle the Alamo and its historical context from its enfablement in Texas myth and folklore, and also to assess how Alamo mythos—the cluster of prevalent symbolic associations that surround it—has affected people of color.

This catalogue is intended for the general reader, and, in order to encourage future research on the part of its readers, I have prioritized accessible materials over rare or arcane sources. These include books that are in print and/or well represented in general library collections, as well as online resources.

For readers without a background in Mexican/Texas history, this is a capsule summary and explanation of terms. Mexico achieved independence from Spain in 1821. Stephen F. Austin, the first and by far the most important empresario (land agent), began bringing Anglo-American settlers into the Mexican state of Coahuila and Texas in 1821. The price of cotton rose dramatically in 1815, and it was very high between 1831-35, which was a critical period for immigration. Mexican land in the Gulf Coast region was ideal for growing cotton, and it was attractive to colonists because they could quickly make enormous profits. Austin replicated the structure of a Southern slave state in his settlements, and cotton production grew exponentially. Due to internal political conflicts, Mexico exerted little control over Anglo-American colonies in what is now Texas. The colonists' commitment to African slavery was a source of continuous conflict with Mexico, on both the state and national level (this is treated in detail in chapter three). Mexico made a belated effort to end Anglo-American immigration in 1830, but they continued to flood into Texas, doubling their number by 1834 from 10,000 to 21,000 (Torget, 2015: 150-57). An armed insurrection against Mexico broke out in 1835. San Antonio and the Alamo (the former Mission San Antonio de Valero) were captured by an army composed of rebels, squatters, and mercenaries from the U.S. in December of 1835. On March 2, 1836, a convention (made up largely of relatively recent arrivals from the U.S.) declared independence from Mexico, inaugurating the slavery-based Republic of Texas, which has been called a "dress-rehearsal" for the Confederate States of America (Torget, 2015: 12, 263). Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna had begun his siege of the Alamo on February 23, and he recaptured it during a short battle on March 6. Santa Anna's capture at San Jacinto in April of 1836 brought an end to the war (Hardin, 1994: 199-217; 245-50). For a brief overview of Mexican Texas, see De León (2017).

The Anglo-American rebels referred to themselves as Texians (this term helps to differentiate them from the ethnically Mexican inhabitants of Texas, who are called Tejanos). I refer to the 1835-36 war of independence as the Texian Revolt rather than the Texas Revolution because it does not fulfill the criteria of a revolution (Reichstein, 1989: 191-196; Reichstein, 1989b). The Republic of Texas came to an end on December 29, 1845, when it was annexed (without defined borders) to the United States as Texas, a slave state. Annexation to the U.S. had been the goal of the independence movement because annexation served to secure the land taken from Mexico, to safeguard the institution of slavery, and to facilitate continued Anglo-American immigration. The state of Texas lacked defined borders by design: this deficiency made it easier for the U.S. to provoke the Mexican-American War in 1846. This war of conquest resulted in the seizure of Mexican territory all the way to the Pacific Ocean.

I would like to thank Mark Anthony Martinez, former Visual Arts Director, and Cristina Ballí, Executive Director of the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center, who were, from the moment I made the proposal, enthusiastic and supportive of this exhibition and catalog. I am also grateful for the generous support of the Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, without which this exhibition and catalog would not have been possible. I extend my heartfelt thanks, also, to the artists, whose deeply personal and diverse creative visions give material form to this exhibition, and to the private collectors, who generously lent their treasures for the duration of the exhibition.

Mel Casas, *Humanscape 147 (Alamo) (detail)*

Contents

Introduction

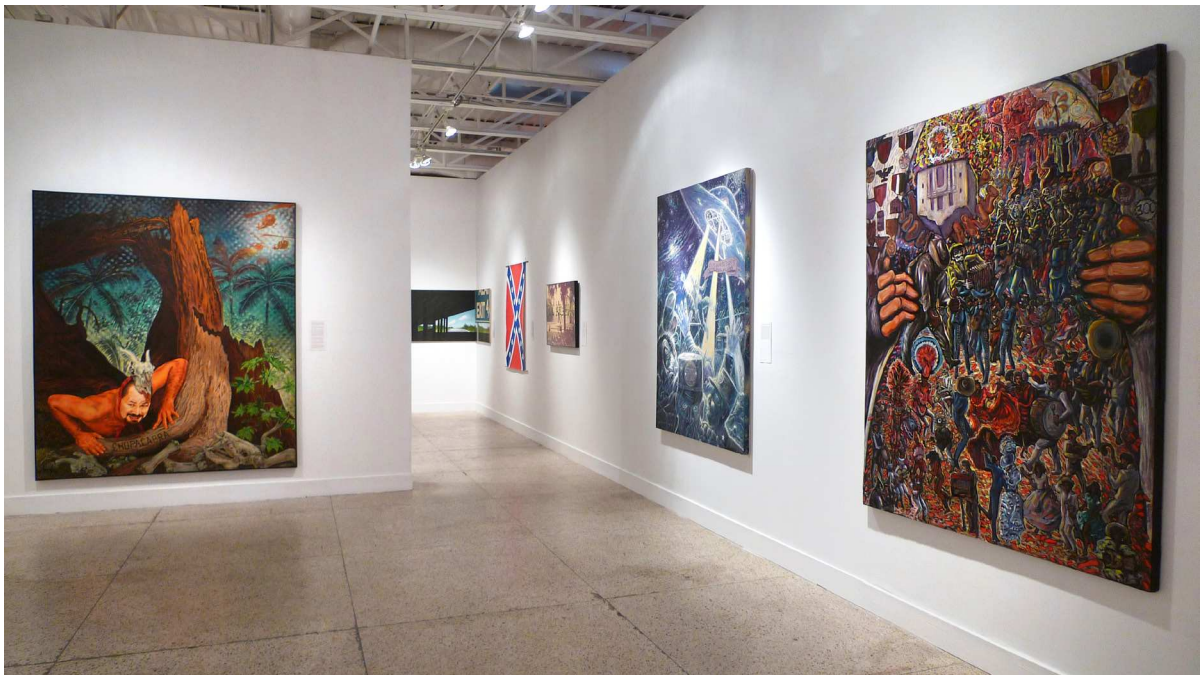
The Alamo, a former Spanish Mission located in downtown San Antonio, inadvertently played a pivotal symbolic role in U.S. history. After Mexican troops killed all the Texian occupiers of this fortified mission, "Remember the Alamo" became the rallying cry during the last phase of the Texian Revolt (1835-1836) and during the Mexican-American War (1846-48). Texas was the crucible for the rise of a racialized Anglo-Saxonism, one that regarded dominance as its special destiny. The Alamo battle has been interpreted and represented in a manner that served to galvanize a virulently Social Darwinist strain of anti-Mexican sentiment. Steven F. Austin, leader of the Anglo-American colony in Texas, wrote to Senator L. F. Linn of Missouri on May 4, 1836: "A war of extermination is raging in Texas—a war of barbarism and of despotic principles, waged by the mongrel Spanish-Indian and Negro race, against civilization and the Anglo-American race...." He emphasizes that the former were "all the natural enemies of white men and civilization" (Cordova, 2009:3) The term Manifest Destiny was coined in a discussion of the U.S. annexation of Texas in 1845, the very act that precipitated the Mexican-American War (Horsman, 1981: 119-221). Due to the momentous consequences that stemmed from it, Jeff Long (1990: 258) calls March 6, 1836, the date of the Battle of the Alamo, "the inaugural moment of Manifest Destiny." The Mexican-American War resulted in the dismemberment of Mexico. Texas, initially a slave republic, entered the U.S. as a slave state. Discord over the means by which Texas was annexed (Silbey, 2005), as well as sectional conflict over slavery's potential expansion to other territories seized from Mexico led to the Civil War. Ulysses S. Grant judged the Mexican-American War "one of the most unjust ever waged." He termed the Civil War "largely the outgrowth of the Mexican war" and concluded: "nations, like individuals, are punished for their transgressions" (Greenberg, 2012: 274).

As one of the most enduring and potent symbols of Anglo-American power and triumph, the Alamo has often functioned as the quintessential anti-Mexican emblem, one that marks Mexicans and their descendants as the villains of Texas history, and one that perpetually seems to cry out for vengeance for a long-lost battle. Though commonly and uncritically touted as the "cradle of Texas liberty," the Alamo—through symbolism associated with it—has impacted people of color in a catastrophic manner. It served to incite pogroms of terror, murder, and territorial dispossession against former Mexican nationals in Texas, and it resulted in discriminatory practices against their descendents that continue to this day. The Texian Revolt led to the imposition of slavery on a massive scale. Benjamin F. Lundy and John Quincy Adams viewed the Texian Revolt as a war for slavery and land. In his *America's Forgotten First War for Slavery and Genesis of the Alamo*, Phillip Thomas Tucker (2017a; 2017b) agrees with them and concludes that President Andrew Jackson (1829-1837) was determined to acquire Texas by any means. Jackson's protégée, President James K. Polk (1845-1849) deliberately provoked a war whose purpose was to take half of Mexico, from Texas to California (Greenberg, 2012). Both Presidents wanted to further the expansion of slavery. Following abolition, blacks were subjected to discrimination and segregation, as well as campaigns of terror by groups such as the KKK. Many Native American groups, who had not been conquered by Spain or Mexico, suffered horrific consequences, including sustained efforts to eradicate them or forcibly remove them from Texas altogether. Mirabeau B. Lamar, the second president of the Republic of Texas,

declared: “The white man and the red man cannot dwell in harmony together. Nature forbids it” (Klos, 2010). After the Civil War, North and South reconciled through “Indian Wars” and the Spanish-American War.

Far from viewing the Alamo church façade as an emblem of freedom, many people of color rightly view it as a symbol of racial oppression—not because of anything inherent in the building itself, but rather due to the manner in which it has been deployed as a symbol in Texas myth, history, and folklore. This exhibition counters the mythic Alamo with innovative and powerful works by 24 Chicana and Chicano artists, as well as one Puerto Rican artist, all of whom are residents of San Antonio. They proudly and defiantly celebrate their mixed cultural heritage in the very shadow of the Alamo by giving expression to suppressed narratives that provide alternatives to triumphalist and colonialist treatments of the Alamo. Having resisted various forms of prejudice and domination (both overt and covert), they have affirmed their perseverance in a variety of approaches featured in this exhibition.

A historical essay precedes the catalog: it examines popular Alamo myths, provides an episodic narrative from the founding of Austin’s Anglo-American colony to the Civil War, and treats the legacy of the Alamo with particular reference to racial mixing.



The Other Side of the Alamo: Art Against the Myth, Installation view

1.
Alamo Myths, Alamo Realities

Texians were quick to characterize their Alamo heroes in both religious and mythic terms. On March 24, 1836, the *Telegraph and Texas Register* declared: "Honors and rest are with ye: the spark of immortality which animated your forms, shall brighten into a flame, and Texas, the whole world, shall hail ye like demi-gods of old, as founders of new actions, and as patterns of imitation" (Hutton, 1995: 17). Two days later, a resolution by the city of Nacogdoches called them "martyrs to liberty" and equated them with the most revered martyr-warriors in Western history, the 300 Spartans who fought for Greece against a Persian invasion in 380 B.C.: "Thermopylae, is no longer without parallel… Travis and his companions will be named in rivalry with Leonidas and his Spartan band" (Hutton, 1995: 17). Thermopylaen invocations became "so pervasive" in treatments of the Alamo that one observer said "it almost seems a law that each novel, drama, or poem must contain its own" (Graham, 1998: 240). Lawyer, politician, land speculator, and diarist William Fairfax Gray evidently foresaw this phenomenon. Gray, who was appalled that the Alamo garrison had not been reinforced, had this to say about historical hypocrisy and mythification: "Texas will take honor to herself for the defense of the Alamo and will call it a second Thermopylae, but it will be an everlasting monument of national disgrace" (Tucker, 2010: 329).

If, in 1836, the Alamo occupiers were likened to demi-gods, they were further elevated in an 1888 textbook that was used in Texas for forty years: "The Texans stood like gods waiting to let others feel their mighty strength" (Pennybacker, 1888: 76). This textbook, which refers to Mexican soldiers as "fiends" and "servants of the 'Prince of Butchers,'" calls each Texian soldier "a bleeding sacrifice upon his country's altar" (Pennybacker, 1888: 78, 88). Finally, after denouncing the cremation of the Texian dead, Anna J. Pennybacker celebrates its effects: "From that sacred fire sprang the flames that lighted all Texas" (1888: 78-79). Such hagiographic martyrologies served a heady mix of racism, myth, grandiosity, and religion, a heritage that endowed Texas history with its special character. Texas History Movies, a deeply racist comic strip, was the pedagogical successor to Pennybacker, providing "for many students the first and only taste of Texas history" (New Texas History Movies, n.d.). It began in the *Dallas Morning* News in 1926, and, reprinted as a book, it was distributed free of charge to Texas schoolchildren by the Magnolia Petroleum/Mobile Oil Company from 1932 to 1959. Complaints that it demeaned Indians, Mexicans, and African-Americans caused Mobil to cease distribution (Brear, 1995: 166-67, n. 2; Markstein, 2010).

This chapter, which takes the form of a review of the literature, is a skeptical examination of primary myths associated with the Alamo. It is informed by Randolph B. Campbell's (2003: 146) caveat that the Alamo is "encrusted" by "so many legends that no one can be certain of the details."

THE TEXIAN OCCUPIERS OF THE ALAMO WERE DETERMINED TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH, RATHER THAN SURRENDER

According to Mexican Lt. Colonel José Enrique de la Peña, Texian Colonel William B. Travis acceded to the will of the garrison after days of pleading: if no reinforcements came on March 5, they would attempt to surrender or escape the next night. His sources were a San Antonian woman and a "Negro [Joe] who was

the only male who escaped." De la Peña says these accounts were later confirmed by women who remained inside the Alamo during the battle (Long, 1990: 231-32; Hardin, 1994: 137; de la Peña, 1975: 44). Mexican General Vincente Filisola says Travis, "through the intermediary of a woman," attempted to surrender around nightfall on March 5, with the sole condition of guaranteeing their lives, but Santa Anna would only accept unconditional surrender (Long, 1990: 232; Hardin, 1994: 137). Lindley (2003: 146-47) believes Juana Alsbury was the messenger/intermediary.

De la Peña speculates that Mexican President and General Antonio López de Santa Anna thought a bloodless victory would lack "sensation" and "glory" (Hardin, 1994: 137; de la Peña, 1975:45). Perhaps more importantly, Santa Anna expected that Travis would soon receive reinforcements. Santa Anna attacked before dawn on March 6 to catch the occupiers by surprise and to prevent their escape that night. This attack also negated the Texian's strategic advantages: long-range rifles and perhaps the most formidable array of cannon between Mexico City and New Orleans.

Until the bitter end, Travis and the garrison as a whole expected substantial Texian reinforcements. When they were not forthcoming, Travis agreed to surrender or escape. Moreover, Travis mistakenly thought that local Tejanos would overwhelmingly rally to his cause. Travis angrily recognized his error on March 3: "The citizens of this municipality are all our enemies except those who have joined us heretofore" (Hutton, 1995: 18; Tucker, 2010: 99). Many Tejanos, of course, simply did not want to take sides in this conflict. As Paul D. Lack (1992: 183) points out: "Almost any behavior, even that designed to protect themselves from the ravages of war, made the Tejanos seem like traitors from the perspective of one army, if not both…." In the March 3 letter, Travis vindictively called for the punishment of the Tejanos in San Antonio who had not united with him, which of course was virtually the entire population: "… those who have not joined with us in this extremity, should be declared public enemies, and their property should aid in paying the expenses of the war" (Hutton, 1995: 18). On June 21, 1836, after the Texians had won the war, Juan Seguín attempted—with little success—to evacuate San Antonio, telling the populace to move to the interior with their livestock, or face being "treated as real enemies… without fail" (Ramos, 2008: 169), essentially ratifying Travis's equation of neutrality with Toryism (Lack, 1992: 181-82).

In any case, once the Texians were surrounded in the Alamo, they had few choices: they could stay put, sneak out in small numbers, or attempt a great escape. A few couriers could and did leave the fort on horseback, and the Tejanos were formally offered amnesty. But for most of the garrison, "the Alamo was as much prison as fort" (Davis, 1998: 555).

THE ALAMO HAD BEEN TRANSFORMED INTO A FORMIDABLE FORTRESS, AND IT WAS STRATEGICALLY VITAL

De la Peña deemed the Alamo "unimportant, politically or militarily," which he says was the "unanimous opinion of all the military" (Tucker, 2010: 86, 185, 133). Ramón Martínez Caro, Santa Anna's personal secretary, called it "a mere corral and nothing more" (Tucker, 2010: 102).

Stephen L. Hardin (1994: 131) and others have emphasized that the Alamo's perimeter—nearly a quarter mile in length—rendered it "indefensible" without a significantly more numerous force. Tucker says it was a mistake for the Texians to defend it, and "a greater folly" for Santa Anna to attack it (2010: 133), since neither the Alamo nor San Antonio had strategic importance. Hardin (1994: 185) calls the attack on the Alamo "pointless" and "wasteful." William C. Davis says Santa Anna had no reason to fear 200 Texian soldiers in "a mud fort," and he should have left them behind (1998: 555). Several authors say the Alamo was deficient or lacking in critical features possessed by purpose-built forts, such as catwalks behind the walls, firing platforms, rifle slots, portholes, bastions, ravelines, interior redoubts, hornworks, embrasures for cannon etc. (Tucker, 2010: 84, 105, 109, 210; Hardin, 1994: 128; Long, 1990: 183). Tucker says garrison members didn't want to work on fortifications because they were aspiring Southern gentlemen and considered hard labor to be slave work (2010: 131-32). In a letter to Sam Houston dated January 18, G. B. Jameson, the Alamo's engineer, complained: "the men I have will not labor…. The officers of every department do more work than the men." Jameson lacked the time, tools, economic resources, and willing manpower to realize more significant improvements. Consequently, "most" of the Alamo's defenses at the time of the 1836 battle had been put in place under Mexican General Cos in the fall of 1835 (Nelson, 1998: 46-47). Another problem was that many—including Travis—seem to have been more interested in fandangos than fortifications.

More recently, renowned battle illustrator Gary S. Zaboly (2011: S1-S46), argues that the extent of the Alamo's defensive features during Santa Anna's siege has been seriously underestimated, due to an over-reliance on post-battle illustrations that reflect the destruction of its fortifications in May of 1836, when General Juan José Andrade fulfilled his order to "render them useless for all times and under any circumstances." Zaboly's use of early sources leads him to conclude that the Alamo formerly "brimmed with… batteries, ramps, tambours, palisades, traverses, bonnets, battlements, embrasures, ditches, banquettes, and so on," and thus was not the "broken-down, armed hacienda" that is commonly depicted (2011: S4, S7). In any case, regardless of the improvements made to the former mission, it had too many vulnerabilities and too small a garrison to withstand Santa Anna's attack for any appreciable amount of time. Travis was naïve to claim that he could hold the Alamo with 200 men, as he did in a letter on February 12 to Governor Smith (Tucker, 2010: 210). Jameson was likewise naïve to think that the Texians could "whip [the Mexican army] 10 to 1" (Nelson, 1998: 46). But—as we shall see at San Jacinto—the Texians did not possess a monopoly on hubris.

THE ALAMO WAS THE SITE OF AN EPIC SIEGE, FEB. 23-MARCH 6, 1846

Tucker says the Battle of the Alamo, "perhaps the most glorified battle in American history," was "transformed into something that it was not: a climactic, epic clash of arms" (2010: 328). He calls the siege "something of a farce" because the Mexicans, who were awaiting the arrival of their large cannon (two 12-pounders that would have devastating effects), used an inadequate number of small, antiquated field pieces, which were largely ineffective (Tucker, 2010: 169, 171-72). The Mexicans generally stayed out of rifle range, and the Texians even quit returning cannon fire due to a critical shortage of usable powder.

Filisola said bombardment by twenty properly placed artillery pieces would have reduced the walls to “rubble” in less than an hour (Hardin, 1994: 129). Nonetheless, the Mexican forces dug protective trenches for their artillery and inched closer day by day. The bombardment of the North wall possibly facilitated the ability of the Mexican soldiers to scale it without ladders, though the failure to cover General Cos’ log reinforcements with an earth facing was probably a bigger factor (Long, 1990: 184). On March 9, Captain John Sowers Brooks at Goliad wrote of a battery whose “every [cannon] shot goes through it as the walls are weak” (Zaboly, 2011: S8). Lindley (2003: 147) assumes his source was James A. Allen, Travis’ last courier, who departed for Goliad on the evening of March 5. Alan C. Huffines (1999) provides a valuable, day-by-day documentary chronology of the siege as chronicled by participants, eyewitnesses, and purported eyewitnesses.

THE STORIED BATTLE OF THE ALAMO IS ONE OF THE GREATEST “LAST STANDS” IN AMERICAN HISTORY

While the battle is assuredly storied, the Mexican army had reached the walls before most of the Alamo occupiers were awake, much less aware that the assault had begun. William Fairfax Gray, in a diary entry on March 20, 1836, summarized the testimony of Joe, Travis’s slave, before the Texas cabinet: “when the attack was made, sentinels and all were asleep, except one man, Capt. -----[J. J. Baugh], who gave the alarm. There were three picket guards without the fort, but they, too, it is supposed, were asleep, and were run upon and bayoneted, for they gave no alarm. Joe was sleeping in the room with his master when the alarm was given” (Gray, 1997: 128). De la Peña (1975: 52), an eyewitness, said the battle lasted an hour “before the curtain of death covered and ended it” just after 6 a.m. Santa Anna’s chief of staff, Colonel Juan Nepomuceno Almonte, says the units took their battle stations at 5:00 a.m., began the attack at 5:30, “and continued until 6:00 a.m.” (Lindley, 2003: 148). He adds: “When the enemy attempted in vain to fly, they were overtaken and put to the sword….” (Lindley, 2003: 148).

Tucker concludes that the majority of the Alamo garrison offered “little or no resistance” (2010: 237) and that the battle inside of the Alamo lasted only twenty minutes (2010: 318) or one-half hour (2010: 299). Davis (1998: 570) estimates that the battle took “less than an hour,” as does Crisp (2005: 64). Ironically, Tucker says the “stiffest resistance,” the “principal ‘battle’—the real last stand” took place not on the walls, but rather near the hospital, where perhaps 50-75 men who were recuperating were trapped and had little chance to escape (2010: 248-50).

According to Tucker, those Texians who had the chance to escape made the most of their opportunities in three groups: (1) 62 men escaped near the palisade just South of the church in what might have been an organized flight (2010: 261); (2) the second group consisted of about 50 men who exited the main gate on the South end (2010: 287-95); (3) a small number of men exited the Alamo near the center of the West wall (2010: 295-98). These escapees totaled as many as 120 men in Tucker’s estimation (2010: 302). They were met by 400 elite mounted lancers and cavalrymen, who mowed nearly all of them down. Thus it was more a slaughter than a fiercely contested battle. Santa Anna consequently had

the Texian bodies burned in proximity to where they fell (Tucker, 2010: 304; Davis, 1998: 736, n. 105). William C. Murphy, a Texian veteran of the 1835 San Antonio campaign as well as San Jacinto, told a reporter that the Texians had been "compelled to abandon" the Alamo, and eight survived and escaped to other cities (Tucker, 2010: 307). Tucker (2010: 307-8) notes that Alan C. Huffines (1999: 176-77), Gary S. Zaboly, and Roger Borroel have posited substantial flights from the Alamo. Borroel (1989: 83-85) believes over 100 Texian soldiers exited the Alamo during the battle. Davis (1998: 562; 736-37, n. 105) also posits three separate escapes, and notes "perhaps a score" of known but largely ignored sources that attest to Texian soldiers escaping from the Alamo during the battle. Davis discovered a confirming report by General Ramírez y Sesma in the Mexican military archives in Mexico City, and he also mentions a confirming forthcoming publication (by other authors) of an anonymous journal of a Mexican soldier. Davis thinks as many as 80 men, who, by his estimation, constituted about a third of the Texian force, fled the Alamo during the battle. Tucker concludes that the majority of the Texian garrison died outside of the Alamo and "even farther from the romance and glory of the mythical last stand" (2010: 308).

THE TEXIAN OCCUPIERS OF THE ALAMO WERE ANGRY THAT SANTA ANNA HAD USURPED THEIR RIGHTS AS COLONISTS

Walter Lord (1968: 20) estimates two-thirds of the garrison were "new arrivals" from the U.S., and, apart from a handful of Tejanos, only six were residents of Texas for six years or more. He concludes that the Anglo-Americans at the Alamo "weren't fighting for any kind of Mexican constitution" (1968: 20). Hutton (1995: 20) says: "Almost all of them were recent emigrants to Texas, and it was unlikely that many of them knew anything about the Mexican Constitution." Tucker avers that the Alamo occupiers were "almost wholly recent volunteers from the United States" who entered Mexico illegally, seeking free land that belonged to Mexico (2010: 15). Hardin (1994: 137) notes: "the majority had only recently come from the United States. ...Few of the real Texians were there, for few of the old settlers had originally sought independence or war." De la Peña (1975: 51) wrote in his diary: "there were thirty or more colonists, the rest were pirates." Lack (1992: 110-36) provides a comprehensive study of the Texian army, complete with charts that provide a basis for Kelley's summary below (115, 123, 127). Michael G. Kelley summarizes the three phases of the Texian army: (1) in the earliest phase, 63 percent of the men who fought at Gonzalez and San Antonio in late 1835 had spent at least a year in Texas, and fourteen percent were in Texas for eleven years or more. After the December 1835 capture of San Antonio, most Texas colonists who had participated in the revolt returned home to tend to their crops. (2) 78 percent of the soldiers during the Alamo and Goliad campaigns in 1836, by contrast, had spent less than four months in Texas, and only four percent had been in Texas for at least 11 years. (3) At the Battle of San Jacinto, 24 percent of the men in the army had been residents of Texas for at least six years, while only 21 percent had lived in Texas for less than five months (Kelley, 2011: 200-01). Nonetheless, that means at least 38 percent had been in Texas for a year or less, not including those combatants who left no documentary trace. Long (1990: 109) notes "two waves of mercenaries," the first of which arrived about the time San Antonio was captured, and the second after San Jacinto. The first group was largely killed

before San Jacinto. Thus the happenstance that a quarter of the soldiers at San Jacinto had relatively deep Texas roots was an anomalous statistical blip.

Even in the earliest period of the revolt, U.S. citizens served critical roles. The newly arrived New Orleans Greys were instrumental in the capture of San Antonio and the Alamo in the first place: without them, the revolt would likely have collapsed in late 1835 (Brown, 1999: 46; Tucker, 2010: 89). Gary Brown (1999:88) says the attack "was launched almost entirely by United States volunteers led by American officers and wielding American-manufactured weapons and equipment." This characterization is probably an overstatement, but the participation of U.S. volunteers was vital, nonetheless. Given the relatively few colonists in San Antonio in December of 1835, Brown concludes: "there is reason to doubt that the army remaining there was fighting for the constitutional freedoms of the Anglo settlers" (1999: 88).

When officials in San Antonio planned the election of delegates for the Constitutional Convention in 1836, Alamo garrison members were to be denied a vote because they were considered members of an occupying army rather than citizens of Texas or Mexico. As a compromise, the garrison, which unanimously supported independence, sent two delegates from its own body: Samuel Maverick and Jesse Badgett (Long, 1990: 125; Lack, 1992: 78-79; Tucker, 2010: 131). The Texian's December 1835 victory at San Antonio had also attracted immigrants who had been born in Europe many of them young and impoverished (Tucker, 2010: 140-41).

In an 1836 speech in the House of Representatives, John Quincy Adams mocked the grounds adduced for the revolt in Texas by saying the state of Michigan "has greater grievances and heavier wrongs to allege against you for a declaration of her independence, if she were disposed to declare it, than the people of Texas have for breaking off their union with the Republic of Mexico" (Lundy, 1837: 35). Paul D. Lack (1992: 3-4) observes: "The people of Texas had received much from the government of Mexico and had not been badly treated…. Seldom has the ruling hand been felt so lightly as in Texas in the period 1821-35." Josefina Zoraida Vázquez (1997: 75) declares: "No group in Mexico received as many privileges as the Texans because the government was determined to make the colonization work." While the complaint of the colonists of the future U.S. was "no taxation without representation," the Texian colonists long had representation without taxation (since tariffs were waived, generally for seven years).

Frederick Merk concludes: "The explanation of the Texas revolution, that it was an uprising against Mexican tyranny, is unfounded. That explanation was propaganda, spread by the Texans in the course of the war. … But even Texas historians are now agreed that Mexican rule had not been cruel or oppressive. The revolution was basically the outcome of admitting into the rich prairies of Texas a race of aggressive and unruly American frontiersmen, a masterful race of men, who were contemptuous of Mexico and Mexican authority" (Merk, 1972: 180).

THE TEXIAN OCCUPIERS OF THE ALAMO WERE A FORMIDABLE FIGHTING FORCE

In Texas, it is commonly asserted that Travis' men made up one of the finest fighting forces of its age, if not in the history of the world. Walter Lord

(1968: 20) debunks the notion that the garrison was mostly made up of "frontier types" like those found in Western films. He characterizes them as a "cross section of the America of that period," without a single professional soldier. In contrast to the misconception that a high percentage of the Texian occupiers were frontiersmen skilled in warfare with the legendary long rifle, Lord (1968: 20), Tucker (2010: 145), and Walraven (1993: 59) note their many professions: lawyer, merchant, farmer, rancher, clerk, surveyor, bricklayer, blacksmith, hatter. They had so little military experience that Tucker refers to them as "amateurs under arms" (Tucker, 2010: 263). De la Peña describes them as "inexperienced and untried in the science of war" (Tucker, 2010: 263). During the war, Texas offered 1,200 acres for military service, an additional 640 for completing six months service, and an additional 4,444 for settling with a family (Tucker, 2017b: 104). Benjamin F. Lundy condemned these mercenary "bribes" for military service: "The artful deceivers, however, have not relied upon the generosity and noble sympathy of our fellow-citizens, for they insidiously presented a bribe to excite their cupidity also. They have not only falsely represented the Texian cause as one of pure, disinterested liberty and justice, as opposed to perfidious tyranny and cruel oppression, but they have themselves assumed something more than the liberty which they basely and hypocritically advocate, by impudently promising a fertile paradisiacal piece of Texian land, a mile square, to every American citizen and foreign emigrant, who will sally forth to capture it from the Mexican republic!" (Lundy, 1837: 33).

Widely posted handbills lured enlistees to Texas with the promise of "a fortune in Land" (Tucker, 2017b: 105). When prime cotton-growing land was auctioned for as much as $50 an acre in the U.S., this was no exaggeration. It should be no surprise that many of the men who had braved long and perilous journeys in order to receive free land were poor farmers or ranchers. Since an individual worker could cultivate only eight to ten acres, the remainder of the property could serve as an investment, thus all settlers could be regarded as potential land speculators (Torget, 2015: 84-85).

THE TEXIAN OCCUPIERS OF THE ALAMO MADE THE MEXICAN ARMY PAY DEARLY FOR ITS VICTORY

Recent estimations of Mexican casualties are much lower than those that have long prevailed. On April 12, 1836, the *New York Herald* estimated that the Mexican army had suffered between 2,000 and 3,000 killed and wounded at the Alamo (Tucker, 2010: 309). On the same day, the *Memphis Enquirer* declared that 1,600 Mexicans had been killed, citing Travis's slave Joe as its source (Tucker, 2010: 310). Pennybacker's Texas textbook (1888: 78) also enumerated 1,600 Mexican fatalities. T. R. Fehrenbach (1968: 214), in his immensely popular *Lone Star: A History of Texas and Texans*, accepted the figure of "nearly 1,600 Mexican dead." In pointing out the absurdity of these figures, Tucker (2010) and Jeff Long (1990: 243-45) emphasize that the Texians were caught by surprise, their guns could not have fired properly if they had been loaded the previous evening, they suffered severe shortages of usable gunpowder, ammunition, and cannon balls. Tucker believes a majority of the garrison sought to escape. He says the most accurate count was that of Santa

Anna's chief of staff, Colonel Almonte, who, on March 6, listed 65 killed and 223 wounded in his Order Book (Tucker, 2010: 318). Tucker notes the similar figures given by other Mexican officers (2010: 317-18). Davis says the number of Mexican soldiers killed in the battle is "unclear." He thinks 400 were wounded (based on hospital figures that would include those wounded in the siege, adjusted for a number that remained hospitalized from 1835 campaign), 75 of which subsequently died. Davis estimates about 200 Mexican soldiers were killed or mortally wounded based on Mexican accounts (1998: 569-70; 739-40, n. 22). Lindley (2003: 275) gives a total of 516 killed and wounded, including during the siege, which is very close to Davis's total. Richard Bruce Winders (Collins, 2012: xiii) says historians currently accept a figure of less than 400 killed and wounded Mexican soldiers. According to Ramón Martínez Caro, who was Santa Anna's secretary, the Mexican death toll was needlessly compounded by Santa Anna's callousness and lack of medical preparedness, which resulted in over 100 deaths from wounds that should not have been fatal (Hardin, 1994: 155).

Tucker believes that half or more of Mexican casualties came from "friendly fire" (2010: 312-315). Many were shot from behind as they scaled or descended the walls. Mexican soldiers were generally not trained marksmen, they marched in columns and shot from the hip in volleys, and many must have shot their fellow soldiers in the darkness, tumult, and confusion. General Filisola attributed "most of our dead and wounded"—more than three-quarters—to friendly fire (Long, 1995: 245-46; Tucker, 2010: 313). Hardin (2001: 41) says Filisola's percentages might be "exaggerated."

De la Peña (1975: 54) said 253 Texian bodies were counted. Almonte (Lindley, 2003: 148), Sanchez-Navarro, and an anonymous source in the newspaper *El Mosquito Mexicano* also listed the body count in the 250s (Edmondson, 2000: 408). The most commonly used figure is only about 182 bodies, a figure used by Ruiz, (who probably wasn't even in San Antonio at the time of the battle), which is identical to Caro's 183, minus Gregorio Esparza, who was permitted burial (Edmondson, 2000: 408). In a notation, de la Peña lists the conventional numbers of those thought to be in the Alamo: 150 volunteers, 32 inhabitants of Gonzalez, and "and about 20 or so townspeople or merchants" from San Antonio (de la Peña, 1975: 54, n. 17). Tucker speculates that when Travis cited 150 men (a figure subsequently increased by the approximately 32 men from Gonzalez), he might only have been counting able-bodied men (2010: 319). Davis thinks Travis did not count either the sick or the Tejanos (1998: 548) and the total number of garrison members could have been "240 to 260 or more" (737, n. 105). In his January 18 letter to Houston, Jameson tallied 80 "effective" men out of a total of 114, which means about 35 were sick or wounded at that time (Nelson, 1998: 46). Crisp (2005: 144) notes "200-odd defenders." Other researchers speculate that the Alamo garrison received additional, hitherto unaccounted for reinforcements. But where could such a substantial number of ghost riders have come from, without leaving a trace, or being spotted by the encircling Mexican forces? Lindley (2003: 119-171) has some theories. I see one way to explain how two groups of people could come up with two distinct, but relatively similar body counts: one group of counters missed one group of bodies, or one group of counters double-counted one group of bodies. Bodies in the Alamo, for instance, could have been counted on the

inside, and then counted again after they were taken outside to be burned. In any case, scholars are increasingly favoring the higher number.

THE TEXIAN OCCUPIERS OF THE ALAMO REPRESENTED AND FOUGHT FOR THE ANGLO-AMERICAN COLONISTS (THE "OLD TEXIANS") WHO DECLARED INDEPENDENCE FROM MEXICO

Independence was not declared until March 2, 1836, and neither the Texians nor the Mexicans at the Alamo had confirmation of this event. The convention that declared independence at Washington (subsequently called Washington-on-the-Brazos) consisted of 59 delegates, almost half of who had been in Texas less than two years. The declaration itself, which was modeled largely on the U.S. Declaration of Independence, was written by the nephew of a land speculator. Its author, George C. Childress, had spent only a few months in Texas: he likely wrote the declaration in Tennessee, where he met with President Jackson (who had his tentacles everywhere) shortly before leaving for the convention (Shuffler, 1962: 327-29; Campbell, 2003: 147). Almost a third of the delegates had lived in Texas less than six months, and only one delegate was from Austin's original colony. 29% arrived after the war had begun. Only ten had been Texas residents for more than six years (Long, 1990: 207; Reichstein, 1989b: 77). The Declaration, signed largely by interlopers who had no authorized right to be in Mexico, reflected these shallow roots. It complained of the loss of rights "habituated in the land of their birth, the United States of America" as well as the fact that legislation was conducted "in an unknown tongue" (i.e. Spanish) (Long, 1990: 208). It was quickly and unanimously adopted in an unfinished house that no longer survives, though a "battered chest" (14 x 22 x 10") constructed of planks from this hallowed hall rests in the State Archives. It is known as The Ark of the Covenant of the Texas Declaration of Independence (Shuffler, 1962: 314-17, 327-29, 331).

The Alamo garrison expected that independence would increase the value of slaves as well as land. David P. Cummings, a Texian who would die at the Alamo, wrote in a letter dated February 14, 1836: "upon the faith in this great event [independence] great speculation is going on in Lands…." (Tucker, 2017b: 101). Cummings noted: "The price of land has risen greatly since the commencement of the war…." (Tucker, 2017b: 31).

By the time the Battle of the Alamo approached, most legitimate colonists had returned to their homesteads. Moreover, Tucker says the occupiers of the Alamo did not sufficiently appreciate that they were "the natural opponents of the older [Anglo-American colonist] settlers" for Texas land (Tucker, 2010: 89). The newcomers at the Alamo supported complete independence from Mexico, which would potentially threaten the land grants of the "Old Texians," the certified colonists, who supported the 1824 Mexican Constitution. The latter did so because the 1824 Constitution, which did not mention slavery, deferred the issue to individual states. Erasmo Seguín represented Texas in Mexico City when the Constitution was being written, and he "helped insure" that it did not forbid slavery" (Torget, 2015: 79, 78, 256; Tucker, 2017a: 58-59). Andrew J. Torget (2015: 71) calls Erasmo Seguín a "fierce advocate" for slavery in Texas. As Torget (2015: 174) also points out, by 1836, federalism in Texas and slave-based agriculture "could not be separated." The defense of federalism in Texas meant the defense of slavery, for they were intertwined from the inception of the

1824 Constitution. Andreas Reichstein (1989b: 72) argues that claiming fealty to the 1824 Constitution was also a stratagem designed to "enlist more aid from the U.S. … [and] the support of the liberal Mexicans and thus divide Mexican opinion." Reichstein (1989b: 72) adds that all the delegates to the Consultation knew "they were actually fighting for independence," and they had no intention of keeping the pledge they had sworn to the Mexican federation.

The Alamo garrison did not recognize the authority of Texian General Sam Houston (Lack, 1992: 119; Hardin, 1994: 58), and they received no support from him (Tucker, 2010: 133). Houston, who had advised against occupying the Alamo, claimed not to believe Travis' desperately worded appeals for aid and reinforcements (Davis, 1998: 547-48, 568-69; Kelley, 2011: 189-190; Tucker, 2010: 167). Travis, James Bowie, and David Crockett were among Houston's greatest potential political rivals for leadership in a new state or republic: their deaths served to eliminate his chief competitors. Moreover, Crockett was a champion of the "common man," rather than the wealthy planters and land speculators, as well as an ardent foe of President Andrew Jackson (Tucker, 2010: 115-17). In any case, Houston was too canny to allow himself to be trapped in the Alamo, and that reticence might have a bearing on his dilatory rescue effort, once he decided to head in the Alamo's direction.

SLAVERY WAS NOT A PARAMOUNT FACTOR IN THE TEXIAN REVOLT

Though slavery is the most repressed factor in Texas history—an issue that will be addressed in detail in chapter three—a number of works in recent decades have underscored slavery's importance in the Texian Revolt. Paul D. Lack (1985: 190) points out that federalism "tacitly protected slavery," despite repeated condemnations by the national government. "Clearly, the challenge to slavery contributed to the Texas decision to resist the new order [centralism] in Mexico" by force of arms in 1835, says Lack (1985: 190), who adds that separation from Mexico "also promised to end the period of disputation on the status of slavery." Lack (1985: 187) also notes: "Even malleable local Mexican officials clearly regarded slavery as a temporary and shameful evil," and by the spring of 1835 there were ample "warnings that traditional Mexican restraint with regard to slavery had come to an end." Moreover, by the summer of 1835, "many Anglo Texans concluded that Mexico had acquired the will and power to implement an antislavery strategy" (Lack, 1992: 241).

Vázquez (1997: 76) points to the extensive protections for slavery that were built into the Republic of Texas constitution (such as: "Congress shall not pass laws to prohibit bringing their slaves into the Republic…. nor shall Congress have power to emancipate slaves….") as tangible evidence of "the significant role that Mexico's antislavery stance" played in Texan independence. Slavery was the king of the Texas constitution, relegating congress to second fiddle. The British Plenipotentiary Minister in Mexico reported on June 1, 1836 that Irish colonists who left San Patricio for asylum in Matamoros told him "the establishment of slavery as a permanent institution was one of the principal causes of the rebellion" (Vázquez, 1997: 76).

Quintard Taylor (1998:39) argues: "The Texas Revolution of 1835-36 is often represented as a contest between liberty-loving Anglos and Tejanos confronting

a despotic Mexican government. That image belies a central motive in the campaign for independence: an Anglo desire to preserve slavery." Will Fowler (2007: 163) writes: "as long as the federal 1824 Constitution was in place slavery was allowed to continue under Texan law." He points out, however, that "the imposition of a centralist state would result in the abolition of slavery," which he calls "one of the main, yet often downplayed, reasons why the Texans rose up in arms" (2007:163). Fowler (2007: 175) adds: "after the demise of the 1824 charter, there were no longer any legal loopholes whereby slaves could be legitimately kept in Texas." Andrew J. Torget (2015: 140) argues that slavery must be placed in a broader context, and that "a complex tangle of cotton, slavery, and Mexican federalism… produced the fights that eventually led to the Texas Revolution." The revolt happened because the Anglo-Tejano alliance reached the "painful realization" that in order to "remake the region with slave-based agriculture," they had to have "unabashed" governmental support for slavery (Torget, 2015: 260).

Tucker deems slavery "the true—but most forgotten, denied, and overlooked—catalyst of the Texas Revolution" (2017a: 3). Tucker sees this struggle as a component of a "*national war* for slavery" rather than the "localized grass roots revolt" found in Texas histories, due to the "massive" neutrality law-violating, multi-level involvement of the United States, particularly in the South (2017a: 16). He also points out that the exclusive focus on the Alamo occupiers ignores the desire for freedom on the part of 5,000 black slaves, a reality "silenced to preserve… the Texas creation story" (Tucker, 2017a: 18). A number of Alamo garrison members owned slaves, and, according to Joe, other slaves were inside during the battle (Jackson, 1998; Durham, 2005).

Tucker argues that President Andrew Jackson and Southern planters formed a "pro-slavery cabal" to expand slavery (2017a: 22-25). Tucker says that Houston, whom he calls Jackson's "political-military representative," was sent by Jackson in 1832 to prepare the groundwork for a pro-slavery revolt in Texas (2017a: 209; 191; 197-204). In a report Houston sent to Jackson on February 13, 1833, he noted that nineteen out of twenty Texians wanted annexation by the U.S., and that Mexico was "powerless and penniless," embroiled in civil war, and thus unable to keep Texas (Stenberg, 1934: 242; Tucker, 2017a: 200-01). Houston and Jackson subsequently conferred in Washington DC in the spring of 1834, according to Houston's cousin Narcissa Hamilton, to make "plans for the liberation of Texas" (Tucker, 2017a: 217). In April of 1834, Houston, who was a major land speculator, wrote to his partner James Prentiss, predicting that Texas would be a sovereign state "within one year" and "forever" severed from Mexico in three years (Stenberg, 1934: 243; Tucker, 2017a: 219). In a follow-up letter a few days later, Houston informed Prentiss that a cessation treaty with Mexico "would not be ratified by the present Senate" (Stenberg, 1934: 243), likely an expression of Jackson's assessment. The Texians wanted virtually free land and slavery. Land was not a problem—Mexico was happy to provide it. But on the issue of slavery, Mexico and the Texians were on a collision course that—unless one side gave in—could only lead to war. Tucker concludes that the Texian Revolt, rather than the American Civil War constituted the "first war over slavery" (2017a: 19).

Even Captain Juan Nepomuceno Seguín, the preeminent and highest ranking Tejano hero of the Texian Revolt, came from a family that owned at least one slave (one of only three Tejano families with this distinction in 1820), planted cotton, and operated a cotton gin (Ramos, 2008: 92; Tucker, 2017a: 126; Tucker, 2017b: 258). Moreover, Juan Seguín's father Erasmo served as a close ally and cultural broker for Stephen F. Austin (Ramos, 2008: 81, 83-84, 120). The elder Seguín worked for years to oppose abolition laws and the enforcement of them in Texas, both on the national level and on the state level, and he was arguably the single most accommodating Tejano ally of slavery and Anglo colonization (Ramos, 2008: 97, 117-18; Tucker, 2017a: 126; 2017b: 258; Torget, 2015: 78-79, 256-57). After San Jacinto, Juan Seguín led a unit charged with hunting down and capturing the slaves that had been liberated by the Mexican army (Tucker, 2017b: 258). Despite his light skin and his exemplary service to the Texian Revolt, the Republic of Texas, and the cause of slavery, Seguín was falsely implicated and hounded from Texas by death threats from new Anglo American arrivals to Texas. He fled to Mexico with his family and later fought against the U.S. in the Mexican-American War (de la Teja, 2017; Ramos, 2008: 173-77).

Tucker supports the conclusions of Benjamin Lundy, the Quaker abolitionist who determined that slaveholders, slave traders, and land speculators sought to take Texas, re-establish slavery in it, and annex it to the United States (Tucker, 2010: 39).

ANTI-MEXICAN RACISM WAS NOT A SIGNIFICANT FACTOR IN THE TEXIAN REVOLT

Reginald Horsman observes: "The Texas Revolution was from its beginnings interpreted in the United States and in Texas as a racial clash, not simply a revolt against unjust government or tyranny" (1981: 213). More significantly, Texas became the crucible of racialized Anglo-Saxonism: the "belief that American Anglo-Saxons were destined to dominate…." (1981: 208). Horsman views the Texian Revolt and the Mexican-American War as catalysts "in the adaptation of a racial Anglo-Saxonism" (1981: 209). He adds: "In the 1830s and 1840s, when it became obvious that American and Mexican interests were incompatible and that the Mexicans would suffer, innate weaknesses were found in the Mexicans" (Horsman, 1981: 210). Anglo-Americans argued that they were driven by Providence or Destiny—rather than greed or opportunism—to conquer people they considered racial inferiors, which in their minds absolved them of guilt.

Stephen F. Austin is generally described as extremely tactful and diplomatic in his dealings with his host nation and its people. Many of his letters were written for public consumption, sometimes for publication. But in letters to his brother James Brown Austin, written in 1822 and 1823, he expressed scorching impressions of Mexicans from his first trip to Mexico. He called them "bigoted and superstitious to an extreem [*sic*]," he noted that "indolence appears to be the general order of the day," and he further claimed that "the majority of the people of the whole nation as far as I have seen want nothing but tails to be more brute than apes" (Weber, 1988: 157). However one might want to try to rationalize Austin's last observation, there is no taking the tail off of that trope! Similarly, Noah Smithwick, who moved

Daniela Riojas, *We Built It, We Will Dismantle It* (detail)

to Texas in 1827, claimed, in recollections dictated at the end of the 19th century, that he "looked on the Mexicans as scarce more than apes" (Weber, 1988: 154; Smithwick, 1983: 31). David J. Weber notes: "many Anglo-American writers held a contemptuous view of Mexican males wherever they encountered them," but negative stereotypes were based less "on direct observation or experience" than the anti-Catholic and anti-Spanish views inherited from their Protestant forebears (1988: 159). This prejudicial heritage, known as the Black Legend, will be further explored in chapter five.

In Lundy's opinion, "the sole object of the foreigners… is to make money; and they indulge in all the unholy prejudices against people of colour, which they brought with them, or have contracted from their associates here" (1847: 146). Many scholars see considerable racial prejudice on the part of the predominantly Southern U.S. immigrants who came to Texas. Arnoldo De León emphasizes this aspect: he argues that the initial Anglo-American colonists in Texas regarded Mexicans as "primitive beings who during a century of residence in Texas had failed to improve their status and environment. Mexicans were religious pagans, purposely indolent and carefree, sexually remiss, degenerate, depraved, and questionably human" (1997: 12). In his view, "the haunting prospect of being ruled by such people indefinitely explains in part the Texian movement for independence in 1836" (De León, 1997: 12). He calls racism "*very* prominent as a promoting and underlying cause" of the revolt (De León, 1997: 12). James E. Crisp, on the other hand, views the Texian Revolt as "less a consequence of racial friction than a precipitating cause of it" (1995: 48). In any case, he is assuredly correct in concluding that "the greatest measure of oppression in Texas came not before 1836, but after" (Crisp, 1995: 48).

In generalizing about Anglo-American attitudes, Raul A. Ramos (2008: 266, n. 73) makes three points: "First, they chose not to follow Mexican laws and civic practices; second, according to Mier y Terán's report, those Tejanos in their midst were treated poorly; and finally, many Anglo-Americans created a generalized negative attitude toward people of Mexican origin after the Law of April 6, 1830" (this law nullified unfulfilled empresario contracts, forbade the further importation of slaves, and ended immigration from the U.S.—though the Austin and De Witt colonies got exemptions). Ramos (2008: 89) says that Anglos who looked at Mexicans negatively tended to focus on the indigenous component of Mexican ethnicity in a class-based manner, which served to exempt elite Mexicans from negative stereotypes. Reichstein (1989b: 73) deploys a surgical accusation of racism: he argues that a few men in the war party such as Henry Smith, Branch T. Archer, and Robert M. Williamson "detested the Mexicans as a whole" and had always wanted independence from Mexico, regardless of what form of government it possessed. He also listed Travis as one of the Texians who "basically hated and were contemptuous of Mexicans" in another publication (1989: 187). Reichstein (1989b: 73) adds that the war party, and with them "all other leading Texans who followed that group in autumn 1835… did not fight with an ideological impetus but for ethnic reasons."

Lack (1992: 13) observes that Anglo settlers possessed "intense racial consciousness," which led them to regard Tejanos with suspicion, though the two groups had limited contact since most of the Tejanos lived in or near to San

Antonio. The exception was Nacogdoches, where the 600 strong Tejano community had constituted a majority until 1834, when their transformation to minority status "accelerated ethnic tensions" (Lack, 1992: 13). Lack (1992: 78) points out that, due to the influence of U.S. volunteers, the revolt became "more openly anti-Mexican" in December of 1835 and January of 1836. He believes expressions of prejudice had previously "been restrained by political prudence" (1992: 78). The earliest Anglo American settlers, who willingly become Mexican colonists, likely had considerably less racial animus towards Mexicans than the newcomers who clamored for war, independence, and annexation to the United States. The Texian Revolt and the Mexican-American War fanned the flames of racism.
General Filisola notes that when Texians encountered dark-skinned Mexican soldiers, "they treated them with grossly insulting scorn as if they were dealing with their own slaves" (Tucker, 2017a: 224). After San Jacinto, Texians pressed some surviving dark Mexican soldiers into servitude/slavery, as they had after General Cos' surrender at San Antonio in 1835 (Tucker, 2017b: 256). Torget (2015: 182-83) notes that captured Mexican soldiers were leased out as "servants" to any Anglos willing to take them. For an overview of the treatment of Mexican prisoners after San Jacinto, see Henson (1990). Prior to the Texian Revolt, free Mexican citizens had been kidnapped and sold into slavery in Louisiana; some Mexican soldiers who survived San Jacinto would have suffered the same fate, had it not been for the timely intervention of the Mexican consul (Tucker, 2017b: 256). Given the racialized discourse surrounding the Texian Revolt, John Quincy Adams rhetorically asked the most pertinent racial question in a speech in the House of Representatives on May 25, 1836: "Do not you, an Anglo-Saxon, slave-holding exterminator of Indians, from the bottom of your soul, hate the Mexican-Spaniard-Indian emancipator of slaves and abolisher of slavery?" (Lundy, 1837: 35).

As Hutton (1995: 18) observes: "the myth of the Alamo is often stunningly racist." This is because "a creation myth draws lines of good and evil that are always razor sharp" (1995:18). He adds that as a 19th century creation, the myth "reflects the racial sensibilities of that time" (1995:18). Tucker sees a continuation of the racial clash against Mexicans to the present day. He says a "vainglorious and heavily xenophobic" tone characterizes Texas history books, which suggests that their true purpose is to "demonstrate cultural and racial superiority over the Mexicans" (2017a: 2).

2.
Goliad and San Jacinto

"NO QUARTER" AT THE ALAMO AND GOLIAD

Santa Anna hoped to eradicate any foreigners who took up arms against Mexico in the Texian Revolt. This "no quarter" policy, which was in effect at the Alamo, has been treated in detail by Richard Winders (2017). It included killing combatants who surrendered. The rationale for this policy is that these men were irregular invaders who, since they were not engaged in a declared war fought between nations, should be regarded as pirates, without the protections offered to soldiers in an officially declared war (Winders 2017: 414-15). This "no quarter" policy was formulated by José María Tornel, the Mexican Minister of War, approved by congress, and issued in a form known as the Tornel Decree on December 30, 1835. The decree's most pertinent sentence declares: "Foreigners landing on the coast of the republic or invading its territory by land, armed with the intention of attacking our country, will be deemed pirates and dealt with as such, being citizens of no nation presently at war with the republic, and fighting under no recognized flag" (Winders 2017: 424). Vázquez (1997: 74) terms the decree "a desperate attempt to maintain control of the territory in the face of the flagrant intervention of foreigners against Mexico's government." On December 14, 1835, 28 soldiers, many of whom had been mustered in New Orleans, were executed after having been convicted of piracy for their participation in the invasion of Tampico. Since this action was not controversial, it paved the way for the Tornel Decree (Davenport and Roell, 2018).

War was more formal in this era than it is today. Irregular or partisan combatants were frequently not accorded the rights of regular forces, and protections for them were not codified until after WWII. Many Paris Communards, for instance, were summarily executed in 1871, as often happened in uprisings and civil conflicts, including Mexico's war for independence from Spain. Sometimes even uniforms met with disapproval: when French volunteers in colorful, Zouave-influenced uniforms surrendered during the Franco-Prussian war in 1871, the Germans refused to accept their legitimacy as soldiers and shot them (Schick, 1978: 176).

In his study of the New Orleans Greys, Gary Brown (1999: 284-85) observes: "Santa Anna claimed the New Orleans Greys were mercenaries and pirates, and technically he was correct. The Greys entered Texas at Gaines Ferry and Velasco as military units. ...most wanted free land—whether to settle on or sell will remain unknown" (since most of them died before San Jacinto). Brown (1999: 285) also underscores the mercenary core of the early Texian army that fought at San Antonio and Goliad: the New Orleans Greys, the Mississippi Volunteers, the Kentucky Mustangs, the Mobile Greys, the Louisville Volunteers, the Alabama Red Rovers, the Nashville Volunteers, and so on. Speaking of the New Orleans Greys, but in terms that could be applied to these other militias, Brown (1999: 284-85) notes: "they were military mercenaries, not pioneers or settlers, and they came to Texas for adventure and material gain—not constitutional freedoms." Vázquez (1997: 72) points out that "Texas Committees" in New York, New Orleans, and other U.S. cities raised troops, arms, and financial support for the Texian cause, which is how these mercenaries got to Texas.

Henson (1990: 221) notes that the Tornel Decree reflects concern over filibustering expeditions that had been "launched from the United States" as

far back as 1810. Even earlier, both Benjamin Franklin and Thomas Jefferson had earmarked Mexico (then part of the Spanish Empire) for invasion and conquest. Two major "filibuster" invasions of what is now Texas stand out. The Gutiérrez-Magee Expedition of 1812–13 terminated in the bloody Battle of Medina (Torget, 2015: 31–34; Warren, 2010). A thousand Spanish residents of Texas died in the rebellion and the harsh reprisals that followed it, causing another thousand to go into exile (Torget, 2015: 310). This great depopulation set the stage for subsequent Anglo-American colonization and separation from Mexico. The Long Expedition was actually two invasions during 1819–21. After capturing Nacogdoches during the first invasion, Long, who had raised over 300 men with offers of land, declared an independent Republic of Texas (Warren, 2017). The brother of Texas empresario Haden Edwards led the short-lived Fredonian Rebellion (also in the Nacogdoches area), named after the republic he declared in 1826 (Vázquez, 1997: 54–55). Mexican authorities had ample reason to fear invasions from the U.S. and rebellions on the part of their Anglo-American colonists in Texas. They also worried that Anglo-Americans posed a threat to "the rest of Mexico" (Henson, 1990: 221). Subsequent events confirmed the validity of their concerns.

On Santa Anna's direct orders, James W. Fannin and most of the Texian soldiers formerly at Goliad under his command were executed on March 27, days after they had surrendered, despite the reluctance of several Mexican officers to carry out the Tornel Decree. 342 Texians were executed, 28 escaped, and "other Mexican officials concocted reasons to strike 83 off the death list" (Hardin, 2001: 66). Popularly known as the Goliad Massacre, Harbert Davenport and Craig H. Roell call this the "most infamous" episode of the Texian Revolt and argue that it "immeasurably garnered support" for the Texian cause in Texas and the U.S. (Davenport and Roell, 2018). These summary executions—without trial or notice—exceeded the terms of the authorization Tornel provided to Santa Anna in a clarification on March 18, 1836 (Vázquez, 1997: 74).

Tucker (2010: 175–76) points out that the U.S. often employed no quarter policies: it was a common practice against Native Americans on the frontier. General Mier y Terán noted in a letter in 1836 that if Indians killed a Texian, they would retaliate by killing ten Indians, including women and children, a practice that essentially "exterminated" the Karankawas. Moreover, Bowie in 1832, Travis at Anáhauc, and Philip Dimmit at Lipantítlan demanded surrender or no quarter, providing justification for Santa Anna to claim that the Texians had been the ones who "declared a war of extermination" (Tucker, 2010: 174). These Texian exhortations, of course, were only on the level of threats, not actions.

Former insurrectionists played a vital part in the capture of San Antonio and the Alamo in 1835. On December 5, the Texian forces would have withdrawn for winter, if not for Ben Milam and the New Orleans Greys, who pressed to attack San Antonio. Brown (1999: 83–89) argues that the Greys took the initiative, and that Milam was put forward as the commander so the invasion would not have a mercenary face. Adolphus Sterne had a key role in the formation and financing of the Greys in New Orleans. Sterne, who had smuggled armaments for the Fredonian Revolt, had been sentenced to death by Mexico for his role in that rebellion, but had won parole through the intercession of his New Orleans Masonic lodge (Lord, 1961: 45–49; Long, 1990: 64–65). Had Sterne been executed or imprisoned, and had the Greys not come into existence when they did, San Antonio and the

Alamo would not have been captured by the Texians in December of 1835, and Santa Anna would have had no occasion to retake it in early 1836. Milam, who was a failed empresario, had been a participant in the Long Expedition, as had Jim Bowie. This prior insurrectionist activity shows that key participants in the Texian revolt of 1835-36 fought for independence long before Santa Anna took the national stage. Centralism provided a justification for them to try again. Multiple threats to Texas, as well as the desire to reassert Mexican sovereignty over its own territory help to explain the rationale behind the Tornel decree.

THE BATTLE OF SAN JACINTO

Frederick Merk (1978: 275) deems the Battle of San Jacinto "one of the strangest of the world's important battles," and indeed it is, not the least because Houston appears to have had little intention of fighting it. Stenberg (1943: 250) says it was fought "*in spite of Houston*." Like the Battle of the Alamo—and to an even greater degree—the Battle of San Jacinto was less a battle than a slaughter. It marked a dramatic reversal of fortune for the Texian army, and it provided an opportunity to avenge the Alamo and Goliad. Hardin notes that on the eve of the battle, "the rebellion was all but crushed" (Hardin, 1994: 191). The Mexican army had won a string of easy victories. Houston tried and failed to raise an army of regular soldiers. On March 10, a committee tallied 60 privates, but 26 of them "had already died on the smoking ruins of the Alamo" (Walraven, 1993: 115), and most of the remainder would die at Goliad. Houston settled for an army of mostly volunteers, and it was continuously on the run, causing both sides to wonder whether Houston was even willing to put up a fight. This apparent cowardice or excess of caution distressed Texian officials, as well as Houston's own troops, many of whom deserted in disgust. David G. Burnet, Provisional President of Texas, stated that shortly before and after San Jacinto, Houston was "universally detested" in Texas (Stenberg, 1934: 250). I agree with those who argue that Houston followed a surreptitious strategy because he was playing for higher stakes than almost anyone realized. Though he was the object of much ridicule, one should also acknowledge that Houston knew better than anyone else that his forces were no match for the Mexican army. Houston, "as late as April 15," wanted to withdraw to Louisiana to escape the Mexican forces and, ostensibly, to raise a more substantial army (Hardin, 1994: 192). His soldiers, however, took the road to Harrisburg instead, apparently against the general's wishes (Hardin, 1994: 192-93). Without this insubordinate act, the Battle of San Jacinto would never have taken place.

As luck would have it, a Mexican courier was captured on April 18. His dispatches indicated that Santa Anna, who was attempting to capture the Texian leadership, was isolated from his main forces. Santa Anna's reckless over-pursuit had left him vulnerable. He compounded that error by choosing an egregiously poor location for his camp, against the vociferous protests of his officers (Hardin, 1994: 202). Santa Anna could hardly have found a worse location in all of Texas. It was low ground, it offered little cover, tall grass allowed the enemy to advance undetected, the swampy ground negated the Mexican army's greatest advantage: its superior cavalry, regarded as the finest troops in the war. Perhaps most critically, a river and lake behind the camp, which were surrounded by marshes, made retreat almost impossible for the bulk of the army. After minor skirmishes between the two armies, Santa Anna expected

the Texians to attack on the evening of April 20 or the morning of April 21. General Cos arrived the morning of the 21st with about 500 men, who, though they were mostly raw recruits, gave the Mexican forces a numerical advantage: about 1,250 to 910, according to Hardin (1994: 209). When no attack was forthcoming on the 21st, Santa Anna told his troops, who were weary from marching or building fortifications, to rest. Santa Anna failed to post effective sentries, and he took a siesta in the afternoon (Hardin, 1994: 209-10).

Houston's army attacked at approximately 4:30. Before the attack, Houston gave a rousing speech, telling his troops to "Remember the Alamo!" and "Remember Goliad!" A Texian officer noted that after this speech, he knew that "damned few [Mexican soldiers] will be taken prisoner" (Hardin, 1994: 200). Houston, given his army's animosity towards "all Mexicans," excused Juan Seguín and his approximately nineteen Tejanos from combat, out of fear that they would be killed indiscriminately by Texians, who were out for Mexican blood. But Seguín insisted on fighting, and his men would soon shout "*requerden del Alamo*!" (Hardin, 1994: 209, 213).

The Texian army made a ferocious attack, deploying two cannon, known as the Twin Sisters, which were provided by the city of Cincinnati, to devastating effect. Caro recalls that the Texians "succeeded in advancing to within 200 yards from our trenches without being discovered, and from there they spread death and terror among our ranks" (Castañeda, 1928: 115-16, n. 45). Mexican Captain Pedro Delgado recalled that the Mexican soldiers "were a bewildered and panic-stricken herd" (Moore, 2004: 337; Hardin, 1994: 211). According to Texian Colonel Coleman and gunners John Ferrel and Ben McCullough, the Twin Sisters were fired at a range of 200 yards (Moore, 2004: 325, 334). This greatly boosted Texian morale, as John Swisher recalls: "the thunder of their roar is very potent in scaring the wits out of the enemy, and is worth ten bands of martial music in inspiring the troops" (Moore, 2004: 325).

The battle lasted less than twenty minutes. By Houston's account, 650 Mexican troops were killed that day, and 700 were eventually captured. The Texians suffered only nine dead and mortally wounded, and about 30 less seriously wounded. The slaughter continued until the Texians were too weary to continue killing (Hardin, 1994: 213, 215). Several Mexican corpses were scalped (Hardin, 1994: 214).

When William Fairfax Gray heard the results of the battle, he wrote: "I do not fully believe it. ...the result is too much *wholesale* (Gray, 1997: 162). Caro, too, was incredulous when he revisited the battlefield to retrieve Santa Anna's escritoire, for in the vicinity of the battle line, he only saw about 100 Mexican bodies. When Caro gave voice to this skepticism, a Texian aide showed him a road strewn with corpses, as well as a creek where bodies "formed a bridge" (Castañeda, 1928: 124-25). According to Caro, the aide explained that the Mexican soldiers "rushed in such confusion and in such numbers that they converted the crossing into a mud hole, obstructing the way, and our soldiers in the heat of battle massacred them" (Castañeda, 1928: 125). Caro laid the blame for the defeat squarely on Santa Anna, saying he was guilty of "criminal negligence" (Castañeda, 1928: 116). All the Mexican officers should share the blame. Given their poor position, they should have been especially vigilant. Additionally, they should have advised their troops that retreat

would likely be fatal: their location left little opportunity for escape, and they should have had no expectation of mercy.

Sergeant Moses Bryan, who was Austin's nephew, recalled a Mexican drummer boy with broken legs who had grabbed a Texian soldier and begged for his life: "*Ave Maria purissima! Por Dios, salva mi vida!*" After menacing Bryan, the soldier "blew the boy's brains out" (Tolbert, 1959: 150; Moore, 2004: 344; Hardin, 1994: 213). Senior Texian officers futilely attempted to stop the carnage, including Houston, who was also concerned that if his forces spent all their ammunition and broke their rifles clubbing surrendering Mexican soldiers to death, they would be vulnerable to an attack by Mexican reinforcements (Tolbert, 1959: 156). Moses Bryan recalls the response of one soldier, probably J. H. T. Dixon, to his colonel: "if Jesus Christ were to come down from heaven and order me to quit shooting Yellowbellies, I wouldn't do it, sir!" (Hardin, 1994: 215). Antonio Menchaca, one of Seguín's men, replied to a Mexican officer who recognized him and asked for mercy as a brother Mexican: "No, damn you, I'm no Mexican—I'm an American. Shoot him!" (Moore, 2004: 326; Hardin, 1994: 213).

The Texians had engaged and defeated "only a small portion" of the Mexican army that was in Texas. San Jacinto brought an end to the war only because Santa Anna was captured. Hardin justifiably concludes that San Jacinto was "squandered" by Santa Anna (1994: 250, 217). Mexican armies under the command of Generals Filisola and Urrea (the latter deemed the most capable general in the war) returned to Mexico, expecting to fight another major campaign in Texas that never transpired (Hardin, 1994: 245-46), largely because of lack of resources and continued centrist-federalist conflict (Vázquez, 1986).

THE PARTICIPATION OF U.S. SOLDIERS AT SAN JACINTO

It is certain that U.S. soldiers participated in this battle, but their number and impact are matters of contention. In a book review of Dixon and Kemp (1932) published in 1933, Eugene C. Barker minimized what he called the "ancient assertion" of U.S. participation (Walraven, 1993: 116). Bill and Marjorie K. Walraven were determined to find what I call the "smoking guns" evidence of participation. Barker was a deeply influential historian who had a deep agenda when it came to Texas. Kelley (2011: 201), who debunks the myth of Texas exceptionalism, dubs Barker its "champion," noting Barker's insistence that "it was the 'settlers' who did, almost unaided all the effective fighting" in the Texian Revolt, winning at San Jacinto "practically alone." Lack (1992:125-26;128) says scholars have "misconstrued the character" of the Texian army: he points out that contrary to Barker's characterization, the army of San Jacinto had "shallow Texas roots," with a median emigration rate of 1834. He (1992: 132) also notes that of the 3,685 men who served in the Texian army, "at least 40 percent" came from the U.S. "after the fighting began." Less than a quarter of the Anglo-American men who lived in Texas served in the army, much to the dismay of Secretary of War Thomas J. Rusk (Walraven, 2004: 582; Tucker, 2017b: 230; 277). Moreover, of the San Jacinto period army, "only 171 men were landowners in Texas" (Tolbert, 1959: 101). *Thus, very few Texans who already possessed land were willing to fight to retain it*. Lack (1992: 132) deems Texian enlistment low "for a people of such fabled militance." On April 15, 1836, Austin, who must have feared the Texian army would be eradicated without even more substantial U.S.

support, wrote to President Jackson: "let the war in Texas become a national war, above board…. It is now a *national war sub rosa*" (Tucker, 2017b: 277).

In a much-cited account, Noah Smithwick (1983: 93), a Texian who arrived at San Jacinto after the battle, said U.S. soldiers deserted to serve the Texian cause, then "'deserted' back" to the U.S. Army, "and no court martial ensued" (Walraven, 1993: 116; Hardin, 1994: 177; Tucker, 2017b: 253). Frank X. Tolbert (1959: 107) says U.S. troops garrisoned in Louisiana, who partially disguised their uniforms with buckskin accessories, had been "allowed to 'desert' for a short, fighting vacation" in support of the Texians (Walraven, 2004: 576). Additionally, a U.S. army officer was sent to Nacogdoches in the summer of 1836 to get 200 U.S. army deserters to return, but they refused (Walraven, 1993: 116; Hardin, 1994: 177).

To determine which U.S. soldiers fought at San Jacinto, the Walravens compared information on Texian veterans with rosters from the 3rd and 6th U.S. Infantry from 1834 to 1836. They found that in at least 153 cases, men had the same or "strikingly similar" names (Walraven, 1993: 116), and they provide an appendix of U.S. Army deserters or discharges, as well as the Texas bounties they received for their service (1993: 187–200; 2004: 585–601). The Walravens (1993: 118) say at least 97 U.S. Army veterans served in the Texian military by April 21, with perhaps three dying at the Alamo and four at Goliad. They (1993: 118) identify 55 men potentially trained by the U.S. Army who fought at San Jacinto (or guarded the baggage and the sick at Harrisburg). This figure is broken down into 28 likely U.S. Army deserters; seventeen soldiers who had been discharged from the U.S. Army; and ten soldiers who appear on both the Texian records and the U.S. Army rolls during the time of the battle. These do not include men with common names that could not be identified, men from other frontier units they did not investigate, or men in records that were missing.

The Walravens (1993: 118) believe these "professional soldiers undoubtedly played a leading role in overcoming the critical part of the Mexican defense" at San Jacinto. Military historian Terrence Barragy thinks the efforts of these experienced soldiers could have contributed to the Mexican army's panic (Walraven, 1993: 118).

Where was this military experience most important? U.S. deserters (including Michael Campbell, George Cumberland, J. N. Gainer, and Ira Milliman) and other soldiers who likely had U.S. artillery experience manned the Twin Sisters, which were highly effective only because of the crew's extensive training, experience, and ability to work in concert with one another (Walraven, 1993: 115; Walraven 2004: 577). They helped to penetrate the makeshift Mexican breastworks, and the extreme accuracy of their withering fire helped prevent the single, larger Mexican cannon from having a similar effect. Mexican Colonel Pedro Delgado, who commanded the Mexican Artillery, attested to the accuracy and effectiveness of the Twin Sisters on both April 20 and April 21 (Walraven, 2004: 580; also see Moore, 2004: 333–37).

Many fully equipped U.S. soldiers were in the center of the attack, with Lt. Col. Henry Millard's Regulars, providing the motley force with a much-needed, highly disciplined core. Captain Henry Teal had recruited 40 Regulars, many of which had U.S. Army uniforms and arms, including bayonets (Walraven, 1993:

115). “It is more than a probability,” say the Walravens (2004: 575), that the majority of the Texian regulars were U.S. soldiers, outfitted with standard issue uniforms, muskets, and bayonets. The bayonet conferred an enormous tactical advantage on the regular armies that possessed them. In a battle on level ground, the bayonet charge was often decisive: it frequently caused the opposing army to flee in disarray. There is good reason to believe a bayonet charge played an important role at San Jacinto. “We were ordered to charge with our bayonets,” wrote William C. Swearingen, who was one of Millard’s men, “the enemy gave way except about 60 men around the cannon…. They fell by the bayonet and swam in one mangle heap from that time until they reached the bieau [bayou]” (Walraven, 1993: 118; 2004: 579; Moore, 2004: 323).

The Walravens (1993: 117–18) assume Swearington was a former U.S. soldier, since old-fashioned muskets that could fit bayonets were standard issue, unlike the newer, more accurate rifles possessed by many of the Texians at San Jacinto that were made for hunters and frontiersmen. Significantly, it was a bayonet charge that vanquished the Mexican force that held its ground. It is also noteworthy that Houston’s battle report explicitly denied the presence of bayonets (“not having the advantage of bayonets on our side”)—because their presence would point to the participation of U.S. soldiers and weapons in the battle (Walraven, 1993: 118; 2004: 579). Houston’s official roster omits first names for the eight artillerymen, as well as for the two companies of Regulars—omissions that might be an attempt to mask their origins (Walraven, 1993: 119).

Smithwick (1983: 99–100) says Santa Anna “had not dreamed” he would be attacked the way he was, because, after his capture, the general stated: “assaulting breastworks without either bayonets or swords was never before known.” Firearms took a long time to load in this era of warfare. Hardin (1994: 72–75) delineates the 19 discrete steps required to load and fire a musket, as well as the hazards of utilizing such weapons. This explains why bayonet charges were so important. At San Jacinto, the first Texian troops to reach the Mexican forces were Colonel Sidney Sherman’s infantry regiment. Many only had time to shoot once before commencing hand-to-hand fighting (Moore, 2004: 319). This is not how battle is typically imagined in the 21st century, so it is useful to recall that de la Peña faulted Santa Anna for ordering his soldiers to be provisioned with as many as seven cartridges for the assault on the Alamo. De la Peña judged this an excess of firepower, resulting in high friendly-fire casualties, when they should have relied upon the bayonet instead (Long, 1990: 249). If—as has often been presumed—the Mexican army had a monopoly on bayonets, this weapon should have constituted a decisive advantage, especially behind a defensive position. Secretary of War Rusk had in fact advised against a charge at San Jacinto “without bayonets” (Walraven, 2004: 579). During a council of war prior to the San Jacinto assault, some officers opposed a charge “with only two hundred bayonets” (Walraven, 2004: 580). Now we know that Houston’s army *did* have bayonets, which were highly effective. That could help explain why the Mexican army inflicted so few casualties at San Jacinto. According to accounts by Texian soldiers, they heard Mexican bullets zinging all around them, which is not too surprising, given the Mexican army’s reputation for poor marksmanship. Most Mexican soldiers offered little effective resistance before dropping their weapons (which were very heavy in comparison to modern firearms) and fleeing, only to be killed in the marshes, the lake, or on the road, where they were pursued for miles.

U.S. General Edmund Pendleton Gaines made the quixotic decision to occupy Nacogdoches in July of 1836—perhaps as a last, futile effort to provoke a war with Mexico (see below)—where his army suffered a high desertion rate. In answer to a request to return all the deserters back to the U.S. Army, General Houston instead took this opportunity to "get rid of a few troublemakers" (Walraven, 1993: 121).

DID ANDREW JACKSON WANT TO PROVOKE A MEXICAN-AMERICAN WAR IN 1836?

Houston won a one-sided battle at San Jacinto, but with this victory he lost the opportunity to start a much more momentous war, which was planned by none other than President Andrew Jackson to acquire—at the very least—Mexican territory extending to the San Francisco Bay. As fantastic as this scenario might sound, it was put forward in a memo written in 1849 by Anson Jones, the fourth and last president of the Republic of Texas (Stenberg, 1934: 249; Walraven, 1993: 123). Jones' source was John H. Houston, Sam's cousin, who was close to Jackson. According to this plan, Houston would draw Santa Anna across the Neches River, onto what the U.S. would (falsely) claim was U.S. territory. General Gaines would engage Santa Anna militarily and claim that American blood had been "spilled upon American ground," forming the basis for a declaration of war against Mexico (Jones, 1966: 83; Stenberg, 1934: 249; Walraven, 1993: 123). If this sounds eerily familiar, it is because this is precisely the formula President Polk used in 1846 to start the actual Mexican-American War. (Jackson had chosen Polk to be the Democratic Party's presidential nominee after the presumptive nominee, Martin Van Buren, opposed the annexation of Texas.) Jones (1966: 82) terms Jackson's border a "*pseudo* claim," designed to create a "pretext for making common cause with Texas." Jones also says that after Goliad, General Houston told him that he planned to retreat to the Neches, seeking "a bloodless victory" (Walraven, 1993: 123), a plan revealed to "several" of Houston's subordinates, according to Richard R. Stenberg (1934: 248). Stenberg (1934: 248) says evidence of Houston's "real but thwarted intention" to retreat "under the American wing" comes from "all the participants in the campaign." According to Jones, "Houston was forced by the men of his army to depart from this policy, and go to Lynchburg, from which resulted the battle of San Jacinto" (Jones, 1966: 85; Hardin, 2001: 73). Additionally, Thomas W. Cutrer (2010b) says Texian soldier Francis T. Duffau claimed to have "documentary proof" that Jackson assured Houston that General Gaines would intervene if Santa Anna crossed the Trinity River. There is considerable circumstantial evidence to support Jones' claims. Samuel Swartwout, a land speculator and supporter of the Texian Revolt who was a Jackson confidant, wrote on April 23 from New York to his speculating partner, Texian Colonel James Morgan (before Swartwout had heard about San Jacinto): "Already I do suspect that Genl. Gaines is in possession of Nacogdoches" (Walraven, 1993: 127). Even before Gaines ventured to Louisiana, the *New Orleans Bee* wrote about the plan, causing Mexico to protest (Long, 1990: 215). Hardin puts great stock in the mute testimony of Pamela Mann's "team of prized oxen," which Houston had yoked on the presumption of a safe trip to Nacogdoches. When they—along with Houston's army—headed in the opposite direction, Mrs. Mann cut her beasts free of their harnesses and angrily accused Houston of duplicity. Perhaps Houston's original destination was a safe one, though his soldiers "had other ideas" (Hardin, 2001: 73). Hardin thinks the most compelling evidence is a speech Houston gave in the city of Houston in 1845. Houston recalled that after hearing of the fate of the Alamo garrison, he: "… then determined to retreat and get as near to

Andrew Jackson and the old flag as I could" (Hardin, 2001: 73). It seems that Sam Houston indeed wanted Uncle Sam to do his fighting for him.

At a meeting attended by British and French ministers in Mexico in December of 1835, Santa Anna declared that the Texian Revolt had been "instigated and supported by the United States." Moreover, he decried efforts to remake the border, saying: "Gen. Jackson sets up a claim to pass the Sabine, and that in running the division line, hopes to acquire the Country as far as the Naches [Neches]" (Walraven, 1993: 124). Santa Anna then said he would "run that line with the Mouth of my Cannon" (Walraven, 1993: 124). The man who reported on this meeting was Anthony Butler, a Jackson emissary who had made efforts to purchase Texas. On August 5, 1835, Butler was also instructed to attempt to purchase Mexican territory extending to San Francisco. Clearly, Jackson already reckoned that to get the Yankees to swallow the annexation of Texas, he would have to offer something like a prime port for their fishing vessels and future trade with Asia. According to Jones (1966: 84), "Gen. Jackson was, doubtless, the architect of the scheme for acquiring California, &c." For more on Jackson's secretive and deceitful machinations, see Stenberg (1932, 1934, 1936).

Jackson recognized that a reckless invasion could achieve more than mere brinksmanship. As a Major General in 1818, Jackson assumed command of General Gaines' forces, invaded Spanish Florida in pursuit of Seminoles, captured a Spanish fort, raised the U.S. flag therein, and had two British subjects executed (Long, 1990: 381, n. 3). That "berserk," order-violating show of force influenced Spain to cede Florida to the U.S. in the 1819 Adams-Onís Treaty, which also explicitly specified the Sabine (not the Neches) as the boundary between the U.S and New Spain. Ironically, Jackson was now disavowing the terms of an agreement that he had helped to force on Spain. In 1824, when he was a Senator, Jackson said "the way to get territory was to occupy it and after taking possession enter into treaties," a snippet of conversation reported to the Mexican government by Mexican chargé Torrens (Stenberg, 1934: 229).

Long (1990: 213-16) explicates Jackson's thorny situation: he wanted Texas more than anything, but Mexico refused to sell it; yet if he simply took it by force, that action could mean war with Mexico and possible interventions by Britain, France, and Spain. Jackson needed a proxy who could start a war for which Mexico could be blamed. In General Gaines, he had "an agent willing to commit an illegal, off-the-shelf operation" without official authorization (Long, 1990: 214).

In 1836 Jackson sent General Gaines to the Texas border, ostensibly to prevent warring factions from spilling over into the U.S., to preserve neutrality by preventing armed volunteers from the U.S. from reaching Texas, and to confront alleged Indian threats. Gaines sent two groups of U.S. soldiers into Texas to dissuade Indians from aiding Mexico, and he allowed armed volunteers to freely cross into Texas from Gaines Ferry, which was owned by his cousin James Gaines (Cutrer, 2010b), who was also a delegate at the Constitutional Convention (Long, 1990: 214). Clearly, General Gaines' mission was to violate neutrality, not to preserve it. On March 29, 1836, Gaines wrote to Secretary of War Lewis Cass, informing him that should Mexico or "her red allies menace our frontier," he would "anticipate their lawless movements by crossing our supposed or imaginary national boundary" to meet the "savage marauders wherever to be found in their

approach to our frontier" (Long, 1990: 216; Walraven, 1993: 125; Rippy, 1921: 294). Gains clearly didn't think much of neutrality nor of the very concept of a border as defined by an officially ratified treaty, but neither did his superiors. J. Fred Rippy (1921: 294) holds that by these "liberal" interpretations of his instructions, Gaines merely "divined" the will of Secretary Cass, who wrote back, before receiving Gaines' letter, telling the general that he had authorization to position himself "on either side of the imaginary boundary line," but not to go past Nacogdoches, which was U.S. territory, "as claimed by this government." Gaines also petitioned the governors of Louisiana, Tennessee, Mississippi, and Alabama to raise thousands of armed volunteers (a request cancelled after San Jacinto). Jackson subsequently denied authorizing these requests, but did not punish Gaines, whereas when Gaines made similar requests during the Mexican-American War, he was relieved of his command and court-martialed, though not convicted (Walraven, 1993: 125-27; Cutrer, 2010b).

Jackson and Gaines laid a trap for Santa Anna. Gaines prepared for a full-scale war with Mexico—one with no paper trail leading back to Jackson, which was exactly the point. Nonetheless, Jackson was disappointed that Gaines did not immediately invade Nacogdoches and incite a Mexican-American war, which would be directed by Senator Thomas H. Benton. Jackson expected Benton to be rewarded by two presidential terms, following Martin Van Buren, who was Jackson's vice president (Stenberg, 1936: 272-73). Stenberg (1934: 242) calls Houston and Jackson "crafty adventurers" who masterfully feigned "*appearances* of non-collusion." In this post-Nixonian era, we refer to this as "plausible deniability." Jackson and Gaines were generals of Manifest Destiny *avant la lettre*: they knew that once the claim was made that American blood had been spilled on American soil, the hawks would carry the day. But this opportunity was lost when San Jacinto was won.

THE MYTHIC STRUCTURES THAT BIND THE ALAMO AND SAN JACINTO

Why is the Alamo celebrated more than San Jacinto? Crisp (2005: 144-45) discusses mythic battles of annihilation, such as Custer's Last Stand and the Battle of Thermopylae in order to consider the paradox wherein "a nation that reveres success nevertheless elevates its great defeats." Crisp turns to Hutton's (1995: 14) analysis of mythic annihilations, in which the heroic forces "are always outnumbered by a vicious enemy from a culturally inferior nation bent on the utter destruction of the heroic band's people…. They know that they are doomed but go willingly to their deaths in order to bleed the enemy…. They perish with a fierce élan that turns their defeat into a spiritual victory." In legend, at least, the victory at San Jacinto served to fructify the mythic defeat at the Alamo, for there can be no sacrifice without something gained in return. *But what, exactly, was the nature of this sacrifice?*

As we have seen, Santa Anna engineered a pre-dawn attack on March 6, the very day the Alamo's occupiers—who finally despaired of receiving significant reinforcements—planned to escape. But this evidence has long been ignored in favor of one of the tallest of Texan tall tales, popularly known as Travis' line in the sand, a yarn woven by one William Physick Zuber. His "An Escape from the Alamo" purportedly recounts the story told by a Moses Rose—said by Zuber to be an illiterate soldier who "spoke very broken English"—to Zuber's parents after Rose escaped from the Alamo on March 3, 1836. Zuber reconstructs a lengthy,

flowery speech allegedly made by Travis (by Zuber's own admission made more authentic by his study of Travis's letters), wherein Travis explained that the garrison faced "*certain* doom" and how they should confront that inevitability. Then, as the story goes, Travis drew a line in the dirt with his sword, and exhorted his men to cross it if they wished to fight to the death. All but one are said to have crossed the line, some arising Lazarus-like from their sickbeds to take those fatal steps. Some, like Bowie, who were too ill to summon the physical strength to make this short journey, insisted that their comrades carry them across. Moses Rose, a man whose very existence cannot be proved, allegedly escaped to tell the tale. Zuber's romance was initially published in 1873. It proved to be so popular that an expanded version was printed in 1895. Excerpts from Zuber's mini-epic were used to indoctrinate Texas schoolchildren "as though they were facts for almost a century of public education" (McWilliams, 1978: 223). In her influential textbook, Anna Pennybacker (1888: 73) calls Travis' line in the sand "one of the grandest scenes history records."

Lindley (2003: 177-87) reprints the lengthier version, with the later additions in brackets; Travis' speech alone is several pages long (178-81). Though he was a rather shady and dubious character, Zuber did admit that one unidentified paragraph was purely his fictional creation. Even Walter Lord (1968: 23)—who went to great lengths to attempt to rehabilitate this legend—thinks it is the line in the sand paragraph. As history, Zuber's tale is preposterous in numerous details. In the course of three well-argued chapters, Lindley (2003: 173-247) debunks Zuber's saga and the torturous attempts of Texas partisans to recuperate a defensible historical core from it. While this might be seen as overkill for a narrative that—as history—should have been regarded as D.O.A. upon its initial publication, Lindley does such a thorough and compelling job that he even succeeded in convincing many Alamo enthusiasts. But as legend, Travis' line in the sand is a chief component of the Alamo myth, and that is primarily what concerns us here.

Percy McWilliams (1978: 223) notes that of the 250 accounts of the Alamo battle in the Eugene C. Barker Texas History Collection at the University of Texas, almost 90% include Zuber's tale. McWilliams (1978: 229) observes that crossing a formidable barrier, such as a wall of fire or a raging river, is often a transformative act in myth: "ordinary mortals may become immortal, fools may become wise." Since Travis' line was easily traversed, McWilliams (1978: 229) compares the story to Christ's Last Supper: both take place "just before an incident of destruction" and serve to "declare the purpose" of that destruction. In my opinion, both mythic structures are relevant. By crossing Travis' line, ordinary men are transmogrified into martyrs-to-be. They essentially enter into a contract to "die sacrificial deaths so that fellow Texans will be spared" (McWilliams, 1978: 229). Otherwise, their deaths "would be viewed as the legitimate outcome of selfishly motivated, criminal activities" (piracy, as Tornel and Santa Anna put it) instead of "gestures of altruism and selfless sacrifice" that bind their deaths with "the fate of their countrymen" (McWilliams, 1978: 229). Mythologically, as Brear (1995: 35) puts it, the Alamo garrison is the "divine sacrifice for the Texas cause… on 'the altar of Liberty.'"

McWilliams (1978: 229) explains that the purpose of sacrifice in myth is to "prevent an act of destruction that would otherwise occur." In the context

of the besieged Alamo garrison, mythic sacrifice has three components: (1) *the freely chosen* vow, which includes full comprehension of the sacrifice and its consequences; (2) *completion of sacrifice*, which here means the Last Stand fight-to-the-death that produces maximum enemy casualties; (3) *realization of the desired goal of the sacrifice*, which here is the salvation of Texas and its people through the prevention of their destruction by Santa Anna.

According to Zuber's text, Travis declared: "our speedy dissolution is a fixed and inevitable fact" (Lindley, 2003: 180). Surrender would constitute submission to execution; attempted escape would result in quick slaughter. He judged both courses of action "without benefit" to family and fellow compatriots. Travis advocated losing their lives "as dearly as possible," to "vow to die together," to "weaken" their foes so fellow Texans could "cut them up, expel them… establish their own independence." In return, the Alamo martyrs-to-be were "*assured*" that "our memory will be gratefully cherished by posterity, till all history shall be erased…." (Lindley, 2003: 180, 181). By crossing Travis's line, all soldiers—except for Rose—took the vow.

Zuber tells us Travis urged his men to complete their sacrifice: "kill them as they come! Kill them as they scale our walls! Kill them as they leap within! … And continue to kill them as long as one of us shall remain alive!" Travis vowed to fight "as long as breath shall remain in my body" (Lindley, 2003: 181). The Last Stand myth has persevered in the face of overwhelming evidence in part because the line in the sand vow demands that the martyrs' sacrifice be completed. The terms of their martyrdom stipulate a fight to the death. Otherwise, they would be worse than Rose, who at least had the candor to refuse the vow, and thus was an honest man in his craven flight. By way of analogy, let us consider Christ's vow and sacrifice. Suppose that in mid-sacrifice he decided not to complete it. Christ was thirsty (and no doubt hungry), so suppose that he took himself down from the cross, turned water into wine, and the rocks of Golgotha into a feast of loaves and fishes. To a Christian, the mere thought is not only blasphemous, but deeply offensive as well. Such an action would negate everything Christ had done up to that point, and would have prevented the establishment the Christian religion. To a great many Texans, who imbibed the line in the sand tale with their mother's milk, the mere thought that the revered "defenders of the Alamo" could have tried to enact a great escape is likewise a high blasphemy, an affront to the foundation of their secular religion. For the terms of their martyrdom made these men the opposite of Christian martyr saints, who went to their deaths passively. The Texians, by contrast, had to go out with a bang. Like mighty Samsons of destruction, they had to take as many philistine Mexicans as possible with them, in order to ensure the future existence of Texas. After dispatching multitudes of Mexicans with his sharp shooting, Crockett is imagined to have died in full martial glory, surrounded by a pile of Mexicans that he smited with his rifle butt, similar to how Samson dispatched Philistines with the jawbone of an ass. Bowie, heretofore unable to raise his head, had been shorn of his preternatural strength by illness rather than a perfidious haircut. Nonetheless, he is popularly thought to have slayed multiple able-bodied inferiors as his final act. Bowie's final fury is often (erroneously) imagined to have taken place in the Alamo church itself, making it a mini murder-in-the-cathedral, but in many respects it is more analogous to Samson toppling the pillars of the Temple of Dagon in a final frenzy of restored potency.

The Alamo's former custodians, the Daughters of the Republic of Texas (DRT), insisted that Bowie died in church. Clara Driscoll, the DRT's dominant personality and benefactress, was responsible for destroying the second story of the Long Barracks (where Bowie likely died) in order to make the church (their hallowed ceremonial shrine) appear more imposing (Brear, 1995: 100).

On June 29, 1836, an allegedly "well-authenticated" account published in the *New York Times* has Bowie lying in bed, killing Mexicans with each discharge of his pistol, till the Mexicans, who "dared not approach him… shot him through the door, and as the cowards approached his bed over the dead bodies of their companions, the dying Bowie, nerving himself for a last blow, plunged his knife into the heart of his nearest foe at the same instant that he expired" (Zaboly, 2011: 251). *Hesperian* magazine in November of 1839 says Bowie was able to rise from his bed "and with the knife that bears his name, he for some time kept the enemy at bay. When his mighty arm was at last tired with the work of death, he fell upon the heaps of the slain which he had thrown around him" (Zaboly, 2011: 251).

Many Texas history partisans absorbed Zuber's yarn with conviction, and they took the Last Stand myth, for which they already had a strong predilection, as an article of perpetual faith. In 1989, the DRT encased a bronze replica of Travis' supposed line in a stone paver and placed it in front of the church's entrance (Brear, 1995: 135). A DRT spokesperson, also in 1989, explained that Travis strategically "occupied" the Mexican army "until General Houston could muster an army for the East." That army-mustering period "was bought with the lives of the Alamo heroes. Had it not been for the delay here at the Alamo, the story would have been undoubtedly much different" (Brear, 1995: 23). Holly Beachley Brear (1995: 35) compares the line in the sand myth to an ancient fertility ritual: "Travis has plowed a furrow with his sword in the dirt and has planted the seed of Texas liberty with his words. The sacrificial blood will then water this seed, it will emerge from the martyr's blood, and it will bear fruit at the Battle of San Jacinto."

Historians, on the other hand, are hard-pressed to explain how the Alamo "sacrifice" saved Texas, as least in the military terms contained in the supposed Travis speech. Bruce Winders, the curator of the Alamo, notes: "Houston made no use of the time gained by the Béxar [Alamo] garrison" (Winders, 2004: 134). Lord (1968: 24) points out that Santa Anna's losses at the Alamo "were far from insuperable," and its siege failed to "seriously upset" his timetable. Instead of regenerating and invigorating the army into a hard force of fighting men, it was—at least in terms of numerical measurement—the source of shrinkage, from 1,400 men to 784 at the time of San Jacinto (Lord, 1968: 25). Nonetheless, even in a text whose aim was to debunk the shibboleths of Texas history, Lord could not surrender the notion that the Alamo "sacrifice" was somehow decisive, for Lord's faith was unshakable. He still argues that the Alamo "saved" Texas (and of course this still means that the Alamo saved Texas *from* Mexico and *for* the United States). Lord can't argue that the Alamo was strategically important, so he makes another argument: even had the Texians been defeated at San Jacinto, "the Alamo had already made sure that Texas would be independent," because it "triggered a massive flow of United States aid that insured the ultimate freedom of Texas" (1968: 25).

Lord's argument ignores the massive flow of aid that made the capture of San Antonio and the Alamo possible in the first place. Brown (1999: 284-85) addresses the mercenary core of the early Texian army, as discussed above in relation to the Tornel Decree. It should also be pointed out that the Texian cause is pervaded by the rhetoric of victimization. This is part of a larger pattern. Richard White points out that Americans absolved themselves of guilt by transforming "conquerors into victims. The great military icons of American Westward expansion… are defeats," such as the Alamo, whose ultimate message is that we "do not plan our conquests…. We just retaliate against barbaric massacres" (Crisp, 2005: 164). Richard R. Flores makes a related, relevant argument. Utilizing Michael Taussig's notion of the colonial mirror of production, Flores (2002: 103-04) points out that "the dominant impute savagery to the native so as to legitimate their civilized violence against them."

Texian rhetoric, so consumed with "defending" the Alamo and the "fight for freedom," could easily give one the impression that the Alamo was the ancestral homeland of the Anglo-Saxon warrior, the Bravehearts of Béxar, who, since time immemorial, had successfully fought off hordes of barbarian invaders. The Texas Declaration of Independence complains of invading "mercenary armies." In fact, a group of Anglo-American colonists, with their mostly Southern aid-giving allies and mercenary soldiers, were the foreign invaders. With the help of their local Tejano allies, they completed their invasion of San Antonio and the Alamo in December of 1835. Thus the Alamo was "theirs"—in any sense of the word—for less than three months prior to the start of Santa Anna's siege. In many respects, Texas history has been an echo chamber of Texian propaganda. In the essay discussed above, Lord makes no mention of slavery, or of the motive of land. He writes as if the sole object of the conflict was that of the abstract concept of liberty.

THERMOPYLAE AND THE ALAMO

As noted in chapter one, Texians were obsessed with comparing the Battle of the Alamo to that of Thermopylae. They even sometimes referred to Alamo garrison members as Spartans. How better to aggrandize themselves, than to link themselves to the most famous Last Stand in the Western tradition. The ancient Greeks were highly accomplished braggarts and self-mythographers, and here, too, the Texians emulated their example.

This near ubiquitous association with the Spartans masks the fact that none of the Alamo occupiers (including Travis) went into the Alamo expecting to die. Nor did all of them—perhaps not even a majority—fight to the death. Nor were they members of an elite and highly trained fighting force, like the 300 Spartans, who were handpicked by King Leonidas from the ranks of arguably the most martial society in human history. The 300 Spartans fought beside thousands of other Greek soldiers and allies, a force that has been estimated as high as 20,000. When they were betrayed and outflanked, the Spartans and a much more substantial number of their allies fought to the death. Leonidas probably came to Thermopylae planning to die. An omen he had received from the Oracle at Delphi implied that either he or Sparta would perish. It is also possible that the Spartans could not escape because they were surrounded. Additionally, Leonidas might have maintained his position to enable a substantial number of Greek soldiers and allies to escape. In

any case, the Spartans got the best press, courtesy of Herodotus, and the battle was magnified all out of proportion to its military significance. The three-day battle did not prevent Xerxes, who, in the ancient world, was said to have had more than a million soldiers (he likely had around a 100,000), from subsequently conquering most of Greece, till more significant battles forced him to depart the next year. Leonidas had only 300 Spartans because a full-scale war effort would have conflicted with a religious festival and the Olympic games, and would have angered the gods (cf. DHWTY, 2015; Lohnes and Sommerville, 2018; Mandal, 2017 and the links they provide). The small size of Travis' garrison should also be explained. After the Texians captured San Antonio and the Alamo, most of the remaining Texian colonists went home. Most of the mercenary soldiers stationed at the Alamo wanted booty and adventure. About 200 of them joined the ill-advised venture to invade Matamoros, Mexico. They stripped the Alamo of its best munitions and supplies at the end of December, leaving behind a force of slightly more than 100 men, including the wounded and the sick. Subsequent reinforcements never made up for the crippling loss of those 200 men and the supplies they took with them. The Matamoros Expedition adventurers contributed to a string of Texian defeats, from the Alamo to Goliad (Roell, 2017).

The Alamo/Thermopylae comparison also masks the fact that the Anglo-Americans in Texas were not terribly concerned with the fate of the Alamo, at least not to the degree that they would fight to maintain their recently obtained possession of it. This is why, as noted in chapter one, Gray called the failure to significantly reinforce the Alamo a "national disgrace." Unlike the Texians, who possessed the Alamo less than three months, the Greeks, of course, had a longstanding claim to Greece. The obsessive Texian comparisons to Thermopylae also implicitly serve to confer legitimacy on their cause, for it suggesting that they were likewise embattled defenders of their homeland. This association also implies that the Alamo "defenders" were equally deserving of eternal historical glory, as specified by early proclamations and reiterated by Zuber. The freedom/tyranny dichotomy utilized by Texian propagandists also goes back to ancient Greece and accounts of Thermopylae.

HOW DAVY DIED, HOW DAVY LIVES

Soon after Santa Anna's victory at the Alamo, contradictory rumors surfaced concerning Crockett's death. Among them were reports that Crockett surrendered and was executed. Such accounts, accepted even by Crockett's son in 1840, were not controversial until after the *Disneyland* television episodes starring Fess Parker as Crockett, which aired in 1954-55 and kicked off a veritable Crockett craze (Hutton, 1995: 24-25). The footage was edited into a feature film in 1955, and the one-hour television shows were re-broadcasted in the 1960s. The Alamo episode ended with Crockett swinging his rifle at Mexican troops, who surrounded him on all sides, followed by a cut to the Alamo garrison flag, which dissolved into the Texas flag. It was a brilliant encapsulation of Zuber's yarn: Crockett's Last Stand fight-to-the-death not only "saved" Texas, it seemingly created Texas (as an Anglo-American entity). The Alamo episode in particular demonstrated the emotive power of television, as well as its ability to move hundreds of millions of dollars of message-reinforcing merchandise. Fess Parker went on a national and international tour, and untold millions of viewers would believe no other

account of Crockett's demise. *These viewers became true believers in the Alamo cult because they felt as though they were the actual eyewitnesses to history.* Thus a Disney television episode (which, fittingly enough, ended with previews of other, upcoming Disney fairy tales), served as the ideological foundation for forthcoming conflicts regarding the circumstances of Crockett's demise. As fate would have it, the accounts of seven Mexican soldiers point to Crockett's surrender and subsequent execution. To the extent that they were known, they were ignored or disavowed by historians who were sympathetic to the Texian cause. Even more damning, Reuben M. Potter, whose accounts of the battle (a pamphlet published in 1860, enlarged in 1878) served as authoritative sources for decades, suppressed the testimony of Francisco Becerra, a reputed (though highly dubious) eyewitness (and arguably Potter's primary source), undoubtedly because Becerra claimed to have witnessed Crockett's execution (Flores, 2002: 141–44). Potter angrily remonstrated against a subsequently published account of Crockett's surrender: "David Crockett never surrendered to bear or tiger, Indian or Mexican" (Flores, 2002: 144). For Potter, surrender to a Mexican would be as senseless as surrender to a wild animal.

Of the accounts of Crockett's surrender, de la Peña's is the most damning, for he records that Crockett claimed to have "taken refuge in the Alamo" while he was exploring Texas (de la Peña, 1975: 53; Long, 1990: 257–58; Flores, 2002: 136; Crisp, 2005: 118–19). For the marquee member of the Texian holy trinity to deny affiliation with the Texian cause is like St. Peter denying Christ—all that is missing is a crowing cock to signal his act of disavowal. To Alamo aficionados schooled by the likes of Zuber, Pennybacker, and Disney, the mere prospect of a Crockett surrender is heresy, which is why scholars who question the myth have been subjected to death threats.

When Dan Kilgore published a small volume in 1978 that collected the accounts of Crockett's surrender, he made international headlines as a myth-murderer. A London paper wrote that he could become "the most hated man in America" (Crisp in Kilgore and Crisp, 2010: 51). Crisp made compelling arguments that Crockett did in fact surrender, and that the de la Peña diary is both genuine and highly reliable. During a visit to San Antonio, Crisp was accosted by a woman in the street. She expressed a desire to "gut you right now with a Bowie knife, because hanging would be too good for you" (Crisp in Kilgore and Crisp, 2010: 101). Crisp was also surprised by the anti-Mexican content of his hate mail, which led him to examine the Kilgore archives, where he found similar racist hate mail. Though Kilgore had mocked charges of communism that had been leveled against him after his book came out, he never disclosed the anti-Mexican hate mail. Crisp (Kilgore and Crisp, 2010: 97) speculates that it was "too sore a subject" during the decade in which the Raza Unida Party achieved success in Texas. Of course, had Kilgore mentioned this mail in print, he would have been deluged with more of the same.

Clearly, Crockett mania provided refuge for significant anti-Mexican animus. This animus has been malleable enough to serve multiple agendas. By comparing the Alamo to Thermopylae, Santa Anna was made to stand for Xerxes, and his troops for the "barbaric hordes" that invaded Greece. Lord (1961: 207) declared: "in some circles it remains dangerous even to question" how Davy died, leading Richard R. Flores (2002: 149) to observe that by this period

“Crockett and nationalistic patriotism had collapsed into each other.” It follows, therefore, that if Crockett surrendered to his enemies, then “America” surrenders to its enemies. The local Texas enemies were Mexican-Americans and subsequently Chicanos. The international enemies include “despotic” communists.

During the Cold War, at a time when advocates of social and racial justice were accused of being communists, Alamo-myth Mexicans were ciphers for communism. Actor John Wayne began his efforts to make an Alamo film in 1945. Fittingly enough, Wayne was the president of the Motion Picture Alliance for the Preservation of American Ideals in 1948, the very organization that had solicited the House Committee on Un-American Activities to investigate the film industry in 1944. Wayne directed and produced *The Alamo*, released in 1960. In a Last Stand that literally brings down the house (at least a small part of it), Wayne, as Davy Crockett, is impaled by a Mexican lance that fixes him to the Alamo door. Still wearing his coonskin cap, he fells his attacker and breaks the lance with one fell swoop. When Wayne flails at Mexicans, they drop like flies. Mortally wounded, he staggers inside and torches the powder magazine as his final act. Gary Wills writes that Wayne hoped the film would be “a knockout blow to communism” (Flores, 2002: 121). In a little known footnote, the entertainer Sammy Davis Jr. had hoped to play a slave in the film, but he was barred from appearing in it because he was dating a white woman. Apparently, Davis was not sufficiently slave-like in real life to avoid offending the film’s core audience.

President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who was so obsessed with the Alamo that he falsely claimed to be a descendent of an “Alamo hero,” sought to apply the “lessons” of the Alamo to Vietnam and the Dominican Republic. He exhorted the troops in Vietnam to “nail the coonskin to the wall” (King, 1976).

In 2004 Disney delivered *The Alamo*, a delayed and much compromised feature film directed by John Lee Hancock. Director Ron Howard, with John Sayles as scriptwriter, had initiated the project, but Disney balked at Howard’s self-described “dark” vision, which would require an R rating due to violence. Howard wanted to produce a corrective to John Wayne’s version, and he also planned to explore ethnic conflict and U.S. expansion, but Disney “reconceived” the film, submerging Howard’s vision to one “built by a committee” with post-9/11 concerns (Corkin, 2012). In May of 2002, Disney executive Michael D. Eisner proclaimed that the film would ”capture the post-September 11 surge in patriotism” (Waxman, 2004). But rather than riding that wave, the film, accurately described as a “rather half-hearted liberal affair designed to appeal neither to hawks nor doves” (French, 2004), was one of the biggest box office bombs of all time. Crockett’s death scene is an unbearable cacophony of false notes. On his knees with his hands tied behind his back, a bloody Billy Bob Thornton is ordered to throw himself “on the mercy” of Santa Anna. He instead offers to accept Santa Anna’s surrender and to intercede on his behalf with General Houston. When the Mexican bayonets finally approach to dispatch Crockett after an excruciating 2 ½ minutes (and here I am referring to the suffering of the audience), he warns: “I’m a screamer!” If this isn’t bizarre enough, after the Battle of San Jacinto, the film returns to the Alamo, where Crockett’s ghost is playing his fiddle on the church’s roof. Most viewers probably thought they knew how the movie would end, but who could have

foreseen a *Fiddler on the Roof* coda? Had Crockett had been dispatched while killing a multitude of Mexicans, the film would have had a boffo box office, even without Disney's bloated budget and record-sized set, because that—above all else—is what the core Alamo audience wants to see. If Ron Howard had delivered a deconstruction of Alamo myths, the film might have found favor among more critically minded audiences. Disney must have deemed Howard's potential audience too small. The corporation hedged its bets by attempting to play both sides, but ultimately pleased neither. Though Hancock says he did not set out to make a post 9/11 parable or allegory, his film has often been interpreted in those terms. Stanley Corkin (2012) observes that the opening shot of the aftermath of the Alamo battle "triggers memories" of the wreckage of 9/11. Philip French (2004) says Santa Anna is presented as "a preening monster, with contempt for the lives of his men whom he employs like suicide bombers." Corkin (2012) points out that San Jacinto "redresses" the Alamo, and delivers Texas "from the clutches of the tyrannical Mexican general," a depiction of events that is "oddly resonant" with the argument that the U.S. saved Iraq from "the clutches of the tyrannical Saddam Hussein" as a means of avenging 9/11. Corkin (2012) also notes that Ted Poe, the Republican congressman whose district contains the Alamo, called Santa Anna "the 19th-century Saddam Hussein" in 2005. A more conservative reviewer revives the Texian trope that only the Alamo "stood between freedom and slavery" for the Anglo-Americans (Holleran, 2004). He decries the movie's lack of heroism, and the fact that Santa Anna was permitted to deliver an anti-American speech, which he likens to affording the same opportunity to Castro, Stalin, or Pol Pot (Holleran, 2004).

Symbolically then, in the context of Alamo myth, Santa Anna is equivalent to, or interchangeable with every ethnic-Other "despot" or communist leader. These include—listing only those enumerated above—Xerxes, Hussein, Castro, Stalin, and Pol Pot. Flores' insight that the mythic Crockett and nationalistic patriotism are intertwined explains the nature of the deep identification that many red-blooded Americans have made with Crockett. His devotees believe Davy died to subdue Santa Anna, and his myth not only immortalizes him, it enlists him in the contemporary battles to subdue Santa Anna's "despotic," latter-day equivalents. Davy could not have surrendered to Mexicans, because "America"—and the Crockett cultists who identify with him—cannot and must not surrender to its enemies.

REPRODUCING ALAMO HEROES AND THEIR ROYAL COURT

Brear (1995: 99, 83, 112) terms the Alamo church an "empty tomb" and "the stone womb of Texas society," protected from potential violators by the DRT, its "matronly custodians." This stone womb is a shrine, the privileged vessel of the Order of the Alamo and the Texas Cavaliers, where San Antonio society reproduces itself in annual meetings convened in secret. The 400 Cavaliers select a King San Antonio from their own membership, and they also choose initiates to the order. Brear (1995: 124) notes that the Cavaliers had one Hispanic member and none of African descent. The Cavaliers have been described as "bourgeois aristocrats" (with emphasis on the former), while the membership of the Order of the Alamo is more deeply connected to old San Antonio money. The Order of the Alamo annually selects a queen and her court. According to *Texas Monthly*: "The queen is chosen not on the basis of her beauty or talent, but on the length of her bloodline and the health of her father's

bank account" (Russell, 1994). These ersatz royals are chosen for San Antonio's annual Fiesta celebration. Fiesta is a commemoration of the Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto, wherein Mexican cultural and culinary traditions are utilized to celebrate Mexico's defeat in 1836 (Brear, 1995, 64-83; Hernández-Ehrisman, 2008).

In 1987 the DRT denied the Catholic church's request to hold a mass in the Alamo church as part of a celebration of the five San Antonio area missions. Mass was instead conducted on adjacent city property, where the priest decried the Alamo church's transformation into "a shrine to a battle" whose myths and history have been "distorted to demean and insult a people" (Brear, 1995: 127). In 2015 Texas Land Commissioner George P. Bush terminated the DRT's stewardship of the Alamo for cause (Huddleston, 2015). After 110 years under the DRT, it remains to be seen if new management will significantly depart from Alamo myth.

3.
From the Austin Colony to the Civil War

SLAVERY AND THE AUSTIN COLONY

The seed of slavery that Stephen F. Austin had so carefully planted and nurtured flourished in Texas. Randolph B. Campbell points out the "popular misconception" that slavery was not important in the history of Texas: Texas is often represented as part of the West rather than the South; there was no book-length study of slavery in Texas prior to Campbell (1989); the best general history of Texas gave less than three pages to the topic; even the three volume *Handbook of Texas* lacked an entry on slavery (Campbell, 1989: 1-5). While 99 percent of Texas' slaves resided in the eastern two-fifths of the state in 1850 and 1860, that area was equal in size to Mississippi and Alabama, and "constituted virtually an empire for slavery" (Campbell, 1989: 2). In the 1850s, more than 25 percent of free Texas families held slaves, who were nearly a third of the total population, percentages comparable to Virginia, the oldest slave state (Campbell, 1989: 2). In 1860, the heads of 77 percent of Texas households had been born in Southern slave states, and many imported slaves and corresponding racial views (Campbell, 1989: 2). The slave interests that had supported independence and annexation had found fertile ground in Texas. Roger G. Kennedy (2013: 28) sees Texas as both the high point and the end of the road for slavery in the U.S.: "In 1865 cotton imperialism [cotton produced for international markets by black slaves, often on land where Indians were eradicated or displaced] came to its zenith in history and its terminus—in Texas."

The first question that needs to be answered is why Spain and Mexico permitted Anglo-American colonization in the first place. They were desperate. Always neglected, this northeastern sector of New Spain was depopulated by warfare, mass executions, and flight during the War of Independence early in the 19th century. A destructive flood in 1819 followed many years of punishing drought. Most importantly, Texas was devastated by the effects of cotton imperialism: the mass migration of settlers into the U.S. Gulf Coast region created an enormous demand for horses and mules, which was met largely by Comanches, who made increasingly violent raids in Texas in order to secure horses to trade for rifles (Torget, 2015: 19-24; 30-45). The Spanish were outgunned by the superior weapons the Anglo-Americans traded to the Comanches, and they also lost control of East Texas, now brimming with Anglo-American squatters, farmers, and traders, which Torget (2015: 44) describes as an "ungovernable appendage" of the U.S. Soon after the signing of the Adams-Onís Treaty in 1819, James Long led a short-lived expedition of a few hundred Americans to "liberate" Texas. This was the context in which Spain approved Moses Austin's colonization proposal (Torget, 2015: 45-51). Torget (2015: 71) also points out that "practically every" family that made up the Tejano elite in San Antonio (including the Seguín, Navarro, and Veramendi families) engaged in the importation of American goods into Northern Mexico. Austin, in turn, helped to grease the wheels of commerce for the Tejano elite in New Orleans, which is another reason they so willingly served as the indispensable Mexican abettors and enablers of plantation slavery in Texas, as well as Austin's allies against Santa Anna (Torget, 2015: 125, 165-66).

The Civil War brought about the emancipation of an estimated 250,000 black slaves in Texas (Campbell, 1989: 259). The institution of slavery had grown so rapidly in Texas because it had been built into the DNA of the Austin colony. In 1820, when Moses Austin ventured to San Antonio for his colonization grant from

Spanish authorities (awarded in early 1821), he took Richmond, a slave lent to him by his son Stephen. When Moses died in 1821, Stephen inherited his claim. Austin awarded colonists an extra fifty acres (soon increased to eighty acres) for each slave they brought with them (Campbell, 1989: 13). In a much-quoted letter dated May 30, 1833, Austin declared: "Texas *must be* a slave country. Circumstances and unavoidable necessity compels it" (Campbell, 1989: 3). But that had clearly been Austin's intention from the start, because the cruel system of slavery was the quickest way to create enormous personal wealth. Slaves could be compelled to work to the very limits of human endurance under severe physical and psychological duress. They could be rented out or sold off like cattle to raise money. Since slavery had been made hereditary, the children of slaves suffered the same fate. With the transition from religion-based slavery to race-based slavery, enormous efforts were made to make all people of African descent slaves for all of eternity. Thus slavery constituted a self-replicating labor force, as well as a self-replicating source of potential capital. Austin couldn't very well found a colony of affluent bankers or industrialists. The wealthiest people Austin could attract to his colony were slave owners who wanted to develop cotton plantations. The Austin colony was predicated on slavery, and Austin went to great lengths to preserve the institution on multiple occasions.

After the Law of April 6, 1830 (mentioned above and discussed in more detail below) Austin briefly made desperate but vain attempts to convince his colonists that they could thrive without slavery. He compared Negroes to Satan, who entered Eden in the shape of a serpent. Austin claimed revolting slaves would eventually violate and slaughter the colonists' daughters. He even drafted a never-posted letter to a Mexican official that claimed he had always opposed slavery in principle and would always oppose it in the future. But by 1831, Austin was again lobbying to allow the importation of slaves (Torget, 2015: 152–55). Thus the 1833 letter quoted above reflects the unalterable attitude of his colonists on the issue of slavery. It should be emphasized that these were circumstances that Austin himself had created.

Slavery had not been a significant factor in Texas under Spanish rule: the 1785 census listed 43 slaves out of 2,919 people; the 1809 census counted 33 slaves in Nacogdoches, while in San Antonio and La Bahía, slavery had "virtually disappeared," since the 1819 census listed only eight people of African descent (Campbell, 1989: 11). When Mexico won independence from Spain in 1821, there were only about 8,000 slaves of African descent in a population of 6 million. Moreover, abolition had been part of Mexico's revolutionary heritage, dating to the beginning of Padre Hidalgo's revolt in 1810. There was substantial sentiment in Congress to forbid slavery altogether. Congress was also hostile to Mexican Emperor Agustín de Iturbide, who dissolved Congress on October 31, 1822, replacing it with a junta. The junta seemed disposed to liberate all slaves after they had lived in Texas for ten years, but Austin and other aspiring empresarios successfully lobbied them and Iturbide for more accommodating laws (Torget, 2015: 71–75; Campbell, 1989: 16). The Imperial Colonization Law, signed by Iturbide on January 4, 1823, was a compromise in which Tejanos had played an important role: it outlawed the slave trade and decreed that the children of slaves would be free when they reached the age of fourteen (Torget, 2015: 75–76; Campbell, 1989: 16). Iturbide was overthrown the next month, but Austin was able to reaffirm these terms for his colony, and he settled nearly all of

his allotted three hundred families by the close of 1824 (Campbell, 1989: 16). Austin subsequently received four other contracts. A new national congress perhaps intended to outlaw the introduction of slaves to Mexico in a law passed on July 13, 1824, but the ambiguous wording "commerce and traffic in slaves" made it possible to interpret it as a prohibition on importing slaves as merchandise (Torget, 2015: 77-78; Campbell, 1989: 16-17). A new colonization law and a new federal constitution, both promulgated in 1824, failed to mention slavery, leaving that issue to be determined by individual states (Torget, 2015: 76-81; Campbell, 1989: 17). Austin created colony regulations that safeguarded slavery, based on regulations that existed in slave states: prohibitions against harboring escaped slaves, the obligation on the part of a white man to whip a slave who was discovered away from home without a pass, etc. (Torget, 2015: 86; Campbell, 1989: 18-19). Austin also lobbied the governor of Coahuila and Texas, saying in a letter of 1825 that without slavery the state would be peopled by "shepherds and the poor" (Campbell, 1989: 18).

In a state constitution written in 1827, the Congress of Coahuila and Texas specified that slaves could be imported into the state for only six months after the constitution was adopted, and that no one could be born a slave in the state. In 1828, supporters of slavery found a way around this law: they drew up contracts that made their slaves indentured servants, sometimes for as long as ninety-nine years (Torget, 2015: 95-136; Campbell, 1989: 17, 21, 23-24). This ruse was made possible by a fraud perpetrated on the Coahuila and Texas legislature by the two Tejano representatives. When the legislature was distracted by another matter, José Antonio Navarro and José Miguel de Arciniega sponsored a law that protected pre-existing contracts made in the U.S. Though ostensibly designed to attract settlers from free states, the law's real purpose was to make a loophole for the continued introduction of slaves into Texas (Torget, 2015: 131). In early 1829 Austin was again lobbying against prohibitions on slavery. On September 15, 1829, the Afro-mestizo President Vincente Guerrero declared emancipation throughout the nation. Juan Antonio Padilla, a Tejano who was formerly Secretary of State for Coahuila and Texas, was infuriated by the decree, which he called "tyrannical, cruel, illegal, and monstrous" (Torget, 2015: 146). Slaveholders threatened insurrection. State officials attempted to keep this decree secret; they requested a statewide exemption, which, after heavy lobbying, Guerrero provided on December 2. Guerrero was soon deposed, still in 1829, and after he was executed in 1831, his emancipation decree was annulled. Emancipation would not be permanent or universal in Mexico until 1837 (Torget, 2015: 142-150, 305, n. 26; Campbell, 1989: 24-26). To Austin's delight, the "best kind of settlers" were rushing to Texas, but Mexico's new president, Anastacio Bustamente—no doubt on the basis of General Mier y Terán's report that warned of the possible loss of Texas—ended immigration from the United States on April 6, 1830 (Torget, 2015: 150-52; Campbell, 1989: 26-27). Austin's and De Witt's colonies were exempt from the immigration ban. The law also cancelled impresario contracts that were non-compliant (De León, 2017). In Tucker's opinion, this ban was "too little, too late" to prevent the loss of Texas (2017a: 153). In theory, Mexico had limited slavery many times. In theory, it now ended U.S. immigration. But in fact, the Anglo population of Texas more than doubled between 1830 and 1834, growing from 10,000 to 21,000 (Torget, 2015: 157).

The state of Coahuila and Texas promulgated a new law on April 28, 1832. Thereafter servants brought into the state by foreign colonists could not be subject to service contracts of more than ten years (Torget, 2015: 163; Campbell, 1989: 29). Frederick Merk deems efforts to impede immigration and the importation of slaves from the U.S. "futile" and "counterproductive, for they annoyed Americans already in Texas and produced a friction that was to eventuate in revolution and independence" (1978: 273). The fact remains that if Mexico had done nothing, Texas would have been overwhelmed in any case. Perhaps most critically, the 1830 law seems to have been the last straw for Austin, who wielded enormous influence in Texas. In a letter to Mirabeau B. Lamar on December 5, 1836, Austin declared: "Ever since 1830, I foresaw that an open breach with Mexico was inevitable. It was, however, of the greatest importance to keep it off as long as possible, in order to gain time and strength" (Stenberg, 1934: 245). In a letter dated February 26, 1832, Mary Austin Holley referenced a simile her cousin Stephen had made with respect to Mexico, about an infant lying low till he became a man and could use weapons (Tucker, 2017a: 228). Clearly, Austin and some of his colleagues were biding their time, gathering strength for their rebellion. One of the implications of this reality is that Santa Anna's rule was a pretext for a revolt that had been planned for years. As Reichstein (1989: 188) notes: "Centrist governments and would-be dictators had existed in Mexico before 1835 without having it result in disturbances or even armed uprisings." According to Stenberg (1936), the "unscrupulous, opportunistic" Andrew Jackson had been anticipating a revolt in Texas since 1829.

Anglo-American colonists held conventions in 1832 and 1833, seeking repeal of the ban on immigration that was imposed in 1830, as well as statehood for Texas (apart from Coahuila). Austin took these requests to Mexico City. He spent most of 1834 under arrest due to an intercepted letter in which he had advocated forming a Texas state government without Mexican approval. President Santa Anna ended the ban on immigration in mid-1834, but refused to grant Texas independent statehood (Torget, 2015: 163-65; Campbell, 1989: 29-30). In violation of several Mexican laws, American settlers treated "all blacks as de facto slaves" (Campbell, 1989: 32). Even the most prominent Texians ignored slavery laws: on Christmas of 1834, William Barret Travis sold a five year-old-boy for the amount of $225; Austin listed a slave woman in his will of 1833, and designated who would inherit her in the event of his death (Campbell, 1989: 31-32).

Colonists almost began a full-blown revolt in 1832. Mexican Colonel John D. Bradbury, commander of the newly established military post at Anahuac, gave asylum to two slaves who had escaped from Louisiana. Travis and his law partner Patrick H. Jack, who were engaged to retrieve them, were arrested by Bradbury after insinuating that an armed force was coming from Louisiana. Travis and Jack had previously formed a militia to oppose the Mexican garrison (Henson, 2010; De León, 2017). Bradbury refused demands to release them, leading the colonists to send for cannon. At Velascao, a body of armed friends of Travis and Jack were not allowed to leave, and they fought a battle that killed and wounded a disputed number of Mexicans (Velasco, 2017; Henson, 2010; Walraven, 1993: 27-28). Before the armed insurrection could begin at Anahuac, the Mexican commander of the Nacogdoches garrison came to Anahuac and freed Travis and Jack. Santa Anna was then leading a rebellion against President Anastasio

Bustamante, and the colonists had pledged fealty to Santa Anna and the 1824 Constitution. These allegiances served to diffuse other potential conflicts when Colonel José Antonio Mexía arrived in Texas with a substantial army, because, at that time, he, too, was a Santanista. Mexía was fêted as an ally in Brazoria before his return to Mexico City (De León, 2017; Campbell, 1989: 36-38; Henson, 2010).

The abolitionist Benjamin J. Lundy was informed in 1833 that colonists wanted Texas statehood in order to have control over slavery laws. Lundy also said a man named Egerton from New York (a speculator hoping to get a Mexican land grant) told him Austin sought the continuation of slavery when he proposed an independent Texas to the Mexican Congress (Campbell, 1989: 29; Lundy, 1847: 85-86). Based on conversations with Egerton, Lundy says the Mexican Congress "would by no means agree" to this request (Lundy, 1847: 86). In a meeting with deputy Lombrano, Lundy reported that the congressman supported his plan to make a colony for free blacks in Mexico, and that in Lombrano's opinion, the congress of Coahuila and Texas would not support measures that would increase slavery (Lundy, 1847: 88-89).

The Texian Revolt was sparked over the collection of duties at Anahuac and an ensuing call for reinforcement by the Mexican military in 1835 (De León, 2017; Merk, 1972: 179-80; Campbell, 1989: 40). It also coincided with the return of Austin, who wanted separation from Mexico if he could not get statehood for Texas apart from Coahuila. That does not mean that slavery was not a key issue. Mexico's anti-slavery laws could not be enforced without an armed presence (De León, 2017; Tucker, 2017a: 153; Kelley, 2011: 156). When General Cos decided to come to Texas with reinforcements, the Texians had good reason to believe that he planned to end their practice of cavalierly disobeying Mexico's slavery laws. Lundy relates that Colonel Almonte assured him that the Mexican government planned to enforce its slavery laws. As Lundy puts it, once the government became settled the "insurgents" would be curbed, and "the laws which they now trample upon will be enforced" (Lundy, 1847: 129).

On the eve of revolt in the summer and fall of 1835, a number of colonists noted that the institution of slavery was imperiled by Mexico: Ben Milam worried about slave revolts and warned that the colonists could be reduced to a level below "the most degraded slaves;" R. M. Williamson, Horatio Alsbury, and several newspapers warned of impending emancipation efforts (Campbell, 1989: 40-41). The ironically named Liberty Committee of Public Safety—one would reasonably assume it was committed to abolition, rather than slavery—said the choice was "liberty or slavery" for the Texians themselves (Campbell, 1989: 41). As the Texians repeatedly put it, life without slaves would be slavery itself.

Even before Texas independence was declared, officials in The Consultation worked on legislation that would prohibit free blacks and mulattos from entering the new nation-to-be (Campbell, 1989: 45). The convention in March of 1836 produced a Texas constitution that addressed slavery at great length and introduced numerous detailed protections for it, but its Declaration of Independence did not mention slavery (Campbell, 1989: 45-47; Torget, 2015: 169-71). This was obviously a strategic omission. Officials were already planning for annexation to the U.S. By omitting slavery as a source of the revolt, they hoped to make annexation easier.

Slavery was—in a very real sense—paramount. Texian colonists would not have chosen loyalty to Mexico over the ability to own slaves (though the vast majority who owned land were not willing to risk their lives fighting for this right). They were completely unmoved when Austin tried to scare them into accepting a future without slavery. When Texas was a republic, it refused to accept emancipation as the price of recognition and protection from Britain. Texas happy sacrificed nationhood because annexation to the U.S. seemed to be the best way to secure the survival of slavery—even Lamar, the megalomaniac, would-be empire-builder eventually accepted this position. Texas withdrew from the Union when Lincoln was elected simply because he was opposed to the spread of slavery. Thus, Texas (as an Anglo-American entity) always put slavery first. It chose slavery over Mexico, over Austin, over its continued existence as an independent nation, and over its continued incorporation into the United States. Finally Texas chose to go to war with the United States to preserve slavery.

BENJAMIN F. LUNDY AND JOHN QUINCY ADAMS

One has to step away from Texas minutia to grasp the big picture, which includes the power, influence, ambitions, and intrigues of U.S. slavery interests, the role of the Jackson administration, the critical role of land speculation in Texas, and U.S. imperial ambitions, the latter not always strictly allied with slave interests.

The key historical figure that grasped and explicated the connections between these various interests was Benjamin F. Lundy. Lundy, a Quaker who became a leading abolitionist publisher after witnessing the cruelties of slavery in Virginia, made three trips to Texas between 1830 and 1835 in hopes of founding a colony for free blacks, where they could cultivate sugar, cotton, and rice. Lundy had extensive contact with Mexican officials, travelers passing to and through Mexico, slave owners in Texas, and a wide network of abolitionists. His work caught the attention of former U.S. President John Quincy Adams, an anti-slavery activist who was then a representative from Massachusetts. Lundy and Adams played a significant role in delaying the annexation of Texas by the United States (Lundy, 1847; Silbey, 2010).

In a pamphlet printed in 1836, which he augmented and reprinted in 1837, Lundy argues that the propaganda efforts of the Texians and their allies had misled the American people. Even a sizeable portion of honest citizens, said Lundy, "*have been induced to believe that the inhabitants of Texas were engaged in a legitimate contest for the maintenance of the sacred principles of Liberty, and the natural, inalienable Rights of Man: whereas, the motives of its instigators… have been, from the commencement, of a directly opposite character and tendency…. this contest originated in a settled design, among the slaveholders of this country, (with land speculators and slave-traders,) to wrest the large and valuable territory of Texas, from the Mexican Republic, in order to re-establish the SYSTEM OF SLAVERY; to open a vast and profitable SLAVE-MARKET therein; and, ultimately, to annex it to the United States*" (Lundy, 1837: 3).

Lundy also notes the essential and generally acknowledged participation of U.S. forces and resources: "…the insurrectionists are principally citizens of the United States, who have proceeded thither, for the purpose of revolutionizing the country; and that they are dependent upon this nation, for both the

physical and pecuniary means, to carry the design into effect" (Lundy, 1837: 3). While the vast majority of Anglo-American colonists did not go to Texas to fight for any cause, a tiny minority were insurrectionists, and the overwhelming majority of the resources for the independence movement did come from the U.S.

Adams delivered a speech in the House of Representatives on May 25, 1836 (which Lundy misdates December 25, 1835) in which he notes: "a swarm of colonists from these United States were covering the Mexican border with land-jobbing, and with slaves, introduced in defiance of the Mexican laws" (Lundy, 1837: 34). Adams characterizes the Texian Revolt as "a war for the re-establishment of slavery where it was abolished. ...a war between slavery and emancipation." Moreover, Adams claims: "every possible effort has been made to drive us into the war, on the side of slavery" (Lundy, 1837: 34).

PRESIDENT JACKSON AND THE THREAT OF WAR WITH MEXICO

Both Lundy and Adams underscore the importance of President Jackson's pro-slavery sympathies. Lundy calls them "paramount in the Executive branch" and says they work "in favor of this Grand Scheme of Oppression and Tyrannical Usurpation" (Lundy, 1837: 3). In histories of Texas, Lundy and Adams have been marginalized specifically because of their opposition to slavery, while the propaganda of the pro-slavery Texians has been taken at face value. Though there was no over-arching conspiratorial plan on the part of pro-slavery forces, Jackson and nearly everyone with any power in the South wanted Texas as a slave state, and they could be counted on to take actions to make it a reality. There must have been a number of opportunistic plots and schemes, some more hare-brained than others (to mention only those hatched by Sam Houston).

Though the raising of militias and volunteers in the U.S. to fight against Mexico is still celebrated today, such acts were illegal, and should have been suppressed by the U.S. president. Lundy points this out with citations of the Neutrality Act. But, as we have seen, Jackson was arguably the central figure in this undeclared, but not-especially-covert war on Mexico. Long (1990: 112-13) gives examples of U.S. district attorneys ignoring or abetting Neutrality Act violations, and he notes that an armed militia saluted and cheered Jackson when his boat passed by. When Jackson was questioned about the propriety of raising this force, he said they were entitled to bear arms and emigrate.

Adams had offered to buy Texas for a million dollars when he was president in 1826. Jackson was willing to offer up to five million, but he was determined to have Texas by any means necessary. David Lee Child of New Rochelle, New York, informed Mexican Colonel Almonte in a letter written on September 15, 1835 that a North Carolina politician had bought 40,000 acres in Texas because Jackson had informed him: "we must have it [Texas] either by negotiation or force" (Tucker, 2017a: 236). Jackson promoted speculation in Texas lands because he wanted slavery to spread and prosper and he wanted to reward pro-slavery allies. When it came to territorial mergers and acquisitions, Jackson was the ultimate insider-trader tipster. Investors and land speculators favored independence and annexation because without independence the script and deeds they traded and possessed would be valueless. Mexico could cancel them at any time (if it had not already) and without the guarantee of immigration, there could be no

certainty that anyone could take possession of the land. Without annexation there would be no guarantee that Mexico would not successfully reclaim Texas at a future date. Jackson wanted to strengthen the power of slavery interests in what was becoming an increasingly polarized nation. He fomented a revolt in Texas, and he was willing to use almost any means to achieve success, including the deployment of U.S. soldiers against Mexico, and the provocation of a war for territorial conquest. In a letter in April of 1835 to the unsuccessful empresario David G. Burnet, who was soon to be the interim President of the Republic of Texas, William B. Travis noted: "Speculators are overrunning" Texas, expecting it to be "ceded to the United States" before the end of President Jackson's second term of office in 1837 (Tucker, 2017a: 208). No lovers of slavery could hope for a more powerful, ruthless, determined, and unscrupulous pro-slavery president, so it was only logical to assume that the revolt should take place while Jackson was still in office.

The stakes were high. More slave states meant more pro-slavery senators and congressmen. In determining representatives in congress, slaves counted for three-fifths of a white person, which gave slave states extraordinary power in the House, as well as in the Electoral College. This in turn gave the "slaveocracy" the rule of the House, as well as a big edge in presidential elections. Presidents, in turn, appointed the justices to the Supreme Court that ultimately determined many key cases pertaining to slavery. In a speech to his constituents at Dedham on October 21, 1843, John Quincy Adams condemned the injustices of the recent congressional reapportionment. The number of representatives from Massachusetts had been reduced from twelve to ten, while 90 of the total of 223 congressmen represented slaves in Southern states, who could not vote because they were defined as property rather than people (Merk, 1972: 237-244).

In his "Address to the People of the Free States of the Union" on March 3, 1843, John Quincy Adams declared: "*…it [is] impossible for any man to doubt* that ANNEXATION and the formation of several new slaveholding States were originally the policy and design of the slaveholding States and the Executive of the nation" (Merk, 1972: 206). He elucidates their goals: "*…the perpetuation of slavery and the continued ascendancy of the slave power*" (Merk, 1972: 206).

In his May 25, 1836 speech, Adams claimed that the U.S. was on the brink of war with Mexico, which he attributed to "provocations" dating from the beginning of the Jackson administration to the authorization for General Gaines to invade Mexico (Lundy, 1837: 34). In this speech, Adams again points out Jackson's "instigation" for a "war of conquest" that was "commenced by aggression on your part and for the re-establishment of slavery" (Lundy, 1837: 35).

Adams states unequivocally that in a war with Mexico, "the banners of freedom" will be Mexico's, whereas the U.S.'s will be "the banners of slavery" (Lundy, 1837: 35). He warns that the separation of Texas from Mexico and its annexation by the U.S. could result in war with Great Britain, which might well ask why "with freedom, independence, and democracy upon your lips," are we "waging a war of extermination to forge new manacles and fetters…." He adds: "She [Great Britain] will carry emancipation and abolition with her in every fold of her flag—while your stars, as they increase in numbers [on the flag], will be overcast with the murky vapors of oppression, and the only

portion of your banners visible to the eye, will be the blood-stained stripes of the task master" (Lundy, 1837: 37).

Remarkably, Lundy foresees that should Texas be annexed to the United States, such an act would soon lead to the succession of slaveholding states from the Union: "but in fighting for the union of Texas with the United States, which is the avowed meaning of 'Texian Independence,' they will be fighting for that which, at no distant period, will inevitably DISSOLVE THE UNION" (Lundy, 1837: 33). Lundy prophesies that once the slave states have added Texas "to their land of bondage," they "will ere long cut asunder the federal tie which they have long held with ungracious and unfraternal fingers, and confederate a new and distinct slaveholding republic, in opposition to the whole free republic of the North" (Lundy, 1837: 33). He concludes that "our history" would then exemplify the maxim "of the slaveholding republics of old, that liberty and slavery cannot long inhabit the same soil" (Lundy, 1837: 33).

Lundy's foresight was better than the hindsight of most historians who have treated Texas, whether professional or amateur.

LAND SPECULATION IN TEXAS

Elgin Williams views land speculation as the defining feature of Texas: "It was land, and especially land speculation which gave the tone to the whole period of the annexation of Texas" (1968: 21). Texas was synonymous with cheap and plentiful land. As Marilyn Sibley points out: "To the land-hungry population of America and Europe, Texas represented one of the last places on earth where arable land was plentiful and virtually free" (Kelley, 2011: 97). The head of a family could get 4,600 acres of Texas land for the cost of surveying it: as low as two cents per acre, with six years to pay for it. Importantly, though these grants gave the recipient the legal right to occupy and use the land within the limits set by the Mexican government, they were not unconditional transfers of land that permitted the recipient to do anything with it (Kelley, 2011: 98). "General indebtedness," as Williams (1968:24) delicately puts it, drew many adventurers to Texas, where they were "speculators without capital." Consequently, land served as capital—even to pay doctor's fees (Williams, 1968: 27). It seems that just about everyone, even the "makers of Texas" entered the territory "as adventurers in land in one way or another" (Williams, 1968: 28).

Most of the prominent Anglo-American figures in Texas were land speculators on a significant—and sometimes a spectacular—scale. Many were speculators before they came to Texas. Moses and Stephen F. Austin had been speculators in Missouri. When Stephen F. died in 1836, he was one of the richest men in Texas, due almost entirely to his holdings in land. Between 1828 and 1832, he became the owner of approximately 215,927,139 acres of land (Reichstein, 1989: 69).

In the annals of speculation and territorial con artistry, James Bowie deserves special mention. After dealing in slaves smuggled by the pirate Jean Lafitte in Louisiana, Bowie turned to fraudulent land schemes on such a large scale that the term "Bowie claim" became synonymous with fraud in Louisiana (Davis, 1998: 52-62, 598-600n; 579). Davis discovered that the Bowie brothers' Louisiana

holdings “were based on extensive forgery, fraud, bribery, and intimidation, making him easily the largest land swindler of his era” (Davis, 1999). Bowie also engaged in land fraud in Arkansas, a “repeat” of his work in Louisiana (Davis, 1998: 159). Bowie arrived in Texas in 1830 with substantial land-grabbing experience and 109 slaves, whom he claimed were “dependents.” In February of that year he unsuccessfully applied for a land grant on Galveston island: “perhaps not coincidentally, this was the same area where his former slave trading colleague Jean Lafitte had once had his headquarters” (Bullock Texas State History Museum, n.d.). Did Bowie hope to become a literal sea borne pirate as well as a land pirate? We’ll never know. In any case, he married into a wealthy, well-connected Mexican family, and he got Mexican citizens to apply for grants, which he purchased from them. Bowie quickly amassed an astonishing amount of land—750,000 acres (Long, 1990: 30-31; Tucker, 2017b: 124-25). Like other speculators, this gave Bowie “a tremendous motive for wanting to see Texas break away from a Mexican government that would repudiate those grants” (Davis, 1998: 585). Nonetheless, most were invalidated, leaving his heirs with very little (Davis, 1998: 585, 573).

The Galveston and Texas Land Company in New York City bought grants from empresarios Lorenzo de Zavala and David G. Burnet (who later served as interim vice-president and interim president of the Texas Republic) among others, and ultimately accumulated 3,743,163 acres of prime land in Texas, which they resold as script (Tucker, 2017a: 172-73). Since Mexico would not accept these dealings, this script was essentially funny money that had no value without independence and annexation. Everyone involved had a vested interest in breaking Texas away from Mexico. This is why Lundy and Adams railed against speculators.

Other notable speculators include Mirabeau Lamar, Anson Jones, Ben Milam, and Sam Houston. Even David Crockett journeyed to Texas with the expectation of becoming a land agent (Kelley, 2011: 99-100). Prior to his journey to Texas, Crockett had served as a publicist for Nicholas Biddle’s Bank, “whose interest in Texas debt made it a powerful Northern influence for annexation” (Williams, 1968: 28). So, in addition to proponents of slavery, land speculators and bankers and actual and potential guarantors of Texas debt strongly favored independence and annexation.

TEJANOS AFTER SAN JACINTO

It was a perilous time for Tejanos: thousands of newly arrived American volunteers had come to join the Texas army, which had no need of them and little means to pay them. They nearly overthrew the Texas government “more than once” (Crisp, 2005: 45). At Victoria, where they were stationed, they directed their aggressions against local Tejanos, causing most of them to flee. Victoria mayor John V. Linn accused these newcomers of seeking the “total extermination of the Mexican race and the appropriation of their property to the individual use of the exterminators” (Crisp, 2005: 46). A similar attempt at ethnic cleansing was made in San Antonio. Felix Huston had raised an army of 500 to 700 volunteers, but they did not arrive in Texas until after San Jacinto (Cutrer, 2010a). Huston became a Texas general, and in 1836 he ordered Juan Seguín to relocate the inhabitants of San Antonio to the eastern bank of the Brazos River, which was over one hundred miles away. Seguín appealed this order to Texas president Sam Houston, who countermanded Huston’s order (Ramos,

2008: 169-70). John Linn said Anglo "investors" had been poised to take over San Antonio once it had been successfully depopulated (Crisp, 2005: 46). Foiled in his efforts to steal San Antonio and to invade Matamoros, Mexico, Huston returned to Mississippi in 1840, where he later agitated for the annexation of Texas and, in the late 1850s, for succession.

For many Tejanos, however, this was but a brief reprieve. In early 1842, a Mexican army briefly reoccupied San Antonio, and Juan Seguín was falsely accused of complicity. Though he was quickly exonerated, Seguín faced such serious threats that he resigned as mayor and fled to Mexico. Forced to choose between prison and the Mexican army, Seguín participated in another short-lived Mexican reoccupation of San Antonio, during which time he helped hundreds of beleaguered Tejanos find asylum in Mexico (Crisp, 2005: 47-48).

TEXAS ANNEXATION STRUGGLES AND CONTROVERSIES

After the defeat of Santa Anna, opposition to the annexation of Texas was strong, particularly in the North. Annexation was such a hot topic that Jackson publicly avoided it: he did not even recognize Texas independence till the last day of his presidential term, out of fear that it would impact the presidential election (Merk, 1972: x; 44-45). That did not prevent Jackson from secretly dispatching Machiavellian advice to a Texas emissary named William H. Wharton (the son-in-law of the largest slave owner in Texas) as early as 1836, who reported in a confidential letter: "Genl. Jackson says that Texas must claim the Californias on the Pacific in order to paralyze the opposition of the North and East to Annexation…. He… says we must not consent to less" (Merk, 1972: 47). In December of 1836, the Texas legislature had already claimed the Rio Grande as the Southern border, resulting in a "doubling of the territory of old Texas," which now included Santa Fe (Merk, 1978: 47). After a failed effort to take Santa Fe in 1841, known as the Santa Fe Expedition, the Texas Congress doubled down and followed Jackson's advice in 1842 by voting to extend the state boundary to the Pacific (Merk, 1978: 277).

President Van Buren opposed annexation. However, when Daniel Webster retired as President Tyler's Secretary of State and was replaced by Abel P. Upshur of Virginia in July of 1843, "the shift brought into the State Department the driving force of slavery extremism in the South. Annexation became the passion of the Tyler Administration" (Merk, 1972: x). Merk lists three reasons for the "earlier prudence" with respect to annexation: (1) opposition to the spread of slavery; (2) the "fact" that the victorious army at San Jacinto "had been composed largely of Americans who had crossed the border in blatant violation of American neutrality," raised the risk of international outrage if Texas were annexed too quickly; (3) Mexico threatened to invade Texas to reclaim it if the U.S. annexed it (Merk, 1972: 6). Upshur worked on a secret treaty of annexation until his death in February of 1844. His efforts were continued by John C. Calhoun, Upshur's successor as Secretary of State under Tyler.

In the 1830s a new form of propaganda was disseminated from the South: the argument that slavery "was an actual good… beneficent to the slaves economically, morally, and spiritually" (Merk, 1972: 6). A cavalcade of Southern propaganda efforts culminated in the preposterous but effective *Letter of Mr.*

Walker of Mississippi, Relative to the Annexation of Texas in February of 1844. Senator Robert J. Walker, a leading annexation zealot, disingenuously held that annexation was the best method of ending slavery in the U.S. His "safety-valve" argument claimed that the fresh, fertile lands of Texas would draw slaves from the Southern states, and that when the Texas soil was exhausted, owners would liberate their slaves, who would emigrate to Mexico (Merk, 1972: 9). The alternative, abolition in Texas caused by British influence, would result in abolition in the U.S., race war, the extermination of blacks in the South, and the overrunning of the North by insane and feeble-minded free blacks (Merk, 1972: 48). Walker declared: slavery "*will certainly disappear if Texas is reannexed to the union*" (Horsman, 1981: 216). Southerners and land speculators paid for the mass circulation of this missive in the North. Meanwhile, Walker anonymously authored an antithetical pamphlet for Southern consumption called *The South in Danger*. It claimed that Henry Clay and Northern abolitionists wanted to destroy slavery, whose survival depended upon the annexation of Texas and the election of Polk. The exposure of Walker's authorship of both documents revealed their "contradictions and hollowness" (Merk, 1972: 98).

Calhoun wrote in a letter of April 18, 1844 to a British envoy that Southern slavery benefited blacks, such that "in no other condition, or in any other age or country, has the Negro race ever attained so high an elevation in morals, intelligence, or civilization" (Merk, 1972: 87). Moreover, utilizing the same faulty census data as Walker, he alleged that in the North free blacks "have been invariably sunk into vice and pauperism," resulting in "deafness, blindness, insanity, and idiocy, to a degree without example" (Merk, 1972: 87). Northerners were outraged by the Calhoun letter.

The annexation treaty needed a two-thirds majority in the Senate, but it was roundly defeated by a vote of 35-16 on June 8. Thomas Hart Benton, a Democratic Senator from Missouri, had earlier given a long, blistering speech that cast doubts on alleged British intrigues, as well as the territory claimed by Texas, which included Santa Fe (Merk, 1972: 78-79).

According to Merk, the infamous House of Representatives "gag rule" (the 25th rule of the House, which began May 26, 1836) that forbade all petitions and discussions pertaining to slavery went into effect when the "Texas issue" emerged in 1836. At that time, a great number of anti-slavery petitions were put forward (Merk, 1972: 131-32). It was rescinded on December 3, 1844, in time to discuss the next attempt to annex Texas (Merk, 1972: 134). Since the U.S. had recognized Texas as an independent nation, the only possible constitutional method to annex Texas was through a Senate ratified treaty (Merk, 1972: 135-146), but since that effort had failed, President Tyler pursued annexation through a Joint Resolution of the House and Senate. Calhoun and many other strict constructionist, "states rights" advocates approved this stratagem. They were mocked for having abandoned their philosophical principles in order to abet the extension of slavery (Merk, 1972: 146-147).

Benton exposed the wide-scale land speculation that was taking place in Texas, including a pro-annexation lobby that distributed propaganda. Unaware of its extent when the annexation treaty was under consideration, Benton declared, in a speech delivered on July 17 and 18, 1844, that Washington DC was a "buzzard

roost" of speculation. He also noted that though Texas' "proper extent" was 84 million acres, the rejected treaty had claimed an area of 200 million acres. Moreover, Benton pointed out that one single man, John Woodward of New York, claimed more Texas land than all the land the treaty claimed had been "granted by all the Governments which ever held Texas" (Merk, 1972: 147-151). Texas's massive public debt had been secured primarily by land script, which was given to everyone from soldiers to merchants, who often resold it for a pittance to speculators. If Texas were annexed, then this land would be valuable. The more land that Texas could claim, then the more land its politicians could claim for themselves or sell.

In September of 1844, Calhoun and Tyler sent Duff Green, their craftiest undercover agent, to Mexico to attempt to purchase Texas, New Mexico, and California. Green reported on October 28 that any such sale would be suicide for any Mexican political party (Merk, 1972: 162-63).

Ultimately, however, Southern slave interests and Northern expansionists united, winning over Benton, whose Missouri constituents and legislators wanted annexation. The amended Joint Resolution was tweaked to mollify specific constituencies, and it passed both houses in February of 1845 and was signed on March 1 by President Tyler (Merk, 1972: 152-57). It gave the incoming president the choice of offering Texas admission to the union or negotiating a new treaty. Nevertheless, Tyler offered statehood to Texas just before Polk was inaugurated as president; Polk rescinded that offer and sent his own on March 10 (Merk, 1972: 160; 167).

Though Texas immediately sought annexation after securing independence, the long delay gave some prominent Texans the opportunity to nurture megalomaniac visions of an independent nation that would rival the U.S. by taking California and possibly Oregon as well (Merk, 1972: 172). Lamar held this fantasy, which is why he authorized the Santa Fe expedition (Reichstein, 1989: 162-63). Sam Houston was originally an annexationist. But for a while at least, he was also one of these Texas empire dreamers, or at least he pretended to be one of them. Ultimately, he settled into the annexation camp by April 15, at which time he dreamed of being a U.S. senator and perhaps the U.S. president (Merk, 1972: 172-73). The Texas congress unanimously accepted statehood on June 18. A convention overwhelmingly voted for annexation on July 4 and drew up a state constitution to present to Congress (Merk, 1972: 174).

In a February 28, 1844 diary entry, John Quincy Adams referred to the Joint Resolution vote as "the heaviest calamity that ever befell myself and my country" (Merk, 1972: 159). At the end of Merk's masterful summary of the intrigues that brought Texas to the union (1972: 176-181), he notes that Adams was not merely disgusted by the spread of slavery, he was also alarmed by the "example [it] set for similar adventures in Mexico, Central America, and Cuba," including the "techniques and maneuvers… established for their success in Texas" (1972: 181). Adams anticipated war with Mexico. He anticipated the seizing of Cuba, which would likely result in war with Spain and further imperial intrigues. It had appeared that annexation was definitively defeated, but now the floodgates were wide open. There was no end in sight to the march of slavery, or to the increased domination of the slaveocracy in the U.S. government. Merk concludes that the "roots" of the tensions that erupted in the Civil War "lay deep in the soil of Texas" (1972: 181).

The Polks set the tone for their new administration (Sarah Polk was so influential she could almost be considered co-president) by firing the White House staff and installing their slaves in the basement (Greenberg, 2012: 74). One hot day, as Sarah looked out the window at the slaves toiling on the grounds of the White House, she remarked to her husband that the Declaration of Independence was wrong to claim all men were created equal, since it was evident that blacks and whites were fulfilling the roles for which they had been created (Greenberg, 2012: 96). This critique of the Declaration of Independence presaged Alexander H. Stephens' "Cornerstone Speech" of 1861, which predicated racial inequality as the foundation of the Confederacy. When Texas seceded from the Union in February of 1861, one of its grievances was "the debasing doctrine of the equality of all men, irrespective of race or color" (Torget, 2015: 262).

President James K. Polk was not content with Texas. He believed the U.S. deserved more choice Mexican land, especially California. Nor, initially, did he believe that Mexico would dare to fight a war against the United States in defense of its own territory. Polk thought he could make Mexico an offer it could not refuse (Greenberg, 2012, 75-77; Horsman, 1981: 231-32). When Mexico could not be bought, Polk decided to provoke a war, but in such clandestine circumstances that even Democratic Party leaders were left in the dark about his intentions. General Zachary Taylor was dispatched to the Sabine River, the border of Texas, where he received a new map that claimed the Rio Grande as the boundary of the U.S., which led one of Taylor's officers to remark in his diary: "It is enough to make atheists of us all to see such wickedness in the world…." (Greenberg, 2012: 99). Having refused a suggestion to approach the Rio Grande, Taylor was ordered to march there with his troops, where the first skirmish with the Mexican army took place on April 24, 1846. Two weeks later, when Polk received the anticipated news of this conflict, his message to congress claimed that Mexico "has invaded our territory and shed American blood upon the American soil" (Greenberg, 2012: 100-04). Polk feared the Senate would reject his war, but the war resolution passed 42-2, in part because he packaged the declaration with funding for troops, a move Amy S. Greenberg calls "shrewd but contemptible" (2012: 104). Shockingly enough, not even Polk's Secretary of State, future president James Buchanan, understood that Polk's war was a war of conquest. When Buchanan read a draft of a message he planned to send to European nations that assured them that this war was not fought for California or other territories, Polk prevaricated, telling Buchanan that California and other lands might well be taken to defray the costs of the war. When Buchanan said the annexation of California would result in war with Britain and possibly France, Polk replied that he would willingly "take on all the powers of Christendom" (Greenberg, 2012: 109). Polk had chosen this course of action, taken from the playbook of Andrew Jackson, and nothing would dissuade him from it.

Few expected Mexico to put up much of a defense, since, as the *Illinois State Register* put it, Mexicans were "but little removed above the negro" (Greenberg, 2012: 115). Captain and minister R. A. Stewart told the U.S. occupiers of Matamoros that the "order of providence" allotted North America to the Anglo-Saxon race, from whence it would "influence and modify" the entire world (Greenberg, 2012: 120). Sam Houston, at a New York rally, deemed the continent a

U.S. “birth-right.” It was evident, he said, that Anglo-Saxons would “pervade… throughout the whole rich empire of this great hemisphere.” He also exhorted his male listeners to venture to Mexico, where they might “annex” beautiful señoritas (Greenberg, 2012: 213, 216).

Gradually, Polk and others decided that Texas, New Mexico, and California would not suffice. At one point Polk decided he also wanted the state of Tamaulipas, and a border at 31 degrees North across the rest of Mexico. Buchanan had initially wanted none of Mexico, he subsequently favored sparsely populated portions of it, but when his presidential aspirations took hold, he happily joined the “all Mexico” annexation chorus, saying it was “that destiny which Providence may have in store for both countries” (Greenberg, 2012: 219, 221). Polk noticed that the states of Sonora, Chihuahua, and Coahuila were rich in minerals and poor in Mexicans. This led him to wish for a border at 26 degrees, along with the port of Tampico, both Californias, and access across Tehuantepec (Greenberg, 2012: 256, 260). Perhaps this is where it would be useful to plug in Merk’s (1963: 24) ironic definition of Manifest Destiny: “It meant expansion, prearranged by Heaven, over an area not clearly defined.”

Expansionists tended to want all of Mexico, but they also tended not to want its Mexicans—at least not as full citizens. “How should we govern the mongrel race which inhabits it?” queried Buchanan in April of 1847 in a letter to General James Shields (Horsman, 1981: 242). Some expansionists favored a military occupation of Mexico. Lewis Cass of Michigan, previously mentioned as Jackson’s Secretary of Defense, preferred not to have Mexicans, “either as citizens or subjects” (Horsman, 1981: 241). Senator Calhoun, who only wanted “Caucasian” citizens, feared the annexation of all of Mexico would cause the “certain destruction of our political institutions,” which Greenberg interprets as a threat to slavery (Horsman, 1981: 241; Greenberg, 2012: 247). It was a dilemma, and no one expressed it with more mocking irony than Senator John Clayton of Delaware: “Yes! Aztecs, Creoles, Half-breeds, Quadroons, Samboes, and I know not what else—‘ring-streaked and speckled’—all will come in, and, instead of our governing them, they, by their votes, will govern us” (Horsman, 1981: 246).

Neither General Winfield Scott nor Commissioner Plenipotentiary Nicholas Trist (a special agent sent by Polk to negotiate the peace treaty with Mexico in order to bypass the Senate) believed that the Mexican and U.S. peoples were compatible. Nor did they believe that the U.S. could effectively govern Mexico, if it were annexed in its entirety. Henry Clay, who lost both his son Henry Clay Jr. (his greatest hope for the future) and his nephew John Hardin (Illinois’ political golden boy, whose death cleared the path for Abraham Lincoln’s ascendant political career) in the Mexican-American War, held similar views. Though he was a significant slaveholder in the slave state of Kentucky, Clay gave a fiery speech on November 13, 1847, that laid bare the lies of the Polk administration, as well as his personal opposition to the spread of slavery. The speech sent reverberations across the country, and it ultimately served as the death-knell for Clay’s presidential aspirations as well as for the Whig Party. The speech inspired and transformed Abraham Lincoln, who, as a politician, had hitherto been concerned with minutia such as tariffs. Lincoln’s first major speech in the House of Representatives, his famous “Spot Resolutions” delivered on December 22, 1847, amplified many of the themes Clay had explored in the speech

Lincoln had witnessed at Lexington, Kentucky the previous month (Greenberg, 2012: 214–15, 222, 232–38, 248–49).

Ulysses S. Grant, serving as a lieutenant in Mexico, wrote of the abuses "some of the volunteers and about all the Texans" perpetrated on the Mexican civilians, including murder, "where the act could be covered by the dark." He also condemned their love of violence (Long, 1990: 345; Greenberg, 2012: 131). Greenberg (2012: 131) explains that many of the soldiers had "thrilled to tales of Texas heroism and Alamo martyrs." They viewed Mexicans as racially inferior practitioners of a "suspect religion" in an "immoral nation." Many possessed a "deep enmity" for Mexicans, who they "conflated with Indians and African American slaves" (Greenberg, 2012: 131–32). Murder, rape, and robbery were among the crimes commonly committed by U.S. soldiers in the Rio Grande area. As Long (1990: 345) puts it: "No one enjoyed the war more than Texans and Southern 'volunteers,' who plundered, murdered, and raped their way through Mexico." A Matamoros newspaper reported that the Texas Rangers had lynched more than 40 Mexicans. After a Texas Ranger had been killed by a guerrilla during the occupation of Mexico City, the Rangers killed 17 Mexicans in retribution, and left 40 others wounded (Greenberg, 2012: 134, 195, 223). Rangers shot 36 Mexican men Near Agua Frio, then burned local ranch houses, before riding off, in the words of Samuel E. Chamberlain, "to fresh scenes of blood" (Long, 1990: 346). Well-reported accounts of atrocities created outrage in Mexico and the U.S.

The Mexican-American War inspired Henry David Thoreau's protest, arrest, and lecture, which inaugurated the practice of civil disobedience. In April the Massachusetts legislature declared it a "war against humanity." Walt Whitman turned against the war, which caused him to be fired from the *Brooklyn Daily Eagle*.

Ashamed of Polk's duplicity, the immorality of the war, and the atrocities committed against the civilian population, Nicholas Trist refused to demand additional territory from Mexico, and he refused to return to the U.S. when Polk recalled him on two occasions, for he was determined to end the "abuse of power." The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that Trist negotiated closely reflected Polk's original instructions. Polk was incensed by the terms of the treaty, but he settled for it because the war was increasingly unpopular and the Democrats had lost their majority in the House of Representatives (Greenberg, 2012: 238–39, 259, 263). The treaty put two major birds in Polk's grasping hands (New Mexico and Upper California), and he decided to secure them rather than to risk losing them by beating around in the bush in the attempt to capture more (Horsman, 1981: 244–45).

California became slavery's new battleground. The Wilmot Proviso, first introduced in 1846, was an attempt to forbid slavery in territories potentially taken from Mexico, and it resurfaced in the debate over California's status (though it could never pass the Senate). Disunion would have resulted from President Taylor's opposition to the spread of slavery in the newly acquired territories, had it not been for Henry Clay's ability to effect compromise and Stephen A. Douglas's ability to push bills through congress (Greenberg, 2012: 262, 266–67).

Nevertheless, the stage was still set for a cataclysmic conflict. Following an improbable and unforeseen series of events, the first cotton plant that sprouted in Austin's colony had led inexorably to the Civil War. As James M. McPherson

puts it: “The Missouri Compromise had contained the genie of slavery expansion for a generation. Texas unstopped the bottle and let the genie out; all efforts during the next fifteen years to stuff him back in again failed” (Silbey, 2005: xii). Texas had not become a slave state by happenstance. Decades of arduous planning and effort paved this path: “The acquisition of Texas as a slave society occurred after forty years of preparation and rehearsal, and thirty of strenuous and successful colonization by planters” (Kennedy, 2013: 275). Numerous battles—both literal and figural—were fought to make this annexation possible.

As Benjamin F. Lundy so sagely predicted, Texas independence lead to war with Mexico and disunion. But the Mexican-American War, the first fruits of this hotly contested annexation, also launched the political career of Abraham Lincoln onto the national stage, and it was he who would make the union whole again.

IT HAPPENED IN TEXAS

This short section gives a few examples of the suffering that the institution of slavery caused on a daily basis.

Noah Smithwick, who lived in Texas from 1827 to 1861, recalls an incident that took place during his time among the Old 300 Colonists, who had settled Austin’s first grant. Slaves learned they could find freedom in Mexico, and Jim, who belonged to Pleasant D. McNeel, “announced his determination to leave… threw down his hoe, and started away” (Smithwick, 1983: 24). McNeel commanded Jim to return to work, but when Jim did not, McNeel “shot him dead.” (Smithwick, 1983: 24). Another account paints Jim as a defiant insurrectionist, a portrait Long (1990: 40) rejects (it probably served as a rationale for murdering Jim). In any case, McNeel ended Jim’s dream of freedom, as well as every other dream he possessed, an act for which McNeel suffered no consequences (Tucker, 2017b: 157). Such acts served as a chilling lesson to other slaves that black lives had no value beyond service to their white masters. Even after emancipation, Taylor (1998: 111) writes of “a one-sided war that engulfed Texas for the rest of the century. Whites killed blacks for celebrating their emancipation, for refusing to remove their hats when whites passed, for refusing to be whipped, for improperly addressing a white man, and ‘just to see them kick.’ The sheriff of De Witt County shot a black man who whistled ‘Yankee Doodle.’” Slavery so devalued the lives of blacks that the utilization of deadly force against people of color is but one of its enduring legacies.

Slave masters could be unimaginably cruel. Ben Simpson recalls that his master, who compelled his family to walk from Georgia to Texas, shot Simpson’s mother in the road when she became exhausted. He molested Simpson’s sister, and he compelled his slaves to work naked. At night he chained them to a tree so they could not escape. The master whipped his Mexican wife when she gave his slaves more food than he instructed her to feed them. His slaves found relief only when the master was hanged—for horse thievery (Campbell, 1989: 117). Slave society was fine with everything else he did until he crossed the line and stole the four-legged property that belonged to another white man.

Texas was so intolerant that angry mobs threatened people who dared to criticize either the South or the institution of slavery. They were not infrequently

forced to leave town at gunpoint, a practice celebrated by Texas newspapers (Campbell, 1989: 209-30). In 1843, Stephen Pearl Andrews, a Houston-based lawyer, gave a pro-abolition speech in Houston. He continued advocating abolition during a visit to Galveston, where he planned to make a speech in support of abolition, to be financed by the British government. He was prohibited from making this speech, and an armed posse escorted him from the island the next day. Some months later in Houston, a mob surrounded his house and threatened his life, causing Andrews and his family to flee from Texas altogether (Torget, 2015: 238-39; Campbell, 1989: 221-23). E. C. Palmer was forced to leave Texas in 1859, due to a private letter in which he expressed anti-Southern sentiments, even though he did not mention slavery (Campbell, 1989: 224).

When intolerance and paranoia joined hands, the results were far more deadly. In 1860, fires broke out in Texas, probably due to a new type of match that ignited spontaneously in the summer heat. Up to 25 whites and 50 slaves were executed during these "Texas Troubles" because Texans believed an abolitionist plot had sparked a slave rebellion. Many slaves were whipped (some fatally) and tortured to confess. Slaves were executed in several counties, with or without confessions. In Fort Worth, where it was said it was preferable to execute 99 innocent men than let one guilty man escape, a man was hanged for allegedly "tampering with slaves." A white minister—who was almost certainly falsely accused of being part of the alleged plot—was captured in Missouri, brought back to Texas, and hanged in Fort Worth without a trial (Campbell, 1989: 185; 224-28).

As we have seen, Benjamin F. Lundy accused Texians of wanting to turn the territory into a slave mart. For a time, the Alamo church itself served as a slave mart. Charles T. Smith was a member of the Knights of the Golden Circle (KGC), a white supremacist, pro-slavery, pro-expansionist group formed shortly before the Civil War. He belonged to a KGC unit called the Company of Alamo Guards. In 1917, he spoke to an interviewer from the *San Antonio Express*, who asked Smith if the Alamo looked different at the time of the Civil War. He replied that external steps led to a platform on the second floor: "That platform was one of the old slave markets where Negroes were put up at auction. A stout, hardy Negro brought anywhere from $1,000 to $1,500. The thin ones were not rated so high. Men brought bigger prices than women and boys because they could pick more cotton" (Nelson, 1998: 80; Salas, 2018).

Even after the Civil War, slavery-like situations were perpetuated in the South in what Douglas A. Blackmon calls "slavery by another name," the post-Reconstruction practice of arresting blacks for minor crimes such as vagrancy and then forcing them to work on plantations, a phenomenon that continued until World War II. In Texas, recently rediscovered graves provide evidence of the imposition of slave-like conditions in an area known as "Hell Hole on the Brazos," near Houston. Blacks were forced to labor in mosquito, alligator, and disease-infested swamps, under conditions that deformed skeletons, tore muscles away from them, and broke bones. Additional study is expected to provide a "fuller portrait of the hell the state visited upon its black prison inmates in particular" (New York Times editorial board, 2018). Since plantation owners had no financial interests in these prisoners, they likely had little compunction against working them to death.

In July of 2018, crushed tortilla chips spontaneously combusted several times in Austin, Texas. It must have been hellish—under any set of conditions—to labor like a slave in the Texas heat. Race-based slavery in the American South was crueler than most previous types of slavery. In most earlier slave societies, it was possible for slaves to obtain their freedom. Some former slaves even became wealthy and prominent. Once Texas gained independence, concerted efforts were made to thwart the possibility of emancipation, and to prevent free blacks from living in Texas. The Southern slaveocracy wanted to prevent escaped slaves from finding asylum. That is one reason Jackson invaded Florida. To proponents of slavery—and especially to slave owners in neighboring states—the prospect of a slavery-free Texas was unbearable.

4.
Native Americans and Texas

Mexico engaged empresarios to settle Texas because Indian tribes effectively controlled much of it. This is how Stephen F. Austin put it in a speech on March 7 of 1836 in Louisville: "…Texas was a wilderness, the home of the uncivilized and wandering Comanche…. In order to restrain these savages and bring them into subjection, the [Mexican] Government opened Texas for settlement…" (Walraven, 1993: 25-26).

Austin, of course, was unaware of how deeply cotton imperialism had already adversely affected Texas, as discussed in the previous chapter. The mission system, which had generally only attracted poorer tribes in the San Antonio area, had failed, and was being terminated in the late 1700s. Trade replaced the mission system, but the "fragile peace" was broken by the War of Independence (Torget, 2015: 26-29). Spain's tenuous hold on its few Northern outposts was nearly lost, and Texas became the "launching point" for horse raids throughout Northern New Spain (Torget, 2015: 39-40). The demand for horses in the U.S. caused so much violence in Texas that the Tejanos were arguably close to abandoning Texas.

Initially, Austin held relatively enlightened views towards Indians for a person of his time. He thought land should be allocated to tribes and that Anglo colonists should marry Indian women in order to bring about assimilation (Tucker, 2017a: 82). Nonetheless, after his militia of Rangers drove a band of Karankawa off of land that he coveted, Austin ordered them to be shot on sight if they returned to their homeland (Tucker, 2017a: 82). Austin similarly dispossessed the Wacos and Tawakonis of their lands, after which he secured an empresario grant to settle them (Kelly, 2011: 157). John Holland Jenkins notes that in 1833, James Clinton Neill (a Ranger who would later become the Alamo's first Texian commander), devised a manner of "sending destruction" to the Waco Indians that was "singular, if not barbarous" (Jenkins, 1973: 25; Tucker, 2017b: 101). Jenkins elaborates: "Having procured some smallpox virus, he vaccinated one of the captive warriors, and then released him to carry the invasion into his tribe! Nothing was ever heard as to the success or failure of this project" (Jenkins, 1973: 26).

The profit motive overrode any philosophical misgivings Austin had about his mistreatment of Indians or his role in spreading slavery. The Texas Rangers, who would rain down so much violence upon people of color in Texas, were formally constituted in 1835, roughly modeled on the Rangers Austin employed, commencing in 1823. Kelley notes that some men joined the Texas Rangers "simply to pillage and kill Indians" (2011: 203).

Andrew Jackson had perfected the practice of eliminating or removing native peoples to facilitate the spread of slavery in the Creek War of 1812-13, an endeavor in which he was assisted by Sam Houston (Tucker, 2017a: 95-99).

INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE LONE STAR REPUBLIC

Texas President Sam Houston made a treaty with numerous Indian bands in February of 1836 (he was negotiating them during the siege of the Alamo) that established boundaries and other provisions, but the Republic of Texas Senate refused to ratify these treaties. Indian-hater Mirabeau B. Lamar headed the

senate committee, and after a long delay it issued a number of highly technical objections (Reichstein, 1989: 160-61). As Klos (2010) notes, when Texas officials learned that the Mexican government had not given land titles to Indians, they "used this as justification for expelling most of them from Texas." Raúl A. Ramos (2008: 177) notes: "Indigenous groups were also caught in the wave of Anglo-Texan land and power consolidation during the Republic period."

While Houston favored coexistence, his successor, Mirabeau B. Lamar, was diametrically opposed to that position. In 1839 he called for the "absolute expulsion" of the "barbarian race" from Texas. Lamar insisted: "The white man and the red man cannot dwell in harmony together. Nature forbids it" (Klos, 2010). Lamar greatly expanded the Texas Rangers, and had them wage "all-out war against the Indians" for three years, a campaign that broke or undermined the power of the dominant tribes (Procter, 2018). This fight also broke the bank. Lamar spent $2.5 million on his Indian wars, which was far more than the struggle for independence from Mexico cost (Torget, 2015: 208).

Texians harbored a general, unfounded fear that Indians would actively ally with Mexicans seeking to retake Texas. Militia groups were formed specifically to force indigenous groups out of Texas, driving them West, or South into Mexico (Ramos, 2008: 177). John Quincy Adams, in a speech of May 25, 1836 that opposed the possible annexation of Texas, declaimed: "Have you not Indians enough to expel from the land of their fathers' sepulchres, and to exterminate?" (Lundy, 1937: 36). Texians engaged in many unprovoked attacks and drove a number of bands from Texas.

INDIAN RELATIONS IN THE STATE OF TEXAS WITHIN THE U.S.

Between 1850 and 1860, the state's inhabitants tripled in number and multitudes of immigrants passed through on their way to California, bringing "a new wave of disease" that killed perhaps half the Comanches (Klos: 2010). Most critically, the Federal government's attempts to make peace treaties were thwarted by Texas' general refusal to yield public land for reservations (Klos: 2010). Little was done during the Confederacy, so the "final subjugation" of the South Plains Indians was brought about by the U.S. Army, which engaged in long-term military campaigns, buttressed by eliminating the buffalo, killing horses captured from Indians, and burning Indian villages (Klos: 2010). Consequently, Texas has but three reservations, "populated, ironically, by Indians who migrated to Texas after European colonization" (Klos: 2010). In stark contrast, Nelson (1998: 112) lists 62 tribes at the Alamo mission circa 1718-1793.

Ruben Luna, *Heavy Metal Capital vs. The Alamo City* (detail)

5.
The After-Effects of Race; Conclusion

"WHITENESS," ANGLO-SAXONISM, AND RACIAL MIXING

The erroneous belief that discrete "races" exist with specific, inheritable characteristics is a modern one. Modern humans evolved too recently, and were too mobile and promiscuous to form distinct races. Differences in skin and hair color are adaptations to climate, not signs of deeper, essential differences. Nevertheless, European colonizers defined whiteness as the norm, and questioned whether darker-skinned peoples possessed souls, or were capable of reason, or deserved their freedom, or deserved to continue to inhabit the land they possessed (Cordova, 2011: 30-31).

The relation between racism and slavery is commonly misconstrued. As Eric Williams notes: "Slavery was not born of racism: rather, racism was the consequence of slavery" (Selfa, 2002). In 1453, when the Ottoman Turks took Constantinople, the international slave trade was directed away from Eastern Europeans and Moors to sub-Saharan Africans. George Fredrickson argues that color was not initially the determining factor in the enslavement of Africans: "Africans and other non-Europeans were initially enslaved not so much because of their color and physical type as because of their legal and cultural vulnerability…. The combination of heathenness and de facto captivity was what made people enslavable, not their pigmentation or other physical characteristics" (Baum, 2008: 45). Bruce Baum points out that the modern concept of "race" developed only in the 17th century, subsequent to the "massive enslavement of 'black' Africans" (2008: 22). The Atlantic slave trade effected a transformation from religious-based slavery to race-based slavery. Plantation slavery in the Americas led to hereditary slavery for blacks (Baum, 2008: 44-49; Selfa, 2002; Wood, 2015). Negative associations were applied to blacks, and scientists began their hierarchical classifications of "races" (Baum, 2008: 49-57). Whereas religious creationists had viewed humanity as a unity, a family of man whose most consequential differences were the product of opposing religious creeds, the new adherents of what is known as scientific racism were busy creating racial hierarchies so they could deny the humanity of large groups of their fellow humans. This research was conducted in the interest of profit and domination.

"Race" was invented during the transition from feudalism to capitalism, pitting Enlightenment ideals against the realities of capitalist inequality, thus, as Kenan Malik notes, "the possibility of human equality" arose in "circumstances that constrained its expression" (Baum, 2008: 60). Deeply contradictory impulses are evident in the freedom/slavery paradox that haunts the founding of the United States and the Republic of Texas. Samuel Johnson formulated a biting quip directed against the U.S.: "how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?" (Mitgang, 1976). But this observation has even more relevance to the Texians, for no group yelped louder and more hypocritically about freedom. Gene Dattel (2009: ix) notes that at the time of the U.S. Constitutional Convention in 1787, cotton production was almost nonexistent and slavery appeared to be receding, so the Founding Fathers were "blindsided" by the ensuing cotton boom and the concomitant growth of race-based slavery. Cotton had been the U.S.'s leading export since 1803, so the slave society constructed in Texas was designed to cash in on the leading cash crop.

In the U.S., attitudes towards race were shaped by the construction of a mythical Anglo-Saxon race, which allegedly possessed an unsurpassed love of liberty. Reginald Horsman (1981: 2) deems this belief as "unreal" as the "Camelot of brave knights, fair ladies, and magic swords." Frederick Douglass (1865) observes that a few centuries ago the "proud Anglo-Saxon… might be found in the highways and byways of Old England laboring with a brass collar on his neck…." Nevertheless, The "feverish interest in distinctly endowed human races" in the nineteenth century endowed Anglo-Saxonism with a pronounced "racial cast" (Horsman, 1981: 43). As noted in chapter one, the Texian Revolt and the Mexican-American War served as catalysts for this racialized Anglo-Saxonism (Horsman, 1981: 209). At the same time, as U.S. citizens coveted Mexican land, Mexicans were deemed deficient (Horsman, 1981: 210). Frederick Douglass (1865), who, as an ex-slave, had inimitable first-hand experience, calls the "charge of inferiority" an "old dodge." "I utterly deny," says Douglass (1865), "that we are originally, or naturally, or practically, or in any way, or in any important sense, inferior to anybody on this globe." He points out that the allegedly deficient "character" of the oppressed serves as the "needed apology" or pretext for their oppression. Douglass (1865) notes that when the U.S. coveted "a slice of Mexico, it was hinted that the Mexicans were an inferior race, that the old Castilian blood had become so weak that it would scarcely run down hill, and that Mexico needed the long, strong and beneficent arm of the Anglo-Saxon care extended over it." Thus Douglass anticipates Horsman's argument by connecting the alleged inferiority of ethnic Others (blacks, Mexicans, Indians) with rampant Anglo-Saxonism. We will follow this twin trail of racial aggrandizement and deprecation in the U.S., in roughly chronological order.

Highly dubious and belligerent claims were made on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon race at the time of the Texian Revolt. Senator Benjamin Leigh of Virginia refuted abolitionists in 1836 by insisting that the Anglo-Saxon race was never content with equality, that it invariably "proceeded to exterminate or enslave the other race" or "abandon the country" (Horsman, 1981: 209).

Opposition to racial mixing in the US was conditioned by English attitudes toward the Spanish, whom they had condemned for possessing African, Moorish, or Saracen blood. This "contamination" was a component of the "Black Legend," which held that the Spanish had an inherent proclivity for cruelty, fanaticism, tyranny, and depravity, a prejudice traceable to Anglo/Spanish conflicts in the sixteenth century (Cordova, 2009: 2-3; Cordova, 2011: 31). The *New Orleans Bee* printed a letter in 1834 by an anonymous Texian who described Mexicans as: "degraded and vile; the unfortunate race of Spaniard, Indian and African, is so blended that the worst qualities of each predominate" (De León, 1983: 9). Thomas J. Green moved to Texas in 1836 to speculate in land, but returned to the U.S. almost immediately to serve as a Texian propagandist and to raise money and muster soldiers. In his missive addressed to the Friends of Liberty throughout the World on April 5, 1836, he referred to Mexicans as "the adulterate and degenerate brood of the once high-spirited Castilian" (De León, 1983: 9). As noted in the introduction, Austin's letter to Senator L. F. Linn of Missouri on May 4, 1836 invoked natural law and the threat of racial pollution in his discussion of the war in Texas. He referred to "the mongrel Spanish-Indian and Negro race," in league with "Indians, Mexicans, and

renegades, all mixed together," which he claimed were "all the natural enemies of white men and civilization" (Cordova, 2009: 3) David G. Burnet, president of the interim revolutionary government, wrote to Senator Henry Clay on March 30, 1836 to explain the underlying cause of the Texian Revolt. Burnet cited the "utter dissimilarity" between Anglo-Americans and "a mongrel race of degenerate Spaniards and Indians more depraved than they" (De León, 1983: 12-13).

Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, who favored the annexation of Texas in 1844, dismissed most Mexicans as "mixed races… composed of every poisonous compound of blood and color" (Horsman, 1981: 215-16). Walker, who later served in Polk's cabinet, became a Democratic Party leader and a fierce advocate of Anglo-Saxon expansion throughout the Americas and beyond. For those who wanted the U.S. to dominate the hemisphere from the North Pole to Patagonia, Mexico was the first domino that had to fall. And it had to fall in its entirely. Halfway annexations would not lead to the border of the next country to be "liberated" by Anglo-Saxon dominion. Consequently, Walker wanted to take all of Mexico.

Senator James Buchanan, who would negotiate the peace treaty with Mexico as secretary of state, declared on February 14, 1845: "The Anglo-Saxon blood could never be subdued by anything that claimed Mexican origin" (Horsman, 1981: 215-16). Waddy Thompson, former congressman from South Carolina, and former U.S. Minister to Mexico, declared in 1847: "Our race has never yet put its foot upon a soil which it has not only kept, but advanced." He predicted: "the Indian race of Mexico must recede before us" (Horsman, 1981: 212). Many proponents of U.S. expansion naïvely believed that the other races would simply melt away, like snow before the Anglo-Saxon sun, without conjuring up unpleasant visions of forced marches, massacres, and concentration camps. Even Whigs and Northerners who opposed wars of conquest generally assumed that Anglo-Saxon domination would be achieved by peaceful means.

Novelist and editor William Gilmore Simms argued in a letter of 1847: "slavery will be the medium & great agent for rescuing and recovering to freedom and civilization all the vast tracts of Texas, Mexico &c" (Horsman, 1981: 167). Simms deemed slavery the prime "agent of Civilization," and he hoped that the annexation of Mexico would ensure slavery's survival for a thousand years (Horsman, 1981: 167). He even wrote a novel in opposition to *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in order to portray the benevolent aspects of slavery. Like Simms, many Southerners increasingly equated slavery with civilization. Especially after the bitter Texas annexation conflict, many Northerners hardened in their opposition to slavery. Calls to annex all of Mexico were blunted, in part by Anglo-Saxon aversion to Mexican "mongrels," as noted earlier with reference to Trist's treaty and Senator Clayton's sarcastic commentary.

In a speech on the U.S. House floor in August of 1848, Congressmen Andrew Johnson of Tennessee (who would later become one of the worst presidents in U.S. history after Lincoln's assassination) portrayed the Mexican-American War as a show of divine will: "…this war was just, or it could never have been crowned with such unparalleled success. Our country must have been in the right, or the God of Battles would sometimes have been against us. Mexico… is a doomed nation. The right red arm of an angry God has been suspended over her, and the Anglo-Saxon race has been selected as the rod of her retribution"

(Cuéllar, 2016: 43). Thus god, in her eternal righteousness, chose to smite Mexico not with a sword or a bolt of lightening, but with her preferred contemporary weapon of choice: the Anglo-Saxon race! Moreover, it follows that this race is the living embodiment of god's will.

Gregory Lee Cuéllar (2016: 46) explains Johnson's imagery by noting that U.S. partisans who favored violence "often attenuated its terror effects by appealing to biblical authority," thus placing the war "within a larger cosmic and metaphysical conflict between the ultimate good and evil." The war was a "holy war," because conquest was viewed as a "divine mandate" (Cuéllar, 2016: 41). According to Cuéllar (2016: 40), the annexation of Texas would be "the inaugural expression of God's plan for Anglo-American occupation of the continent" as revealed by the doctrine of Manifest Destiny. The utilization of Old Testament motifs, such as the chosen people or the Promised Land seemingly diminished the "the pernicious effects" of Manifest Destiny (Cuéllar, 2016: 40). Not everyone joined the Manifest Destiny chorus. Some rightly viewed it as presumptively impious. Tennessee Senator James C. Jones called Manifest Destiny a "blind idol" in 1852 (Horsman, 1981: 257). Congressman William Duer of New York declared in 1848 that if the goal was to plunder and dismember a sister republic, then the U.S should "plainly declare our purposes and desires" (Horsman, 1981: 257).

Social Darwinists made increasingly detailed arguments that "nature" abhorred racial mixing. An editorial in the *Southern Review* in 1871 ("The Latin Races in America") even revives Johnson's biblical curse rhetoric: "An admixture of two unequal races is therefore a cancer, an unpardonable sin against mankind and against nature, which has launched an ever flaming curse on all such connections… mongrels invariably inherit all the vices and evil traits of both races and rarely, or never, any of the good. Nature absolutely disallows the adulteration of blood…. Every violation of these laws she visits in the most condign and pitiless manner" (De León, 1983: 22). W. E. Castle provided the classic rebuttal to this argument in 1926: "Why, if nature abhors race-crossing, does she do so much of it?" (Benedict, 1999: 39).

On the eve of the Mexican Revolution in 1908, Alfred P. Schultz repeated the corruption-of-Spanish-blood-argument in his revealingly titled *Race or Mongrel: A Brief History of the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Races of Earth: A Theory That the Fall of Nations Is Due to Intermarriage with Alien Stocks: A Demonstration That a Nation's Strength is Due to Racial Purity: A Prophecy That America Will Sink to early Decay unless Immigration Is Rigorously Restricted*. Schultz (1908: 148) avers: "As long as Gothic blood prevailed in Spain, Spain was great." But then the Spanish "fused with the Moors," and Negro blood, which began with droplets, "became a flood" (148). Eventually, says Schultz (1908: 149, 151) "these Iberian-Gothic-Arabian-negro mongrels" colonized the Americas, including Mexico, which consists of two classes, one being "those of Spanish origin, narrow-chested, and lacking in physical vigour as well as in character and mental strength of whom the white race has no reason to be proud." Nonetheless, he deems this class vastly superior to "the other four-fifths" of the population who are "slow-witted, stupid, without individuality. They are animals, and their only human qualities are their super-human mendacity and their ability to consume pulque" (151). "That

the mongrel is worthless is a law of nature," says Schultz, who also believes that pure Indians are vastly superior to mestizos and Zambos (149-150). In his view, "it is physiologically inexplicable why only the bad qualities of the whites and of the negro are transmitted to the mongrel offspring and never the good qualities of the Indian. All laws of nature are inexplicable; we recognize them, but we cannot explain them" (149-50). Schultz offers no flaming curses, but no explanations, either.

In this estimation of the Mexican race from circa 1930, a Dimmit County Texas resident attests to the persistence of views that associate racial mixing with disastrous biological consequences: "They are a mixture, a mule race or cross breed. The Spaniard is a cross between a Moor or a Castilian, and the Indian is a cross with them. I know a case in which the father is a mixture of Indian, white and Negro. The mother is Mexican. By intermarriage you can go down to their level but you can't bring them up to yours... . When you cross five races you get meanness" (Montejano, 1987: 221).

The 1930s brings us to the Nazi era, when master race ideology, calls for racial "purification," dreams of hemispheric or world-wide domination, and the prophecy of a thousand year reign took center stage, and this time not merely as vague fantasies, but as military and political objectives that were put into chilling practice. In conversations with Texans about the conquest of Mexico and the "removal" of Indians, I often hear arguments that were made by Social Darwinists and other expansionists in the 19th century. I respond that these actions—as well as U.S. segregation laws—served as instructive precedents and rationalizations for the Nazis and for South Africa's apartheid regime. During the Nuremberg War Crimes Tribunal in 1945, Reichsmarschall Hermann Göring made this observation one day during lunch: "After the United States gobbled up California and half of Mexico, and we were stripped down to nothing, territorial expansion suddenly becomes a crime" (Churchill, 2017: 63 and n. 53). Like the Texians, the Nazis also liked to play the victim. In his autobiography *Mein Kampf,* Adolf Hitler makes reference to U.S. expansion by "mostly Germanic" settlers as a model for his anticipated conquest of Eastern Europe for *Lebensraum* (living space). During WWII Hitler made several favorable references to U.S. expansion and the near extermination of Native Americans. He referred to the Volga River as "our Mississippi" and said Eastern Europeans should be regarded "as Redskins" (Churchill, 2017: 62 and n. 49). Nazi Foreign Minister Joachim von Ribbentrop also pointed to the slaughter of American Indians as an "inferior race" as a precedent for Nazi expansion and genocide (Churchill, 2017: 63). After the defeat of the Nazis, the eugenic and Social Darwinist theories that influenced Hitler suffered a great fall from grace in the U.S., but racism continued in the form of segregation, mob "justice," and various everyday forms of discrimination and domination.

Returning to Texas, Fehrenbach (1968: 88) observes: "the dominant Texan viewpoint was not that Texans settled Texas, but that they conquered it." Rather than a refuge for the oppressed or "a beacon proclaiming human rights," Fehrenbach describes Texas in mythic terms as "a primordial land with a Pleistocene climate, inhabited by species [here he means Indians and Mexicans, not revenants like saber-toothed tigers] inherently hostile to

the Anglo-Celtic breed" (88). This characterization obscures the fact that Mexico welcomed Anglo-American colonization. "Some North Americans chose to conquer it," continues Fehrenbach (88), "and in the process unquestionably came to look upon themselves as a sort of chosen race. This sense of being a chosen people, which was tribal and biblical, was an enormous Texan strength rather than a weakness." Thus, according to Fehrenbach, the chosen race gained dominion over the hostile, implicitly primitive species by force of arms. Fehrenbach's analysis is not that far removed from Andrew Johnson's, and his racial typologies also hearken back to an earlier era. No wonder this history book is so popular—and influential—in Texas.

David Montejano (1987: 223) points out that in popular Texas history and folklore, the Mexican is the enemy: one who had been vanquished in "several official and unofficial wars." Moreover, "Remember the Alamo" became "the essence of Texas celebrations" wherein Mexicans were viewed as "subjugated enemies," making the prospect of "equity with Mexicans a rather absurd prospect" (Montejano, 1978: 224). As James E. Crisp put it most succinctly, "The Alamo became a hammer for bashing Mexican-Americans in Texas" (Selcraig: 2004).

CONCLUSION

Matthew Restall (2018: 21) argues that the West has one essential story, told over and over again: it is the story of a conflict—configured in racialized terms—in which "civilization, faith, reason, reality, and a progressive future are victorious over barbarism, idolatry, superstition, irrationality, and a retrogressive past." It has arguably become the most ubiquitous story in human history, for it "underpins the multimedia fables" consumed and embraced by hundreds of millions of readers and viewers in recent decades. This story, whether told as history or as fantasy/science fiction (*The Lord of the Rings*, *Harry Potter*, *Star Wars*), is the story that confirms "the superior destiny of the West" (21). The paired Battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto certainly constitute one of the most prominent of these triumphalist myths packaged as history. In 1985 Paul Hutton explained how the traditional Alamo narrative functioned as a "contest of civilizations" that served as "a creation myth for Texas" (Crisp in Kilgore and Crisp, 2010: 91). Hutton adduced a number of binary opposites that constituted this conflict: "freedom vs. tyranny; democracy vs. despotism; Protestantism vs. Catholicism; the New World culture of the United States vs. the Old World culture of Mexico; Anglo-Saxonism vs. the mongrelized mixture of Indian and Spanish races; and ultimately, the forces of good over evil" (Crisp in Kilgore and Crisp, 2010: 91). A biography of Houston that won the Pulitzer Prize in 1930 still presented the conflict in similar terms: "wet steel would decide which civilization should prevail on these shores and which submit in the clash of men and symbols impending—the conquistador and the frontiersman, the Inquisition and the Magna Charta [*sic*], the rosary and the rifle" (James, 1989: 250).

The Texian Revolt is posited as the triumph of good over evil, understood as the triumph of the superior over the inferior. This explains the rationale behind the bragging and historical falsification that pervades Texas history. Historical falsification began even before news became available of Santa

Anna's recapture of the Alamo in 1836. A Texian handbill printed in New Orleans claimed that Santa Anna had twice attacked the Alamo with 3,500 men, and had lost 500 men, while the 150 "Americans" had suffered no casualties (reproduced in Reichstein, 1989: frontispiece). The exaggerations habitually made about the odds the Texians faced at the Alamo, the exaggerations about how many Mexicans they killed, the falsifications about their motives ("liberty" rather than the taking of Mexican land to be worked by slaves), the Last Stand myth (rather than the great escape), and the obsession with how Davy Crockett died (he could not have surrendered!) were part of a massive effort—though not always on a conscious level—to provide a rationale for and demonstration of Anglo-American superiority. To those who subscribed to what become known as Manifest Destiny, Anglo-Americans were racially and culturally superior to blacks, Indians, and Mexicans. That superiority, that sign of special destiny, had to be made manifest. The line in the sand and the Last Stand are crucial components of the Texas creation myth, for they provide evidence of superior heroism. That is also why the Mexican sources that refute these components have been ignored. Ironically, for a cultural tradition that is so hostile to Catholicism, Alamo martyrology and symbolism are often strikingly reminiscent of Catholic practices. One great difference, of course, is their belligerent nature, which conjoins remembrance and vengeance. If—as in fact was the case—the Texians had base motives, if the "defenders" were actually the aggressors, if the Alamo garrison sought to surrender or escape rather than fight to the death (and consequently to possibly kill fewer Mexicans than the Mexicans themselves), then the Texian forces (let us specify that they were mostly U.S. citizens or recent U.S. transplants, except for their Tejano allies) could scarcely be regarded as the heroically superior people they were represented to be: the special agents of god/destiny.

The notion of Manifest Destiny overturned religious and republican prohibitions. God, "providence," or some other vague euphemism for the Christian god, had given the Anglo-Saxon race a special destiny to dominate and conquer everyone else. Therefore, by conquering the weak, they were only doing their duty by fulfilling their god-given mandate. Manifest Destiny turned the message of Christianity on its head: the meek would not inherit the earth, rather, they would be conquered by the strong, who would enslave or exterminate them and put their land to "better" use. Just as Southerners used the Old Testament as evidence of divine approval of slavery (against the message of freedom from bondage in the Old Testament and against the entire nature of Christianity in the New Testament), they used the bible's authority to advocate for belligerent conquest rather than Christian peace. Whereas early U.S. political theorists had decried British imperialism and asserted the superiority of republican values, Manifest Destiny was a license for imperial conquest, dressed up as a moral/divine obligation.

Horsman demonstrates that racialized Anglo-Saxonism developed during the Texian Revolt and the Mexican American War, and he provides a thorough, devastating account of its naïveté and its megalomanic aspects (1981: 208-48). As we have seen, the existence of race-based slavery was eventually justified by the construction of a "dominant" white race and an "inferior" black race, a rationale that served to perpetuate chattel slavery. A pre-existing racial typology, one derived from the Black Legend, was imposed

by a criticism of Mexican blood: it was polluted, corrupt, and weak. It is not merely coincidental that racialized Anglo-Saxonism arose at this very historical moment: Anglo-Saxon blood—in contrast to Mexican blood—was extolled as pure, vigorous, and indomitable. This provided a rationale for conquest: Anglo-Saxons were impelled to conquer by their essential nature. The effects of this racism are still with us today. Some contemporary xenophobic commentators even recall the Social Darwinists of an earlier age. Dale Maharidge claims "no white society in the industrial world has ever evolved into a mixed society." He exhorts readers to utilize their "right to bear arms" to prevent this from happening (Gutiérrez, 2009: 189).

To refer to the Alamo simply as the "cradle of Texas liberty" or as the "shrine to Texas liberty" serves to erase the experience of people of color. It also whitewashes the devastating effects that Alamo symbolism, commencing with the Texian Revolt, has had on people of color. The Alamo is the cradle of Texas slavery (and all the anti-black practices that followed in its wake, including segregation, lynching, "slavery by another name," denial of civil rights, voter suppression); the Alamo is the cradle of anti-Mexican sentiment (which resulted in territorial dispossession, murder, segregation, and other forms of discrimination); the Alamo is the cradle of Native American genocide and removal from Texas (neither Spain nor Mexico had controlled Texas, but rather than convert Native Americans to Christianity, Austin, Lamar, and the Republic of Texas sought to expel or eradicate them); the Alamo is the cradle of Manifest Destiny (the Mexican-American War, an outgrowth of the Texian Revolt, was the historical event that led to the inception of the term Manifest Destiny and its widespread usage in the United States); the Alamo is the cradle of racialized Anglo-Saxonism (the Texian Revolt, along with the Mexican-American War, were incubators of this virulent form of racialized Anglo-Saxonism).

President Donald J. Trump is the central player in the contemporary Renaissance of anti-Mexican racism in the United States. But playing the anti-Mexican card on an all-in basis was not his original idea. Research undertaken by Cambridge Analytica and advisor Steven Bannon identified anti-Mexican racism and immigration as key planks with which to build a victorious electoral platform. They provided Trump with his election-winning sound bites. Equally important, Trump's anti-Mexican path had been paved by Ann Coulter and many others. Fittingly enough, Trump's digital voter database is called Project Alamo. Long before Trump's candidacy, immigration was already a hot button issue. Peter Beinart observes that American politics gravitated "between panics about immigrants and panics about blacks" during the last century (Beinart, 2010). He identified Mexican immigration as the dominant paranoia in 2010: "today's fear-mongers don't try to win elections with images of black men raping white women; they do it with images of Mexicans hopping the border, stealing jobs and committing crimes" (Beinart, 2010). Though the general structure of this exhibition was conceived before Trump's presidency, the repercussions of his presidency have made it particularly important to understand the roots of anti-Mexican prejudices in the United States, as well as the precise manner in which the U.S.-Mexico border was fashioned. It is a long and winding road, filled with myth, fantasy, violence, and fear, that takes us back to the Alamo.

Adan Hernandez, *They Don't Want Me in My House,* detail

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Catalog Entries and Illustrations

Felipe Reyes (b. 1944), ***Sacred Conflict,*** c. 1971
acrylic on canvas, 24 x 36 inches, courtesy of private collection

FELIPE REYES

Reyes made some of the most provocative paintings of the early phase of the Chicano movement in San Antonio. *Instant Genocide* (1971, destroyed) depicted a spray can with the inscription: "To Be Used on Chicanos, Indians, Blacks, and all Other Undesirables."* For many Texans, *Sacred Conflict* was equally provocative because it dared to show the Alamo with a United Farm Workers (UFW) flag flying over it.* The United Farmworkers movement served as a catalyst for the Chicano Movement, and the UFW flag served as a Chicano power emblem, and thus as a counter-Alamo emblem. Reyes made this analysis of *Sacred Conflict*:

"Throughout this painting is an intermingling of ironic symbols. The Alamo means different things to different peoples. To the Anglos it represents what they call oppression by Mexican tyrants. But to the Chicanos the Alamo is the symbol of Anglo aggression. The Chicano flag over it represents our viewpoint, that is, that the Alamo was a victory for us, the Chicanos. Yet the Anglos claim the whole event as their victory. . . . the different attitudes force me to apply meaning to this symbol. To be brief, the Alamo to me represents vengeance for the Chicano, and the flag is the Chicano symbol for justice."**

Reyes draws alternative "lessons" from the Alamo: he sees Anglo aggression instead of Mexican tyranny or cruelty; victory for the winners of the battle, rather than the losers; finally, it is a call for future justice for Chicanos, who are the descendents of the dispossessed, and who are themselves subject to discrimination.

Reyes was the prime mover of the Con Safo art group. His *Sacred Conflict* inaugurated a long line of powerful critiques of Alamo mythology. This exhibition includes work by the following Con Safo group members: Mel Casas, Rudy Treviño, Jose Esquivel, Cesar Martinez, Kathy Vargas, Rolando Briseño, and Roberto Gonzalez.

* Ruben C. Cordova, *Con Safo: the Chicano Art Group and the Politics of South Texas*, UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 2009. For *Instant Genocide*, see p. 24-25. For *Sacred Conflict*, see: p. 28-29.

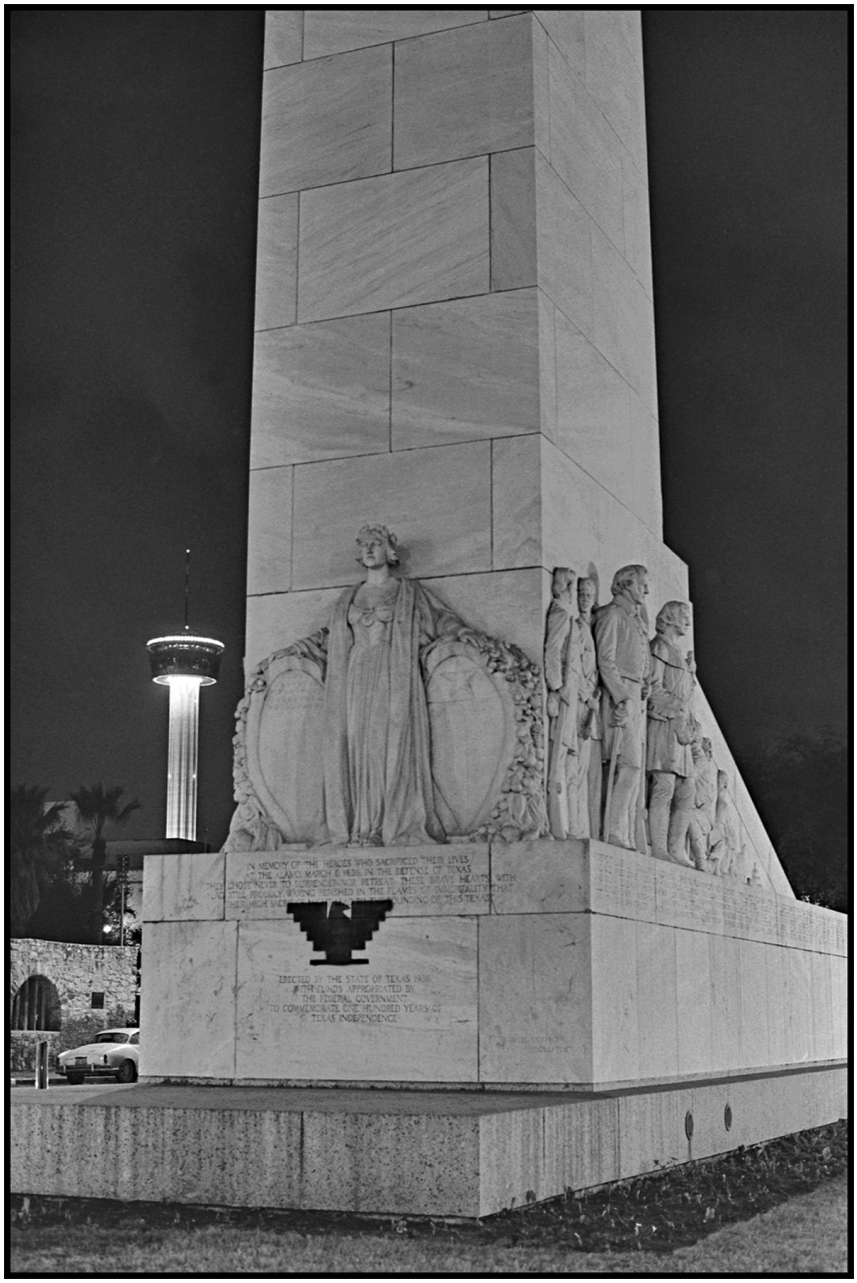
** *Magazín*, April 1972, p. 36, 42.

Cesar Martinez (b. 1944), ***Cenotaph Aguila***, 1972
photograph, 8 x 11 inches (framed), courtesy of the artist

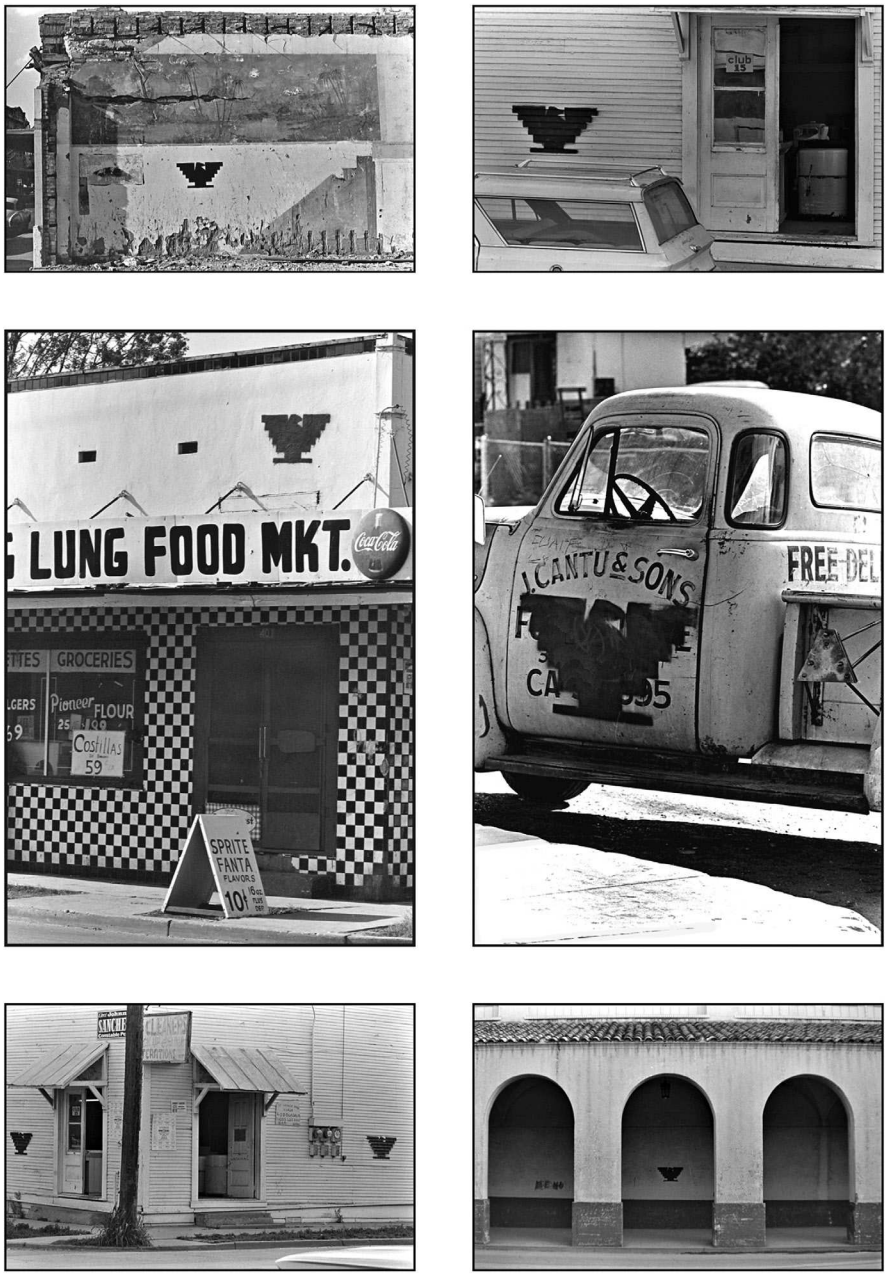
Martinez recalls that "the John Wayne version of Alamo history" reigned supreme in the 1970s. Chicano activist artists recognized that the Alamo was utilized as a symbol with a very explicit anti-Mexican and anti-Chicano character. They in turn deployed the UFW eagle as an antidote, or counter-Alamo, as we have seen in Reyes' *Sacred Conflict* (c. 1971). In a similar vein, Rudy Treviño placed an enormous UFW eagle hovering over the Alamo in a painting called *Alamo Takeover* (c. 1973). In recent years, Raul Servin has made several paintings with UFW eagles as counter-Alamo symbols, two of which are in this exhibition.

These photographs, taken by Martinez in 1972, have never been publicly exhibited, though one was featured on the back cover of the May, 1972 issue of *Magazín*.* Martinez says the UFW eagle had been stenciled "all over the West side," in the farmers' market, and along Commerce Street, as evident in *Six West-side Aguilas*. The ubiquitous UFW eagle served as a Chicano version of "Kilroy was here." Eventually, anonymous guerrilla street artists painted a UFW eagle on *The Spirit of Sacrifice*, the Alamo cenotaph memorial, which was erected in Alamo Plaza in 1939. Since it commemorates the "martyrs" of the Alamo, the cenotaph has long been regarded as San Antonio's secular holy-of-holies. This spray-painted eagle partially effaced the final line of the cenotaph's quasi-religious inscription, which, in typically aggrandizing fashion, reads: "These brave hearts with their flag still proudly waving perished in the flames of immortality that their high sacrifice might lead to the founding of Texas." Though Martinez disavows knowledge of who specifically was responsible, he believes "*someone* really needed to make this statement." Martinez notes that even though the eagle was sandblasted, traces of it were "still evident for many years." He returned to the scene of the crime to ascertain "if its ghost is still there," only to find that the aguila had already flown the coup. In 2017 the San Antonio City Council "conceptually approved" a plan to restore and relocate the cenotaph outside of its current place of honor in Alamo Plaza.

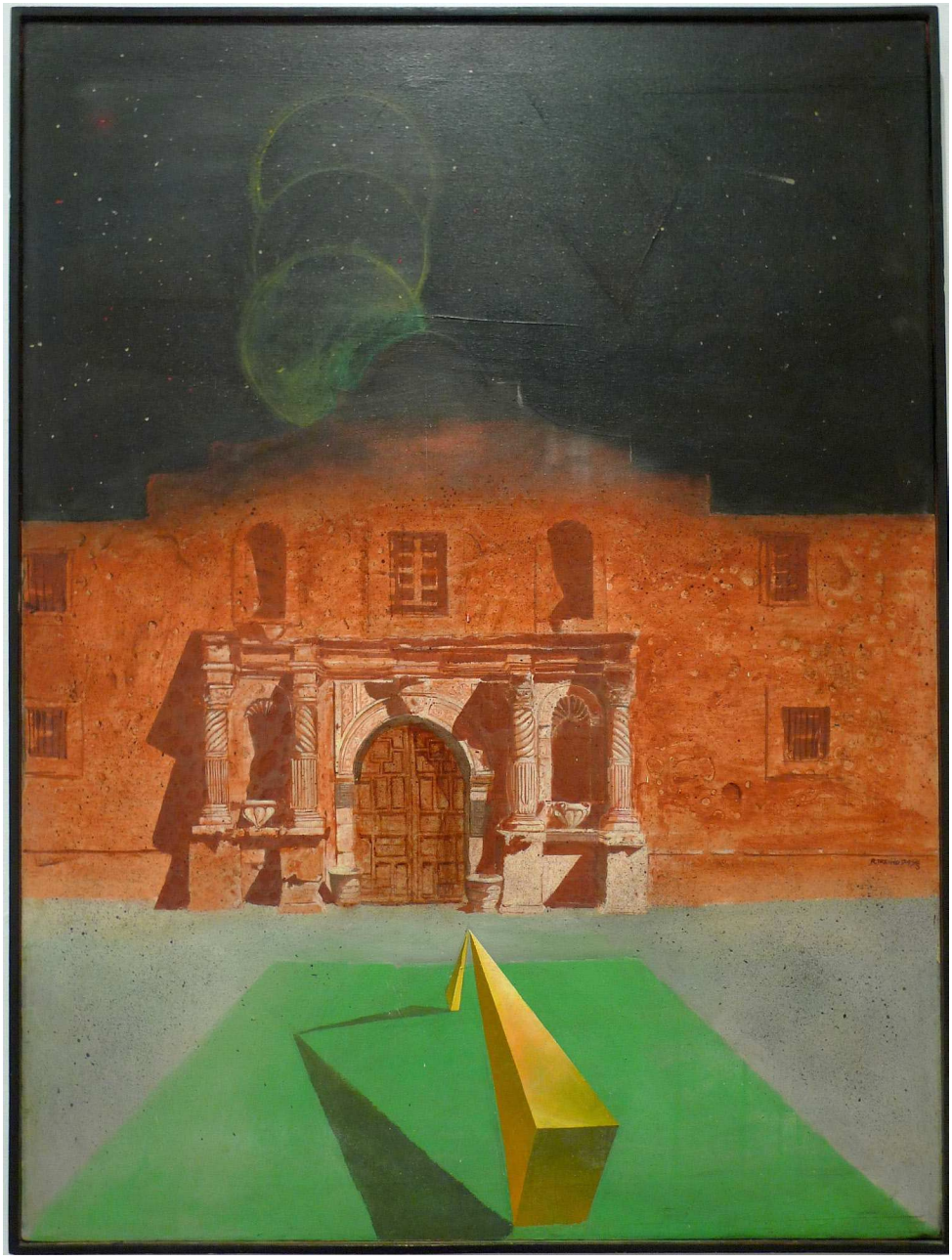
* For a discussion of Alamo-themed art created by members of the Con Safo group, see: Ruben C. Cordova, *Con Safo: the Chicano Art Group and the Politics of South Texas.* UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center, 2009, note 44, p. 83-84.



Cesar Martinez (b. 1944), ***Cenotaph Aguila*****,** 1972
photograph, 11 x 8 inches (framed), courtesy of the artist



Cesar Martinez (b. 1944), *Six West-side Aguilas*, 1972
photograph, 18 x 13 inches (framed), courtesy of the artist



Rudy R. Treviño (b. 1945), ***Magical Pyramid with Alamo,*** c. 1973–2010
oil, glue, and acrylic on canvas, 36 x 48 inches, courtesy of the artist

RUDY TREVIÑO

Treviño has a deep interest in Pre-Columbian cultures, particularly that of the Aztecs. He is especially fascinated by their concepts of dualism (the belief that binary opposites are part and parcel of a unified whole) and infinitely repeating cycles. Treviño chose to depict the Alamo in this painting because it is a powerful contemporary symbol to which many people ascribe either a highly positive or a highly negative value. For many Texans, it is celebrated as the "shrine of Texas liberty," whereas for Chicanos and many people of color, it has served as a symbol of oppression and domination. As the site of a major battle, the Alamo serves as a literal place of death. Treviño highlighted this aspect by developing a new technique that combined oil and glue to create pockmarks left by bullets and cannon balls. The Alamo is also a reminder of new ways of life, both as the central religious component of a Spanish mission, and, more recently, as an emblem of Anglo-American colonization and triumphalism. And even as these new ways of life emerged, they served to extinguish the old ways of life that they had supplanted. Thus life and death are intertwined: they are infinitely fertile and infinitely fatal.

The two yellow shapes in the foreground are modern iterations of Aztec pyramids, whose "majestic size and mystery of purpose" entranced Treviño. As sun-like sources of mysterious energy, they bridge the gulf between pre-Hispanic civilizations and the modern space age: "I have simplified the image of the pyramid and given it the power to energize everything in its presence. It will be giving San Antonio energy for a billion years," exclaims the artist. The pyramids are both positive (three dimensional) and negative (shadow). The space ship in the upper right points to the future, while the three descending green moons are signs of cyclic completion, each of which marks the passing of 100 years. This painting began as Alamo Takeover in c. 1973, which featured a large UFW eagle above the Alamo. Treviño altered the painting over the years. He replaced the eagle with three moons in order to commemorate San Antonio's Tricentennial in 2018.

Luis Valderas (b. 1966), ***A Line Beyond the Sand,*** 2007
graphite and Prisma-color on paper, 18 x 24 inches, courtesy of the artist

LUIS VALDERAS

This colored drawing is based on a photograph Luis Valderas took of his father, Horacio Sanchez Valderas in 1982, when the latter drew a line in the air while leveling the kitchen floor. This photograph was the "seed" the artist used to explore "temporal connections" in *A Line Beyond the Sand*. Horacio-with-stick is an alternate Travis-with-sword, situated "at the edge of a checkerboard, alternate plane that disappears into the darkness of outer space." Behind Horacio, images of the Alamo rotate and partially morph into a green, fanged Quetzalcoatl that attaches to him like a backpack, or its Mesoamerican equivalent, the bundle.

According to the artist, each successive transformation of the Alamo brings it "closer to the stage where the Mayan ball court comes into view and the line between life on this temporal plane and the realm beyond is traversed." The serpent-decorated stone ring in the lower left is a goalpost that would have been tenoned onto a ball court wall at its midpoint. The stylized skulls at the bottom of the picture allude to Mesoamerican balls, which were understood as symbolic skulls. This symbolism was underscored in dramatic fashion when ballplayers were ritually beheaded, thus turning their heads into balls. Mesoamericans believed that bones—and skulls in particular—were the final reservoirs of potent life forces. Thus the rocket ship that blasts off in the upper right is linked to a trio of skulls that provide the cosmic energy for its launch into outer space.

Valderas ties these disparate images together: "It's about what we all carry on our backs into the future. I wanted to explore how icons like the Quetzalcoatl head, the Alamo, rocket/space travel, and the Mayan ball court could intermingle as memories/symbols of transformation."

Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz (b. 1955), ***Antifaz: Forget The Alamo. Yellow Rose,*** 2004
acrylic and oil on canvas, 39 ½ x 60 inches, courtesy of Dr. Raphael and Sandra Guerra

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ-DÍAZ

Rodríguez-Díaz's title negates "Remember the Alamo," the rallying cry that was used at the Battle of San Jacinto during the Texian revolt against Mexico in 1836, and during the Mexican American War of 1846-48. The latter was precipitated by the U.S. annexation of Texas, and it resulted in the U.S. annexation of the northern half of Mexico. In his Artpace installation of 1998, Rodríguez-Díaz made wall drawings that paired the Alamo with the battleship Maine as symbolic pretexts for U.S. wars of conquest.

In this painting, a mysterious dark-skinned woman (only her hand and sleeve are visible) offers a Christmas ornament in the shape of the Alamo. Antifaz, who is Rodríguez-Díaz's Mexican wrestler persona in this painting, twists himself into a human pretzel in a dramatic gesture of refusal. Antifaz recognizes the Alamo as an emblem of Manifest Destiny freighted with anti-Mexican and anti-Chicano sentiment.

Yellow was a term used for mixed race people in the South, so the "Yellow Rose" of Texas is often presumed to refer to a mixed race woman. Legendary accounts identify the Yellow Rose with a real person named Emily D. West, a free black woman born in New Haven, Conn.* She was mistakenly thought to belong to James Morgan, at a time when slave owners evaded Mexico's anti-slavery laws with various subterfuges, such as giving indentured contracts to slaves that would last for their entire lives. West was a contract worker, though in Texas folklore she is referred to as Emily Morgan (since slaves took the last names of their owners). Emily was captured by Mexican soldiers shortly before the battle of San Jacinto. The most fantastic of the tales associated with her credits Emily with convincing another captured servant to escape and inform Texian General Sam Houston of the Mexican army's location; she, meanwhile, out of Texian patriotism, allegedly distracted and sexually exhausted Mexican General Antonio López de Santa Anna in his tent until Houston's army made his victorious advance at San Jacinto.** Kent Biffle, who notes that scholars reject these tales, argues against associating Emily with the popular song "The Yellow Rose of Texas."***

At the heart of the Yellow Rose myth lies the snickering presumption that Santa Anna, Emily "Morgan," and people of color in general are oversexed: thus this tryst fittingly constitutes history's most costly act of coitus, resulting in the loss of half of Mexico's territory. Holly B. Brear debunks this myth.**** Firstly, had any woman been in Santa Anna's tent at this time, the Mexican officers who were critical of Santa Anna would surely have condemned such a rendezvous. Secondly,

Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz, *Antifaz: Forget The Alamo. Yellow Rose (detail)*

the myth sets up a false dichotomy between Santa Anna/the Yellow Rose and the Texians, for the latter are presumed to be chaste, in keeping with their heroic, self-sacrificing nature. Brear and Jeff Long***** note that Travis was sex-obsessed: his diary lists over fifty sexual conquests in Texas (including slaves and prostitutes) in extremely vulgar terms. According to the two most elaborate versions of the Yellow Rose myth, Emily was "insatiable" and "of easy virtue," so she had no qualms about essentially prostituting herself for the Texian cause. Brear calls this interpretation "an inversion of archival records," since Long pointed out that Alamo survivor Susanna Dickinson worked as a prostitute for many years after Texas independence. When Susanna's daughter Angelina (known as the "babe of the Alamo" because she was fifteen months old at the time of the battle) grew up, she also became a prostitute, ultimately dying of a hemorrhaging uterus in 1869. Long also notes that Mexican General Manuel de Mier y Terán, who surveyed Texas in 1828, was dismayed when he discovered that several Anglo-Americans from Nacogdoches were prostituting their wives to Mexican soldiers at the local fort. Yet several Texians, including Travis, tried to spread sexual panic with respect to the Mexican army. A handbill titled "Texas Forever," which was printed before news of Santa Anna's victory reached New Orleans, claimed that Mexican troops were "brought to Texas in irons and are urged forward with the promise of the women and plunder of Texas."

Curiously, the promoters of pro-Texian Yellow Rose legends expect a black or mixed-race woman to side with the pro-slavery forces, even though thousands of slaves won their freedom by escaping to Mexico. In any case, at the same time that Antifaz is recoiling from the myth of the Alamo, we should view him as recoiling from the myth of the Yellow Rose, as well.

* For an overview, see: Margaret Swett Henson, "West, Emily D.," *Handbook of Texas Online,* last modified on June 27, 2016. https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fwe41

** For a humorously credulous account of these legends, see: Mark Whitelaw, "In Search of the 'Yellow Rose of Texas,'" *Texas Legends.* https://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/adp/archives/yellowrose/yelrose.html

*** Kent Biffle's Texana, "The Sweetest Little Rosebud 'We Never Knew' Yellow Rose still Unsolved," *Dallas Morning News*, April 13, 1997. http://www.tamu.edu/faculty/ccbn/dewitt/adp/archives/yellowrose/yellowrose.html

**** Holly B. Brear, Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine. Austin, Tex: Univ. of Texas Press, 1995, p. 45-63; 62; 61; 46-47.

***** Jeff Long, Duel of Eagles: The Mexican and U.S. Fight for the Alamo. New York: William and Morrow, 1990, p. 34-35, 355-56, n. 44-45; 339; 19.


THE ALAMO
YELLOW ROSE

Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz, *Antifaz: Forget The Alamo. Yellow Rose (detail)*

Verónica Castillo Hernández (b. 1967), ***Tree of Life History of San Antonio,*** 2017
32 x 27 x 11 inches, ceramic, wire, acrylic paint, courtesy of the artist

VERÓNICA CASTILLO HERNÁNDEZ

Verónica Castillo Hernández works with craft methods developed by her family, the Castillo Orta family, in the state of Puebla, Mexico. Tree of Life candelabras are the most famous products of this family workshop.

Castillo Hernández's *Tree of Life History of San Antonio* features St. Anthony, the namesake of the city and the emblem of its Spanish and Mexican roots, on a globe-like base. The history of San Antonio is embedded in or suspended from the tree branches that emanate above St. Anthony. The three small figures on the left represent two settlers from the Canary Islands and an evangelizing Franciscan friar. The three figures on the right represent the indigenous peoples that inhabited this area, which they called Yanaguana, before the arrival of the Spanish.

The five San Antonio area missions (now recognized as UNESCO World Heritage Monuments) represent Spanish colonization. The Virgin of Guadalupe is situated above roses, which symbolize her. Castillo Hernández says she "represents mother earth" and refers to her by "Tonanzitzin," her indigenous name. The Virgin of Guadalupe also represents the synthesis of European and indigenous traditions.

The nopal cactus has been a symbol of Mexico since the time of the Aztecs, and the artist uses it to symbolize Mexicans, the "native protectors of mother earth." Corn, the staple of indigenous peoples in North America, is the most remarkable example of selective breeding in human history. It is a symbol of the earth's nurtured bounty.

This tree blossoms with local flora and fauna. These include wildflowers, such as passionflower and bluebonnet. These flowers are fertilized by local birds and butterflies, including monarchs and hummingbirds. Castillo Hernández's *Tree of Life History of San Antonio* conveys a compelling sense of place. It also emphasizes the mestizo roots of San Antonio.

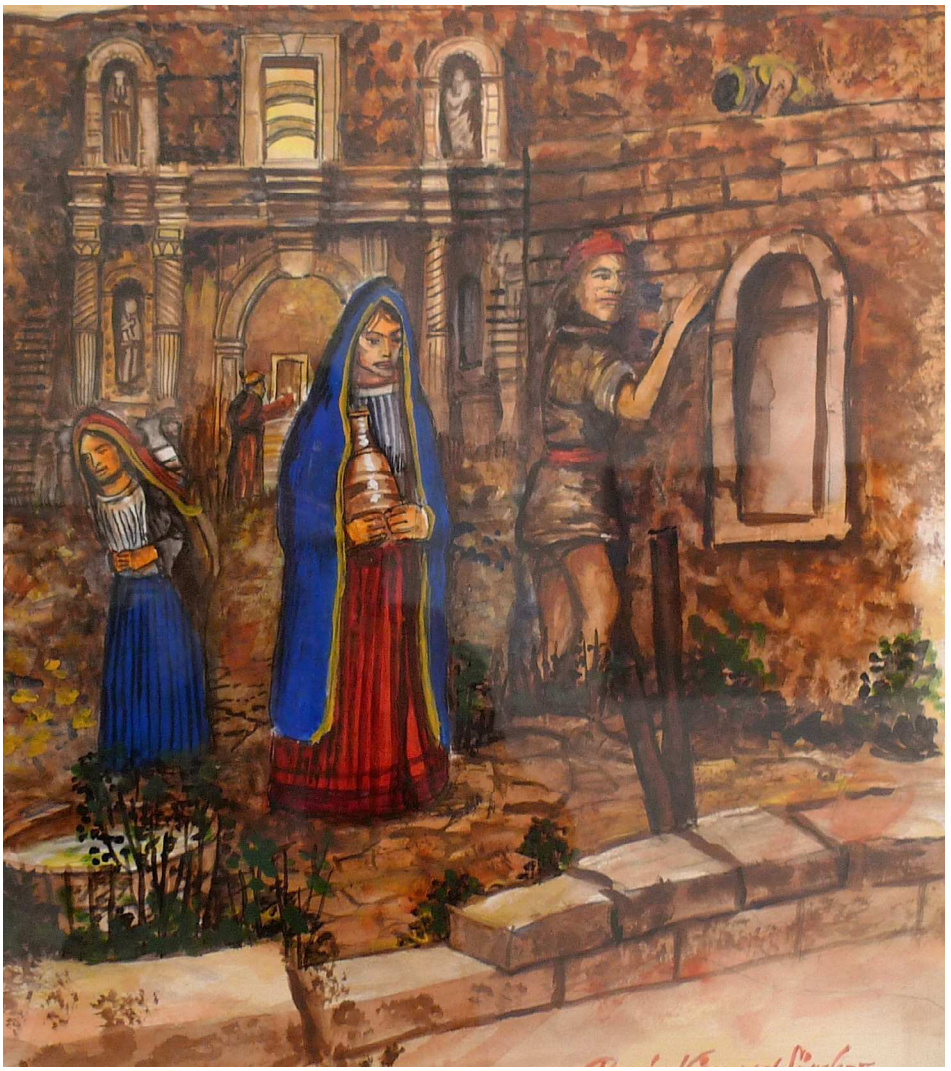
Ramon Vasquez y Sanchez (b. 1940), untitled, 2018
watercolor on paper, 24 x 18 inches, courtesy of the artist

RAMON VASQUEZ Y SANCHEZ

Vasquez y Sanchez identifies as a Coahuiltecan (the tribe that did much of the building of local missions) and as a Chicano. His untitled watercolor depicts Coahuiltecan men building a wall at the Mission San Antonio de Valero. When it was completed, the mission's outer walls measured nearly a quarter mile, so that it could house Franciscan friars and their Indian converts, and also shelter livestock in the event of attack from raiding Apaches and Comanches. Today, the mission—what is left of it—is popularly called the Alamo, a term often used to refer primarily or exclusively to the mission church visible in the background of the watercolor.

The first mission, a temporary mud and brush structure, was erected in 1718 near the source of the San Antonio River. It was soon moved to the West bank of the river, which had better irrigation prospects. In 1724, a hurricane destroyed it, and the mission was moved to its current location, where a stone church was begun in 1744, but it collapsed in 1756. Its replacement—the "Alamo" church—was designated as under construction in reports of 1756, 1762, 1767 (when Dionício de Jesus Gonzalez was contracted to carve the façade), 1772 (when stone arches were noted, as well as statues on the lower level, but not the second), and 1785. But in 1789 a report declared: "because of lack of Indians and other reasons, it cannot be completed." The church was intended to have a third floor (with a statue of Our Lady of Immaculate Conception), framed by two bell towers, as well as a dome, none of which were built.* One can see the stone arches for the barrel vault through the window in the upper center of this watercolor. Since four statues are in place and Indians are still at work, it must represent a phase after 1785, and almost certainly before 1789. Vasquez y Sanchez explains that missionaries "controlled and manipulated Indians by dressing women to appear as the 'Woman in Blue,'" understood as the Virgin Mary. "There were 'Virgins' everywhere," he says.

The U.S. Army erected a gabled roof in 1850, and to hide it, they added the central "hump," the bell-shaped ornament known as a campanulate.** Edward Everett, a soldier who did restoration work at the former mission in 1846-47, says they "respected" the church "as an historical relic." He was appalled to learn that "tasteless hands have evened off the rough walls… surmounting them with a ridiculous scroll, giving the building the appearance of the headboard of a bedstand."*** A similar campanulate formerly capped the large arches behind Mission San Jose, and George S. Nelson speculates that the army appropriated it—either literally or figuratively.* Wherever it came from, this "hump," this "ridiculous scroll," this stone crown perched on the stump of a church, is completely out of place where the army left it. Ironically, the official Alamo website fixates on this architectural fish-out-of-water: "The profile of the building, as a result of this



Ramon Vasquez y Sanchez, untitled (detail)

rounded cresting, has become an iconic symbol of the quest of [sic] freedom."*** Young points out that this distinctive hump so profoundly changed the church's appearance that it would likely be unrecognizable to the soldiers that actually fought inside of it.**** Moreover, if Texans insist on claiming the Alamo church as an architectural equivalent of the Statue of Liberty, they should also acknowledge its symbolism in wars for slavery, its service as a literal slave mart during the Civil War**, and its longstanding function as an anti-Mexican emblem. Whatever its questionable role as an icon of freedom, there can be no doubt that the Alamo hump became the iconic symbol of Taco Bell, sufficient to transform any non-descript, characterless building into a miniature faux-Mexico. Apparently, architectural fakery goes hand-in-hand with historical and culinary misrepresentation.*****

* For the Alamo's evolution, see: George S. Nelson, *The Alamo: An Illustrated History*, Uvalde, Tex: Aldine Press, 1988, p. 31-38, 10-11; 62-63; 74-77, 80. For online Alamo images, see: "Alamo Images: Changing Views of the Mission San Antonio de Valero," Sons of deWitt Colony Texas. http://www.sonsofdewittcolony.org/adp/history/alamo_images/images.html

** John Nova Lomax, "How the Alamo Got its Hump," *Texas Monthly*, March 6, 2018. https://www.texasmonthly.com/being-texan/alamo-got-hump/

*** "Buildings," thealamo.org http://www.thealamo.org/remember/structures/buildings/index.html

**** Kevin R. Young, "Major Babbitt and the Alamo 'Hump.'" *Military Images 6*, #1, 1984, p. 16-17.

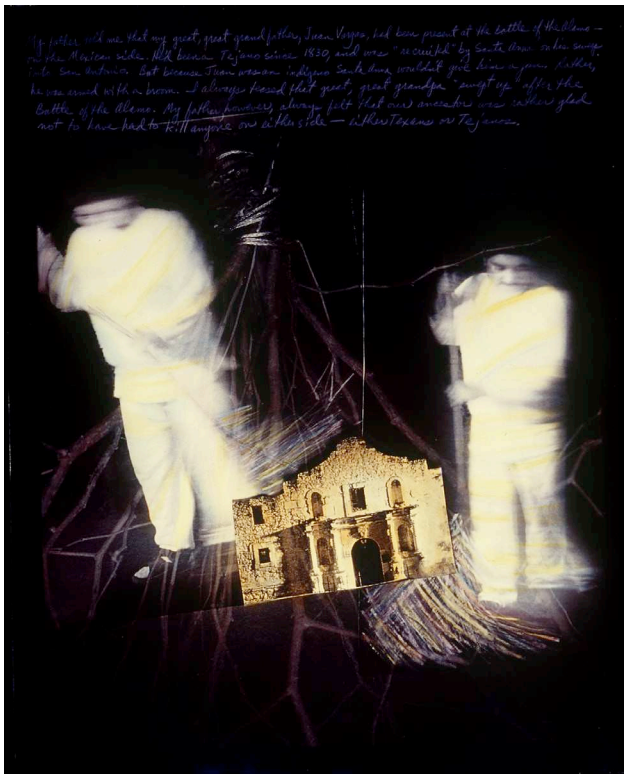
***** For Taco Bell food, see: Ruben C. Cordova, "Indigenous Heritage, Culinary Diaspora, and Globalization in Rolando Briseño's Moctezuma's Table," in Norma E. Cantú, ed., *Moctezuma's Table: Rolando Briseño's Mexican and Chicano Tablescapes*. College Station: Texas A & M Press, 2010, p. 79.

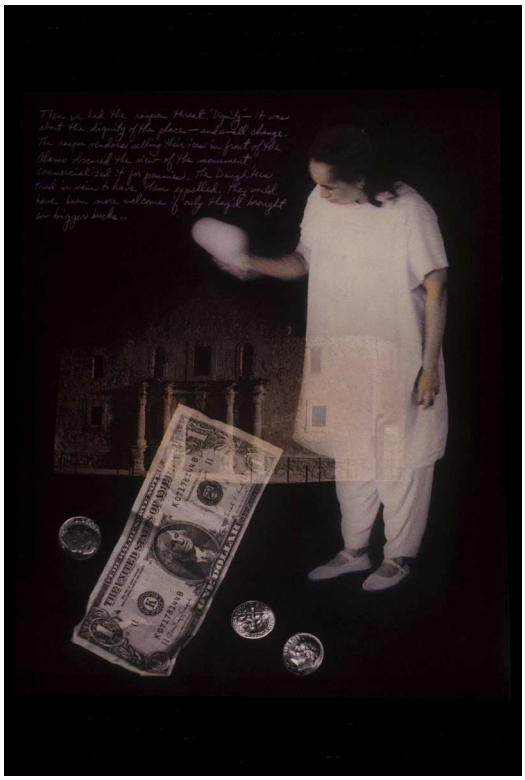
Daniela Riojas (b. 1989), ***We Built It, We Will Dismantle It,*** 2018
photograph, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of the artist

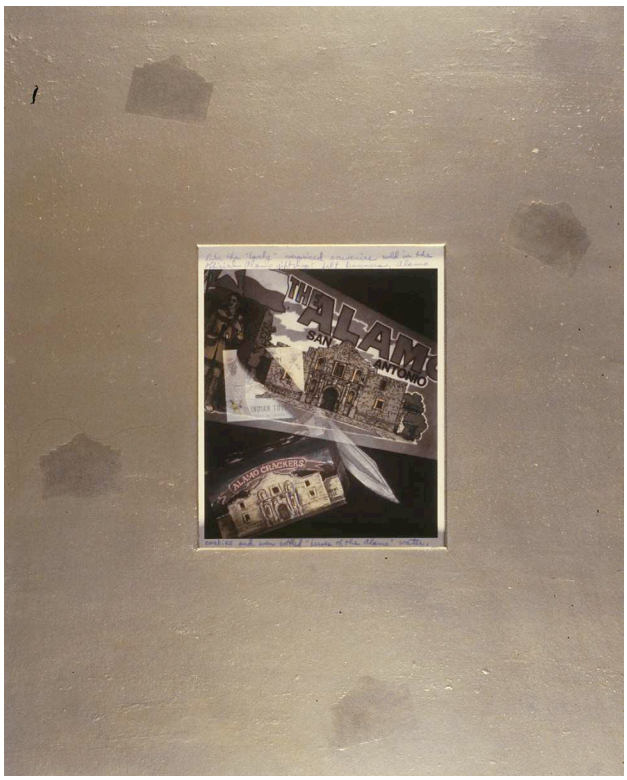
The Alamo, like the other Spanish missions, was built with the sweat and toil of the local indigenous peoples. Riojas points out that the purpose of the missions "was to convert the Payaya Indians to Catholicism and likewise integrate them into the mission community." At the Alamo, they would be "slowly assimilated into Western practice." Concomitantly, their own traditions would gradually be extirpated. *We Built it, We Will Dismantle It* is essentially an indigenous blessing that constitutes a reverse-baptism. It is simultaneously an exorcism of European colonial conquest and domination and a resacralization of the indigenous.

Water has always been a vital, life-giving force. Riojas cites this informational Alamo placard that notes how water was brought to the mission: "The natives irrigated the Alamo mission fields with a series of ditches called acequias which drew water from the San Antonio River using a remarkable gravity-flow system. Dug by Native American labor, the acequias took four years to construct."

An image of Riojas, based on "a feminine symbol of life," appears in the upper center. She is the facilitator of water, which is "being poured to douse the violence committed by the Spanish church." Water flows from an indigenous vessel onto an oversized, blood splattered cross that tops the Alamo church. The Payaya were a Coahuiltecan band that called their village Yanaguana. This artwork conveys "the idea of sacred water" and "the spirit of Yanaguana" through a doubled image of a native woman, also modeled by Riojas. She represents the indigenous workers who built the acequias, as well as mission itself. Her bent pose is meant to invoke the labor of digging the acequias. At the same time, it "hauntingly and simultaneously insinuates an act of destroying the mission." Thus this doubled native is simultaneously the Alamo's creator and destroyer. In the upper corners of the photograph, ears of corn are arrayed like sun emblems. Three curved snakes emanate from each constellation of corn, suggesting that they, too, are repositories of vital life forces.







Kathy Vargas (b. 1950), *My Alamo*, images 1a, 5b, and 5a, 1995
each 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of Gil Cardenas

KATHY VARGAS

Vargas' *My Alamo* series consists of twelve images in six pairs ([a] hand-colored photographs and [b] mixed media with hand colored photograph), three of which are exhibited here as a triptych. Commissioned for an exhibition in 1995, the series is a delirious mash-up of family history and popular culture. Juan Vargas, the artist's great-great-grandfather, had settled in San Antonio in 1830. He was impressed into Santa Anna's army, but was given a broom instead of a rifle. His military service is hilariously imagined in image 1a, where he is busily sweeping around the Alamo church.

The inscription that meanders around image 5b is an ironic commentary on the Alamo gift shop: "like the 'lovely,' overpriced souvenirs sold in the official gift shop: felt banners, Alamo cookies, and even bottled 'heroes of the Alamo' water." Vargas was "shocked" to see this bottled water for sale for three dollars in 1995, a phenomenon that reminded her of religious shrines.* Vargas includes an image of a box of Alamo Crackers®, an ironically named product, since 'cracker' is a slang term for a white person that is sometimes used derogatorily.** Alamo Crackers® are still on sale at the Alamo, and the text on the back of the box declares: "'Remember the Alamo… Crackers!' is the cry of a new breed of 'snackers' in search of a treat independent of the rest." The text avers that the cookies "like their namesake never surrenders when it comes to good taste."

Image 5a refers to the "mostly Chicano *raspa* vendors" that were driven away from the vicinity of the Alamo church because they were "supposedly cluttering the view." Vargas refers to this as "that façade problem again."

* Vargas quotes are from Kathy Vargas, "Revisiting My Alamo," in Scott L. Baugh and Víctor A. Sorell, eds., *Born of Resistance: Cara a Cara Encounters with Chicana/o Visual Culture,* Tucson, The University of Arizona Press, 2015, p. 190-207.

** The history of this term is very long and complex. See: Gene Demby, "The Secret History of the Word 'Cracker,'" *Code Switch: Race and Identity Remixed,* Texas Public Radio, July 1, 2013. https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/07/01/197644761/word-watch-on-crackers

Mel Casas (1929-2014), *Humanscape 147 (Alamo)*, 1987
acrylic on canvas, 6 x 8 feet, courtesy of the Mel Casas Family Trust

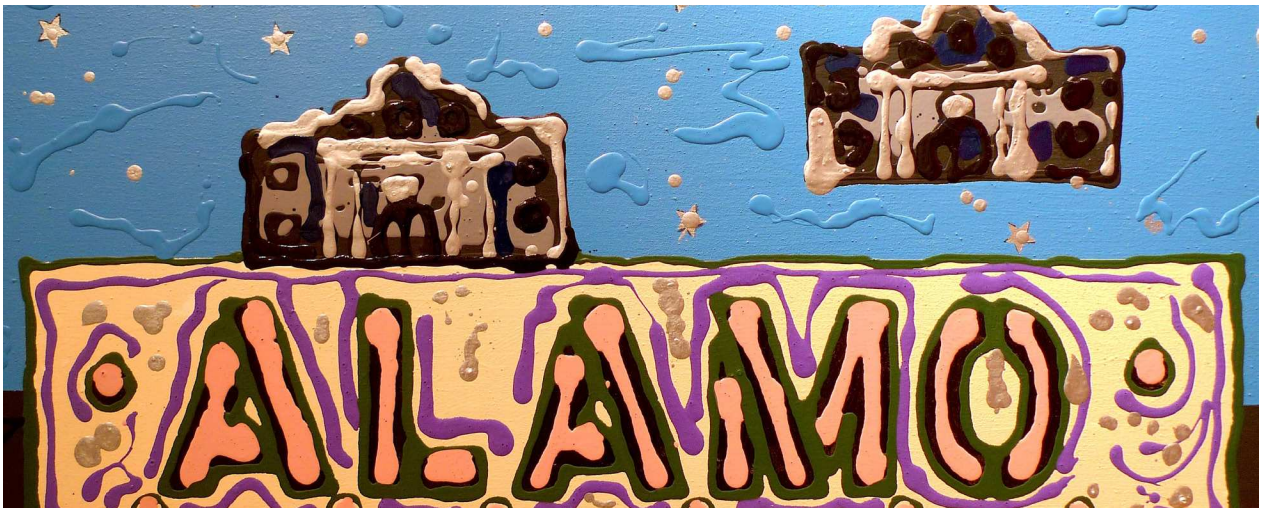
* Ruben C. Cordova, "The Cinematic Genesis of the Mel Casas Humanscape, 1965 — 1967," *Aztlán: A Journal of Chicano Studies, vol. 36, #2, Fall 2011, p. 51-87.*

MEL CASAS

Humanscape 147 is one of the last in a cycle of 150 large-scale paintings Casas called Humanscapes that the artist made between 1965 and 1989. They were inspired by a glimpse of a drive-in movie screen in 1965: a speaking woman appeared to be "munching" on trees in the landscape beneath the screen. Each Humanscape painting has a large screen in the upper portion that references that momentary experience.*

Casas' final group of Humanscape paintings, which he made from 1982 to 1989, were called Southwestern Clichés. Rather than simply working with a brush, Casas increasingly utilized the techniques of pouring and dripping paint onto the canvas. Verbal-visual puns are a vital aspect of Casas' Humanscapes. The screen image in this painting depicts an abstract cottonwood tree because the Spanish word alamo means cottonwood.

The artist explains that this cottonwood tree "bears blurry"—one might even say cottony—"Alamo shapes." These little "Alamos" reference the miniatures sold in the Alamo gift shop, such as the Alamo-shaped Christmas ornament in the center of Rodríguez-Díaz's painting in the previous gallery. Casas likens these miniature Alamos to "acorns that will fall and be multiplied." Thus the mythos of the Alamo—in the material form of small relics of the shrine itself—serves to seed itself. In a discussion of *Humanscape 56 (San Antonio Circus)*, which references a San Antonio annual holiday called Fiesta, Casas relates Fiesta and the Alamo. Casas views both of them as examples of "fake patriotism based on fake history." He adds: "when we repeat a lie over and over again, with time it becomes real."



Video by Laura Varela (b. 1971), ***Enlight-Tents,*** 2009
documenting ***Enlight-Tents***, a public art installation by **Vaago Weiland (b. 1966)** and **Laura Varela** at the Alamo for Luminaria Arts Night in San Antonio, Texas, March 14, 2009

LAURA VARELA

This video is a documentation of the *Enlight-Tents* installation. It also incorporates much of the video that Varela projected onto the Alamo on March 14, 2009. Weiland came up with the idea of doing an installation with tents in front of the Alamo. Varela decided to project a film with indigenous and mestizo faces on the Alamo façade as an act of resistance. These faces were multiple reminders of indigenous perseverance. Varela explains her objectives:

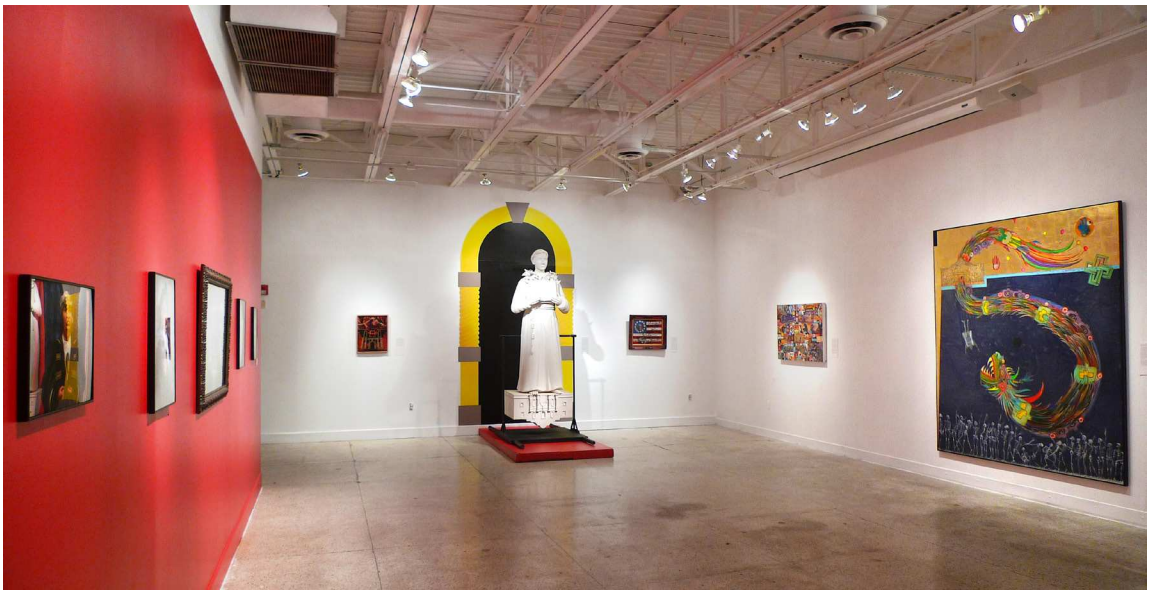
"I projected brown faces on the Alamo because I wanted to explore faces and words that ground us right here in San Antonio as indigenous to this place. I also wanted to show who we are now as Mexican Americans/ Chicanos. We are the true definition of *Raza Cosmica* through our *mestizaje*."

For Varela "the Alamo represents the European invasion of this continent," as well as "the assumption" that European culture "was superior to that of the native inhabitants of this area." The Spanish sought to subjugate and convert the indigenous peoples to Catholicism. For Varela the chapel of the Franciscan mission that is now called the Alamo serves as a symbol of Spanish efforts to colonize. This chapel is also a material remnant of this colonizing mission. The conquest of Mexico by the U.S. subsequently rendered this building a symbol of Euro-American efforts to subjugate and annihilate indigenous peoples.

"We wanted the spectator to interact with the tents," adds Varela, "to have to navigate the area, to be fully immersed in this experience." The thin, light-pierced membranes of the tents, dramatically illumined at night, "represented the heartbeat and soul of the people who lived in balance with nature." Varela and Weiland were also addressing the importance of tents: "Generations of mankind lived and traveled in tents. Everything took place in nature or these tents: life, love, birth, and death."

Video by Laura Varela, Enlight-Tents, 2009


Belonging
to a
Place



The Other Side of the Alamo: Art Against the Myth, *Installation views*

ANDY BENAVIDES

Andy Benavides is an artist and the executive director of S.M.A.R.T. (Supporting Multiple Art Resources Together), a community arts programming organization that sponsored the Enlight-Tents installation.

Andy Benavides (b. 1965), ***Enlight-Tents installation,*** 2009
photograph, 16 x 20 inches, courtesy of the artist

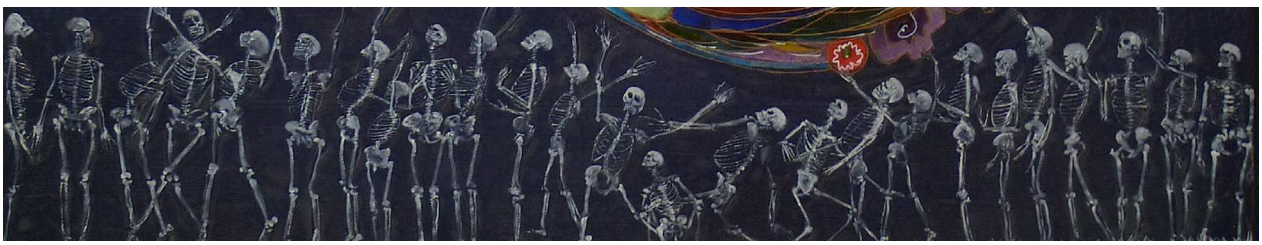
Roberto Jose Gonzalez (b. 1955), ***Una Limpia de Colón: Eres un Conquistador (A Columbus/colon Cleansing: You are a Conquistador)***, 2018
acrylic with gold and silver leaf on canvas, 90 x 78 inches, courtesy of the artist

ROBERTO JOSE GONZALEZ

Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus in English) mistakenly landed in the Americas, where, as a particularly cruel and vicious colonizer, he initiated genocidal practices—greatly heightened by imported diseases—against the indigenous peoples. Gonzalez calls for an indigenous *limpieza* (a ritual cleansing) as a first step in counteracting the damage that Columbus and other Europeans wreaked in the Americas. His title plays on the ambiguity of the word "colon": Gonzalez implies that the cleansing of Columbus is akin to an enema (a colon cleansing). "Colon" is also the root of colonizer.

"This painting presents the notion that our colonial inheritances can be cleansed from within," explains Gonzalez. A resurgent and indomitable Quetzalcoatl, the resplendent feathered serpent god, has passed through the Alamo church, purging it of its colonizing spirit, represented by Columbus, who is falling like a man without a parachute into the underworld. The *calaveras* (skeletons) at the bottom of the painting represent the uncounted millions of indigenous peoples (Gonzalez accepts the 100,000,000 estimate) that died at the hands of Columbus and his successors. "The gold surface is a reminder of why they came—and why they stayed," explains the artist. The red hand signifies the end of colonial influence. Ixchel, the orange moon, represents the natural force of love. The green Ollin symbol stands for movement. The three symbols imply change and transformation.

For Gonzalez, "re-imagining the Alamo is a question of re-imagining civilization." Without European interference, "our identity, language, religion, art, and history would have evolved from its own core." As a Jungian, Gonzalez is deeply concerned with trans-generational transfers of trauma caused by the destruction of belief systems, which he believes are the root of confusion, low self-esteem, abuse, neglect, and gang violence in Latino and indigenous communities. After centuries of colonization, wholesale cultural losses can never be fully recovered, but one can commence "cultivating connections to self and community, strengthening ritual practice, and resonating with the wisdom of the ancestors. Sing, and their breath will find you," says Gonzalez. "*Ometeotl*."



Albert Alvarez (b. 1983), *How the West Was Won,* 2018
acrylic on paper collage on panel, 30 x 40 inches, courtesy of the artist

ALBERT ALVAREZ

Everyone has their peculiar memories of the Alamo, and Alvarez, a San Antonio native, has his: "the Alamo has always been taken for granted, swept under the rug. I remembered the Alamo more for what Ozzy did to it than for what I could recall about Davy Crockett." Heavy Metal icon Ozzy Osbourne was banned from performing in San Antonio for ten years after urinating at the Alamo. Alvarez found a photographic source for this most infamous of performances.* Consequently, this is possibly the first historically accurate representation of this event in art. Most astonishingly, Alvarez juxtaposes Ozzy in the act of drawing his line of urine with Travis drawing his legendary "line in the sand" with his sword (upper left corner).

"We're supposed to revere those who died there," says Alvarez, "particularly those on the Texas side, without question." He depicts Davy Crockett, the martyr of Alamo martyrs, on his knees, presumably after his surrender, bearing multiple wounds, including one that recalls the spear wound in Christ's side. By sandwiching Ozzy between Crockett and Travis, Alvarez seems to have elevated Ozzy into the Holy Trinity of Alamo martyrs, displacing Bowie (James, not David). Ozzy even makes a command appearance in the bottom center, having just bitten the head off of a bat. The extraterrestrial creature from the Predator films is taken from the Ripley's Believe It or Not! Odditorium, located across the street from the Alamo church. Alvarez also included a Spurs basketball player because the Alamo is frequently shown during televised Spurs games.

Alvarez explains how he came to explore revisionist views of the Alamo: "In the past few years in intellectual circles around town there was a lot of talk of the Alamo as a symbol of slavery and oppression. So I wanted to elucidate for myself what the hell is going on with the Alamo. Fortunately there are a lot of perspectives on the Alamo, on the role it played not only in Texas history, but in the Westward expansion of American culture." Alvarez sums up this work: "I've presented some hard-to-refute findings relating to the colonization of indigenous peoples, the taking of their land and heritage, and juxtaposed that with modern Americana concoctions of Alamo lore." Thus the entire painting is crammed with free—and not-so-free—associations.

* As told to John Doran, photos by Tom Sheehan, "From Ozzy Pissing in the Alamo to Snoop in '94: Legendary Photographer Tom Sheehan Explains His Iconic Images," *Vice*, June 7, 2016. https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/jmk8ek/tom-sheehan-john-doran-stories-behind-photos

Raul Servin (b. 1946), ***Olvidate del Alamo #1,*** 2001
acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches, courtesy of the artist

RAUL SERVIN

Raul Servin recognizes slavery as the underlying cause of the Texian Revolt: “the real reason for the Alamo battle was slavery.” Mexico and New Spain had been safe havens for escaped slaves. Mexico, which achieved independence in 1821, began to place restrictions on slavery in 1823, when it forbade the sale and purchase of slaves. Vincente Ramón Guerrero Saldaña, the Afro-Mestizo president of Mexico, abolished slavery in September of 1829, though after intense lobbying by Tejanos, he granted Texas an exemption. President Guerrero was deposed in December of 1829 and executed in January of 1831, and his emancipation decree was subsequently annulled by the national Congress.* President Anastasio Bustamante, who overthrew Guerrero, attempted to enforce abolition in 1830, but Texian colonists sought exemptions and also utilized legal subterfuges, such as calling their slaves indentured servants. Slavery was a ticking time bomb. Cotton—when produced by slaves—was so profitable that it produced a phenomenon analogous to Gold Fever. The Texians revolted to preserve slavery. As Servin notes, “the only way to keep those slaves was independence from Mexico.”

Servin’s painting features a U.S. flag with thirteen stars in a circular configuration, to emphasize U.S. territorial expansion after the Mexican American War. The Alamo church, situated inside the stars, bears the Mexican national colors: green, white, and red. A chain tethered to an Alamo pillar terminates in an opened shackle at the bottom of the painting. As noted earlier, the Alamo church was the site of slave auctions during the Civil War. The ironic inscription on the white stripes inverts and negates conventional slogans: “Olvidate del Alamo esclavitude o Muerte” (Forget the Alamo slavery or Death). “Remember the Alamo” is, of course, a call for vengeance against Mexicans, so Servin says to forget it. “Slavery or Death,” an inversion of Patrick Henry’s “Give me Liberty or given me Death,” mocks the Texian revolt, which, though it habitually made parallels with the U.S. revolution, was fundamentally about slavery. This point is also conveyed visually by a white “lone star”—the Texas emblem—that floats within the slave shackle. The U.S. flag’s red stripes also read as a solid red field behind the white stripes, making the white stripes read


Olvidate
del
Alamo
o Muerte

like prison bars. This red field has an eagle on a cactus: the central emblem of the Mexican flag. Since this eagle normally has a snake in its beak, one can read the chain as a substitute for the snake. Implicitly, the eagle (Mexico) ended slavery, only to have the Alamo (Texas and the Confederacy) perpetuate the institution.

One can also see meaning in this painting that the artist did not intend, given the thirteen stars: Phillip Thomas Tucker points out that there might not have been a 1776 Revolution without a British High Court ruling against slavery that took place in 1772. While the ideological impetus for the Revolution came from the North, the South joined because of British opposition to slavery.**

* Andrew J. Torget. *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands*, 1800-1850. Chapel Hill: UNC, 2015, p. 142-150, 305, n. 26.

** Phillip Thomas Tucker. *America's Forgotten First War for Slavery and Genesis of the Alamo*, Vol. 1. lulu.com, 2017, p. 28-31.

Rolando Briseño (b. 1952), ***Spinning San Antonio de Valero, a.k.a. Upside Down Saint Anthony,*** 2009
painted Styrofoam on processional base, 102 x 41 x 64 inches, courtesy of the artist

ROLANDO BRISEÑO

In folk Catholicism, a devotee usually has allegiance to one particular Catholic saint (or even to one particular painting or statue of a saint or holy figure, such as the Virgin of Guadalupe). Catholics recognize Saint Anthony (San Antonio) as a patron saint of lost things. He is credited with the power to achieve the impossible. However, when a request made to Saint Anthony is unfulfilled by the saint, a folk devotee will often motivate or "punish" his or her statue of Saint Anthony by placing it upside down. Sometimes the statue is buried in an odious material, such as manure. When the saint subsequently delivers the requested favor or miracle, the devotee rewards him by returning his statue to its proper right-side-up orientation in its domestic place of honor. The ingenious, double-ended structure of Briseño's Spinning San Antonio de Valero statue ensures that either Saint Anthony (also understood as the city of San Antonio) or the church of the former Misión San Antonio de Valero (popularly referred to as the Alamo) is upside-down. Briseño created the statue with the intention of using it in performances. Consequently, he provided it with a processional base and a built-in pivot bar for spinning it.

Spinning San Antonio Fiesta was performed by Briseño four times (2009-12) on June 13, Saint Anthony's feast day, in front of the Alamo. Briseño's statue Spinning San Antonio de Valero (2009) was carried in procession by four actors dressed as a pachuco, a slave of African descent, a 19th century undocumented Anglo immigrant to Coahuila y Tejas, and an undocumented Mexican prisoner in the U.S. These actors placed the statue on the table of reconciliation and made it spin around, so that the Alamo and St. Anthony alternated being on top. These fiestas commenced with indigenous cleansing and blessing ceremonies and included music and dance. An Alamo-shaped piñata was broken open, which spilled out hundreds of tiny dolls of mixed ethnicity. Briseño specifies the miraculous intervention he sought:

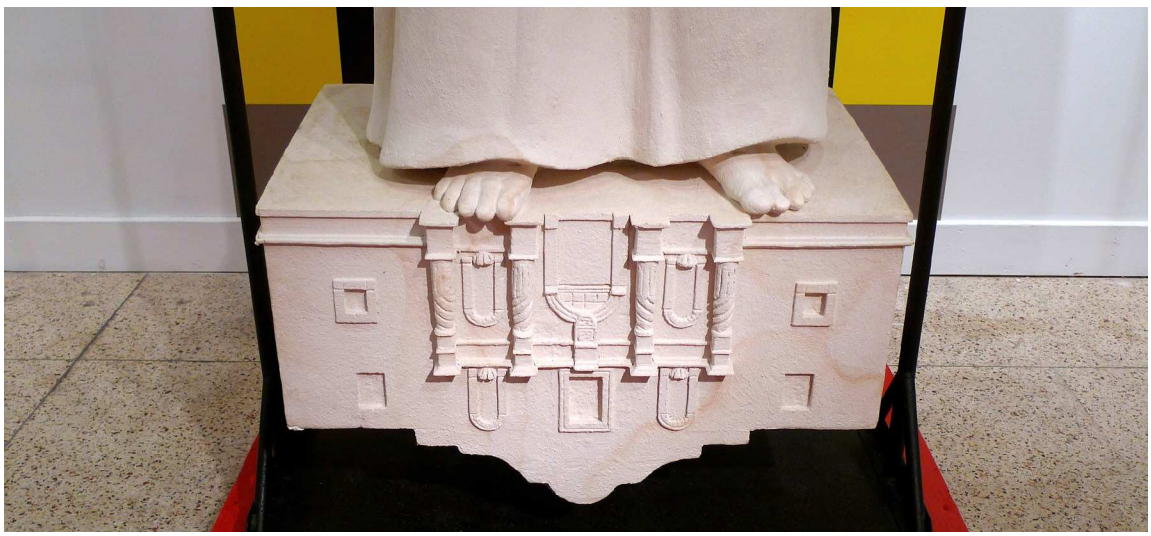
"The favor being requested in this case is that Mexican Americans/Tejanos take their rightful place as the heirs and descendants of the builders and the original inhabitants of this city. Our mixed ancestry — European, African, and Native American — has long been disdained by Anglos, but it is in fact a source of pride to our Mexican-origin population. In many respects, our multi-ethnicity represents the future of the United States."

In these Spinning San Antonio Fiesta performances, Briseño was also exposing the "'spinning' of the narrative of the Alamo." He clarifies: "instead of a preservationist/historical vision for the mission complex, it has been transformed into a shrine whose purpose is to

Rolando Briseño, Spinning San Antonio de Valero, a.k.a. Upside Down Saint Anthony (details)

legitimate the privileged status of Anglo Americans in a hegemonic manner." When he enacted these ritual performances, Briseño noted: "Mexican Americans, Chicanos, and Latinos in general do not feel welcome at the Alamo" because of the manner in which the historical narrative has been distorted to exclude them or to make them the villains of Texas history. Saint Anthony was made a Doctor of the Church in recognition of his direct and resounding preaching that could be understood by everyone, including the unlettered. Consequently, one of the saint's emblems is a book. Briseño endowed his Saint Anthony statue with a book whose open pages read: "Truth in History/History in Truth."

Briseño ceased performing Spinning San Antonio Fiesta in 2013 because Texas Land Commissioner, Jerry Patterson, the new caretaker of the Alamo, said he wanted to make the public narrative more inclusive. Briseño is hopeful that these changes "could make the Alamo a place where all people can go to leave behind discord and contemplate the convergence of cultures." The artist views this development as one that "will make for a more harmonious future."



Raul Servin (b. 1946), ***Olvidate del Alamo #2,*** 2003
acrylic on canvas, 16 x 20 inches, courtesy of the artist

RAUL SERVIN

Red, the defining color of this painting, invokes blood, marking the Alamo as a site of conflict and death. In a vertiginous shifting of positive and negative space, the façade of the Alamo church seems to be completed by a black UFW eagle. This eagle, the paramount symbol of the Chicano movement, represents an Aztec eagle, and, as such, is understood as the successor of the Mexican eagle.* The bottom portion of the UFW eagle is essentially an inverted Mesoamerican step pyramid. In this painting, the lower sides of the eagle seem to define two red pyramids that are co-terminus with the Alamo. To emphasize its Mexican roots, the UFW eagle has a necklace made of red chiles. Both the eagle and the Alamo are dwarfed by an enormous prickly pear cactus in the background. An eagle on a cactus was the Aztec sign of the covenant: it caused them to settle in present day Mexico City, which is why this emblem adorns the Mexican flag.

Outlined in fiery red, Raul Servin's UFW eagle seems like a phoenix, reborn from the ashes of conflict. These Mexican and Chicano symbols emphasize the Mexican victory at the Alamo and tell the viewer to forget what they think they know about the Alamo.

The red background also reads as a screen of blood, oozing down through the columns, alluding to the loss of life during the Texian Revolt, the Mexican-American War, and the Civil War. As the abolitionist Benjamin F. Lundy had warned in a pamphlet called The War in Texas in 1836: "Let the PUBLIC VOICE BE RAISED IN TONES OF THUNDER…. Otherwise the Demons of Oppression will triumph, and our children must wear his chains—or blood will flow in torrents, and the land will be drenched with their crimson gore!"

* Ed Fuentes, "How One Flag Went From Representing Farmworkers to Flying for the Entire Latino Community," *takepart*, April 20, 2014. http://www.takepart.com/article/2014/04/02/cultural-history-ufw-flag/

Mari Hernandez (b. 1979), *Liar,* 2017
photograph, 20 x 18 inches, courtesy of the artist

MARI HERNANDEZ

Like Cindy Sherman, Hernandez utilizes make-up and prostheses to create a photographic practice that consists entirely of self-portraiture. In her creation of suppressed historical narratives, Hernandez also draws on the work of Laura Aguilar, Carrie Mae Weems, and David La Chapelle. Hernandez's work is pervaded by a deep historical pessimism: her awareness of the "falsity of received history" has made her skeptical of dominant historical narratives. After visiting the White House in Washington DC as a participant in a leadership program, Hernandez had a greater understanding that politics is a game wherein genuine power is cloaked, hidden from the public: "We are being fed one history, while another one is taking place behind the curtain."

The photographs in this exhibition are from an ongoing series called "Hombres" (Men) that engages regional history in the broader context of the revival of racism and xenophobia in the age of Trump, who characterized Mexican immigrants as "bad hombres." *Vendido* (sellout) represents a Mexican or Latino traitor who internalizes racism: he either fought against or betrayed his own people. Liar is a quintessentially Trumpean bad actor. *The Signing* reinterprets the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (which ceded approximately half of Mexico to the U.S. in 1848) by implying that it is a consummation of corruption and greed, hence the pig snouts sported by characters that are nominally Mexican, but that stand for greed and corruption in general. The Americans serve as colonial archetypes. They wear full masks, which are appropriate, given how effectively they cloaked their longstanding plots to seize Spanish and Mexican territories. Moreover, particularly in the case of Texas, Anglo-American Imperialists habitually characterized their aggression as self-defense. Fittingly, the American costumes are archaistic, since these imperialistic designs go back to the time of the Founding Fathers. In the upper corners of the photograph, two images of women (in China Poblana and Native American dress) serve as surrogates for the artist: they "look down upon this weird mash-up" of styles and motives with suspicion and skepticism. *Manifest Destiny* is nothing less than the story of America: the belief that people of color are somehow unfit to govern themselves, or even to continue to inhabit the lands they possess. On one level, *Epidemic* represents the diseases that Europeans brought to the Americas, which nearly wiped out the indigenous peoples (and greatly assisted in conquests of them). On another level, it stands for colonization itself, which Hernandez refers to as: "a disease, a fraud, and something infectious." Colonization, in short, is a pestilence without microbial pathogens. In this series, Hernandez mixes "both natural and unnatural features" to create scenarios that interrogate images of "power, war, and trauma."

Mari Hernandez (b. 1979), *Vendido,* 2017
photograph, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of the artist

Mari Hernandez (b. 1979), ***The Signing,*** 2016
photograph, 24 x 36 inches, courtesy of the artist

Mari Hernandez (b. 1979), *Epidemic,* 2017
photograph, 20 x 16 inches, courtesy of the artist

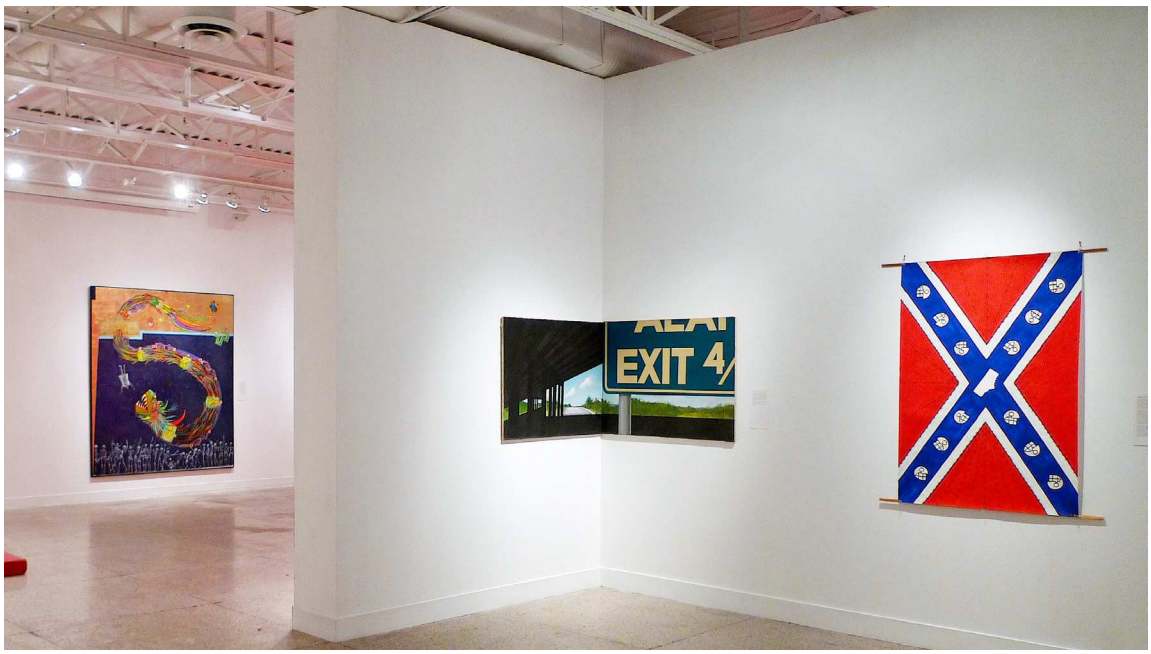
Mari Hernandez (b. 1979), ***Manifest Destiny,*** 2016
photograph, 18 x 12 inches, courtesy of the artist

Jesse Treviño, *Alamo Exit,* 1969
acrylic on 2 canvases, each canvas 32 x 42 inches, courtesy of the artist

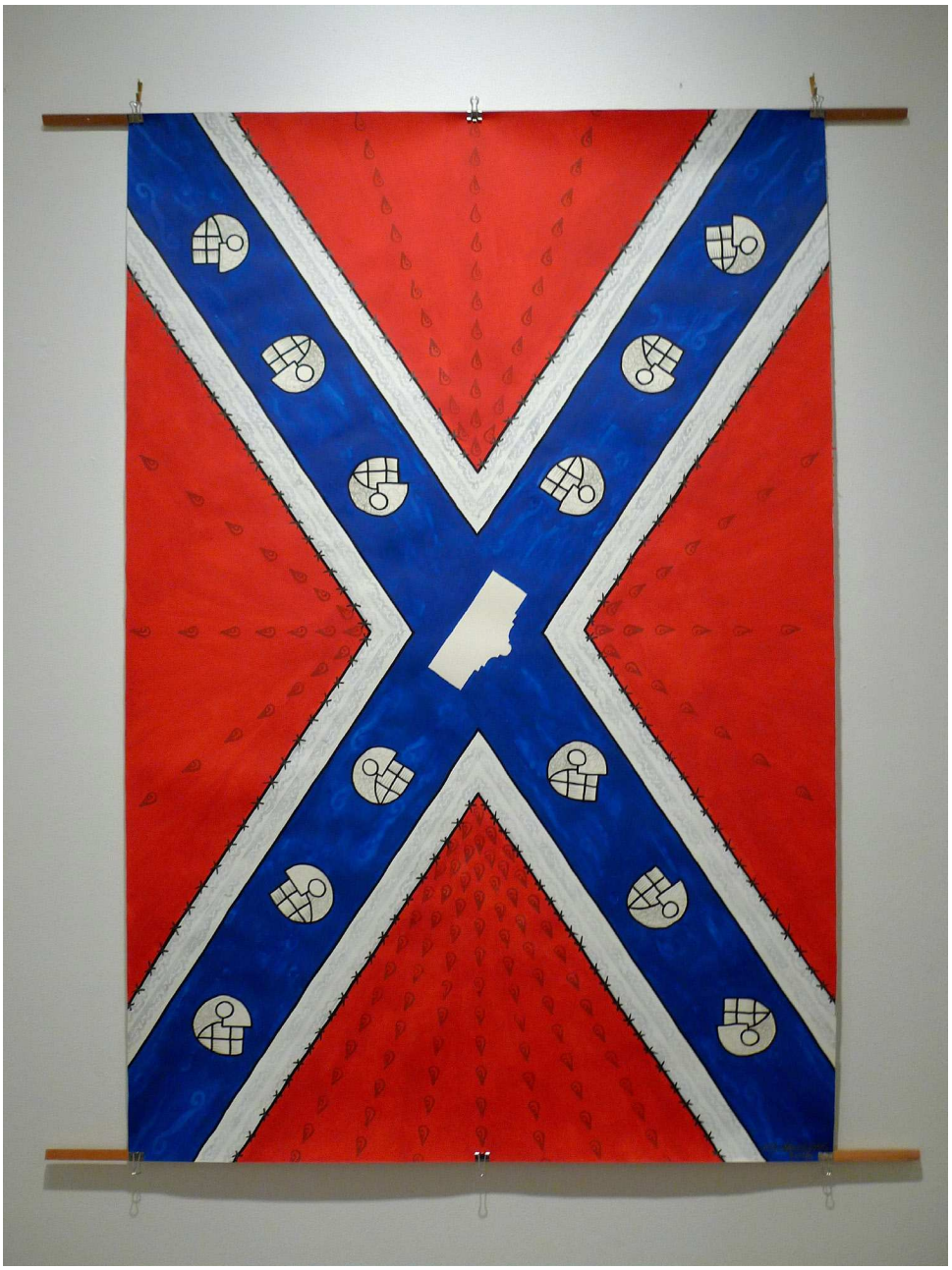
JESSE TREVIÑO

Treviño made *Alamo Exit* in 1969, when he was enrolled as a student at San Antonio College (SAC), where Mel Casas was his most influential professor. The class assignment was to paint a modern landscape. Treviño recalls that he "wanted to make something modern," but he realized that "when you drive just a little bit out of town, you are in the country." He decided to combine the modern, human-built environment with views of the countryside seen through a highway underpass, whose stark, black-silhouetted forms impart an abstract quality. Treviño included the exit sign in order to give the landscape a sense of place. The Alamo is so synonymous with San Antonio that fragments of four letters are sufficient to convey the word Alamo.

Treviño utilized two canvases because he was fascinated by unconventional artworks made by Pop Artists. The two parts of *Alamo Exit* are often set in a convex 90-degree angle, such that the viewer doesn't see the canvas with the exit sign until he or she turns the corner. *Alamo Exit* can be reconfigured into other formats, including opposite sides of a wall, where a spectator can only see one part of the painting at a time.



The Other Side of the Alamo: Art Against the Myth, Installation view



Luis Valderas (b. 1966), ***The Confederate States of La Muerte,*** 2018
acrylic on cotton rag paper, 54 x 36 inches, courtesy of the artist

LUIS VALDERAS

Valderas has made a number of flag-based works garnished with his signature stylized skulls that reflect Day of the Dead traditions from Mexico. This piece examines what one might call the "Alamo effect" on Texas history. "Remember the Alamo" served as the rallying cry for the Texian revolt, which lead to: the foundation of a slave-based republic and the Mexican American War; the dismembering of Mexico and the incorporation of Texas as a slave state into the U.S.; the incorporation of Texas as a slave state into the Confederate States of America. The succession of slave states, of course, lead to the American Civil War. After reunification, pogroms of terror were directed against people of color, especially in the South, which included lynching, torture, and murder.

Consequently, death and the Alamo are appropriately coupled in Valderas' painting, which uses the Confederate Battle Flag as a point of departure: "I have replaced the stars with skulls and the center star with a white Alamo silhouette, turned on its side." He reinterprets the imagery of the flag in a local context: "The skulls and the Alamo float at the crossroads of a confluence formed by the San Antonio River and the blue cross of St. Andrew." The white "fields" on either side of the blue crossing rivers represent rows of cotton. Valderas stamps the verso of the cotton rag paper with custom-carved erasers that endow these fields of cotton with a three-dimensional, "cottony" texture, symbolically returning the industrial product to its organic source.* At the same time, he highlights cotton as the primary reason for slavery and, consequently, the cascading stream of historical events that flowed from the Battle of the Alamo in 1836. The enormous profitability of cotton plantations served as the engine of the South. Valderas suspends the flag from two pieces of wood "to allude to the way slaves were tied down during whipping."

The red fields of the flag constitute a sanguinary tide, filled with speech scrolls derived from Mesoamerican codices that flow in the direction of the upended Alamo. They serve as the largely stifled voices of Mexico, which was defeated in the Mexican American War. Mexico's former citizens and their descendants suffered—and continue to suffer—under the signs of the Alamo and the Lone Star State. Nonetheless, these voices form a current of their own, and they will combine to create new, historically grounded narratives for the Alamo and Texas that do not omit people of color.

* Valderas chose cotton paper as a symbolic reference to "King Cotton," or "White Gold," to use nicknames for the primary slave plantation crop. Similarly, Valderas carves his stamps out of erasers as a symbolic ritual practice: the carved erasers erase historical errors. They create raised surfaces the artist refers to as "ghost textures."

Andy Benavides (b. 1965), *El Alamo,* 2015
acrylic on photograph, 24 x 36 inches, courtesy of Francie Mannix

ANDY BENAVIDES

Benavides notes that General Martín Perfecto de Cos (1800-1854)* "had a short stay in San Antonio de Bexar." The military commander of the state of Coahuila y Tejas, Cos arriving in San Antonio in September of 1835, where, after a siege of 56 days, he surrendered to the Texian army.** In a brilliant tactical move, the Texians shelled the Alamo as a diversion while they attacked the city in force.*** The poorly provisioned Cos ultimately recognized that the Alamo could not be properly defended and that his position was hopeless—a conclusion already drawn by deserting soldiers. The Texians, lacking provisions for a large amount of prisoners, permitted Cos and his army to return to Mexico, where they joined up with Santa Anna's army in early 1836 and helped to recapture the Alamo in February-March. Cos was himself captured at San Jacinto in April by Sam Houston's army.

This artwork is made on an appropriated photograph. Benavides explains that "the idea of carving the tree with Cos's name was a defiant gesture and a humorous reminder that he was there first." Benavides added a "C/S" inscription, an abbreviation of the slang Chicano term Con Safo, whose varied meanings include "the same to you" and "don't touch this." The Alamo, especially the church, has long served as a symbol of Anglo American power. For that reason, Benavides stenciled an enormous "EL ALAMO" across the photograph in a decidedly "Low Rider" styled font to assert Mexican/Chicano priority.

* Claudia Hazlewood, "Cos, Martín Perfecto de," *Handbook of Texas Online*, 2016. https://tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fco76

**Alwyn Barr, "Bexar, Siege Of," *Handbook of Texas Online*, 2018. http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/qeb01

*** Stephen L. Hardin, *Texian Iliad: A Military History of the Texas Revolution, 1835-1836.* Austin: University of Texas Press, 2015, p. 78-90.

Enrique Martinez (1979), ***King of the Hill,*** 2018
acrylic on masonite, 71 x 47 inches, courtesy of the artist

ENRIQUE MARTINEZ

Martinez is concerned with "how it is in human nature to fight for territory and resources." He sees greed as the driving force of history, hence the title *King of the Hill*. His painting is intended as a "depiction of the history of conflict in the area surrounding the Alamo." This conflict is situated on a tiny land mass. On the bottom of the pile, a dark-skinned indigenous man is subdued by a lighter-skinned indigenous man. A Spanish missionary seems to be stabbing at them, trying to insert his cross into their bodies. A Mexican soldier atop the missionary is "attacked by a 'Texian' character, who seems driven by madness."

Ghostly arms suggest that this struggle for domination is directed by invisible forces. Unspecified primal instincts are at work. One of the hands holds shackles, a reference to slavery as the driving force of the Texian Revolt. A land developer is on top of the Texian, and he in turn is "being attacked by a preservationist in the form of a De Zavala/Driscoll hybrid." The landscape is nonetheless "being overtaken by a housing development and a freeway." Multiple copies of the Alamo, rendered as degraded Warholian commodities, are propped up by shabby 2 x 4"s, implying the absence of originality/authenticity. Three grackles serve not merely as picturesque fauna, but as emblems of the battle of the sexes and for conflict in general. Bluebonnets suggest the land's fertility, but also reference the ultimate Texas artistic cliché, which seems impossibly ironic in this setting. Finally, the sunset implies that time is running out for the human race.

* For the early development that destroyed most of the mission complex, as well as the ensuing De Zavala-Driscoll preservationist conflict, see: Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003.

Ruben Luna (b. 1974), ***Heavy Metal Capital vs. The Alamo City*****,** 2018
mixed media, 17 x 13 x 2.5 inches, courtesy of the artist

RUBEN LUNA

During a 1982 performance by Ozzy Osbourne, the "Godfather of Heavy Metal," a fan threw a dead bat onstage and the rocker bit its head off, thinking it was a rubber bat. Ozzy accomplished another singular distinction later that year when he urinated into a planter that was directly in front of the Alamo church.* Luna, who was in second grade at the time, recalls being "shocked" by the news. But when he went to school, "the older kids were celebrating it and viewing it as the ultimate act of rebellion." Ozzy was consequently banned from performing in San Antonio until 1992, when he made an apology and gave $10,000 to the Daughters of the Republic of Texas, who were then the custodians of the Alamo.

Luna says this artwork "was inspired by the city's need to protect the image of the Alamo for the sake of the city's sacred tourism industry." He reasons: just as Disney aggressively protects its copyrights, such as Mickey Mouse, "our city will keep up a façade to keep tourists coming to the Alamo City." Luna notes Disney's connection to Crockett through the television program (that was released as a feature film), and objects such as this cassette, which is housed in an architectonic red velvet sleeve (no doubt to conjure the notion of blood sacrifice). To safeguard this sacred tourist trap, Luna provides a "defender," a diminutive toy figure with a pistol and a knife. It represents "the ghost of Jim Bowie," and it is appropriately as white as a ghost. Yet these weapons seem to be the wrong ones to guard against urine:

an umbrella or a wetsuit would be more effective. Ironically, the gravely ill Bowie was bedridden for most of the siege and was possibly unconscious when the short battle was finally engaged. Consequently, no "defender" of the Alamo could have done less defending. This medical incapacitation did not impede Alamo myth. In John Wayne's film The Alamo (1960), Bowie dispatches at least six Mexican soldiers with a single gun blast, then he fires a brace of pistols, presumably killing at least two off-screen Mexicans. Just as Bowie is about to get bayoneted, the black slave that he had freed before the battle throws himself on Bowie's prone body. Loyal to his master's cause, the slave martyrs himself to enable Bowie's final kill: a Mexican throat slit with his eponymous

Ruben Luna, ***Heavy Metal Capital vs. The Alamo City*** (detail)

knife. Thus Bowie goes out with three bangs and a slash, and manages to slay at least nine Mexicans in twelve seconds.

For the image of Ozzy's body, Luna has supplied a cartoonish child's body, appropriated from a bootleg decal of the cartoon character Calvin.** Luna tops this slight body with a suitably crazed head-shot of Ozzy, who regards the viewer with a cross-eyed, mouth-agape smile as he launches a splashy, golden fusillade in the direction of the Alamo church (though the viewer sees everything in black-and-white). Ozzy's unnaturally backward-facing head recalls that of Linda Blair's character in William Friedkin's The Exorcist (1973). This uncanny coincidence suggests that Ozzy's desecration of this holiest of Texas shrines is likewise a product of demonic possession. Indeed, whether or not one has served as the front man for Black Sabbath, anyone who disregards the Myth of the Alamo risks demonization.

* It is virtually always alleged that Ozzy urinated on the Alamo church or cenotaph while wearing a dress. Photographer Tom Sheehan captured the event on film (Ozzy was in bell bottoms when he drew his line in the sand). Sheehan sets the record straight and adds tasty details: when a Ranger arrested Ozzy, he inquired about the bat and the rocker replied: "It was like a Crunchie wrapped in chamois leather." Ozzy fancifully claims he was locked up with a murderer still covered with blood. In any case, Ozzy was released to do his concert that evening. See: as told to John Doran, photos by Tom Sheehan, "From Ozzy Pissing in the Alamo to Snoop in '94: Legendary Photographer Tom Sheehan Explains His Iconic Images," Vice, June 7, 2016. https://www.vice.com/en_uk/article/jmk8ek/tom-sheehan-john-doran-stories-behind-photos

Jim Mendiola and Ruben Ortiz-Torres made an animatronic, dress-wearing figure of Ozzy in an artwork called *Fountain/Ozzy Visits the Alamo* (2001). Its motion detector causes the life-sized waxwork Ozzy to urinate when a spectator approaches it.

** See Phil Edwards, "The tasteless history of the peeing Calvin decal," *TRIVIA HAPPY:)*, July 2, 2014. https://triviahappy.com/articles/the-tasteless-history-of-the-peeing-calvin-decal

Ruben Luna (b. 1974), *Available for Purchase in the Gift Shop,* 2018
mixed media, 13.25 x 44.25 x 3.25 inches, courtesy of the artist

* David Theis, "Remembering the Alamo—dark side and all—and how Davy Crockett's still cool," *Houston Culture Map.com*, March 30, 2011. http://houston.culturemap.com/news/travel/03-30-11-remembering-the-alamo-dark-side-and-all-and-how-davy-crockett-still-cool/#slide=0

** Richard R. Flores, *Remembering the Alamo: Memory, Modernity, and the Master Symbol*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 2003, p. 140.

*** William Groneman III, "No Wounds in His Back: Step aside David Crockett, just how exactly did James Bowie die at the Alamo?" *True West*, February 20, 2017. https://truewestmagazine.com/no-wounds-back/

RUBEN LUNA

Ruben Luna's *Available for Purchase in the Gift Shop* is a commentary on "toy weapons sold in the gift shop of the Alamo," a phenomenon that he witnessed personally. Luna observes that though they are "marketed to kids under the guise of innocent novelty toys, they nonetheless promote violence." In the context of the Alamo, this violence is directed against Mexicans and their descendants in particular. David Theis recalls how, as a child, he identified deeply with Crockett and even "wore a faux coonskin on my head."* He was excited to study the Texas Revolution in seventh grade, until he read the assigned comic book: "Its overt racism made me feel embarrassed for my 'Mexican' classmates. I distinctly remember the panels in which Texian sharpshooters killed Mexican soldiers and celebrated by exclaiming 'Got a taco bender!' and 'Got a bean eater!' … That was my first inkling that the Alamo's appeal might not be universal."*

No doubt many faux coonskin hat-wearing children made similar exhortations as they shot imaginary Mexicans with their toy Crockett guns. Luna has modernized these pedagogical artifacts to underscore their true nature: "I have enhanced the toy weapons in a modern tactical fashion in order to reveal their deadly essence."

If the hoariest legends are to be believed, Crockett had no need of modern technology to wreak massive carnage. The town of Nacogdoches passed this resolution on March 28, 1836: "David Crockett (now rendered immortal in Glory) had fortified himself with sixteen guns well charged, and a monument of slain foes encompasses his lifeless body."** Just one year later, in the *Crockett Almanac*, he is said to have done more with less: "… during the siege, he killed not less than 85 men, and wounded 120 besides … he had four rifles, with two men to load constantly….**"

The pistol and large knife in Luna's construction are associated with James Bowie, who was sick and died in bed. That did not keep early mythifiers from crediting him with killing two or more Mexicans from his comfortable roost.*** Subsequent exaggerators boosted these statistics. If all the Texians had stayed in bed, they could have wiped out the entire Mexican army with kill ratios like those!

Joe de la Cruz (b. 1981), *Alamo Crackers,* 2010
ink jet on copy paper, 8 ½ x 11 inches, courtesy of Dudley Brooks and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto

JOE DE LA CRUZ

After noticing that many clients at his workplace were members of elite and racially exclusionary San Antonio groups, such as the Order of the Alamo and the Texas Cavaliers, de la Cruz began to sketch out ideas "to explore the names, trends and demographics of these organizations." de la Cruz also wanted to address how the Alamo functions as a potent symbol whose narrative "still influences San Antonio's class structure." *Alamo Crackers,* an Alamo chapel constructed out of saltine crackers, was the product of these studies.

de la Cruz's awareness of the importance of this subject began in elementary school, when his class produced a Battle of the Alamo pageant. He drew the name William Barrett Travis, but his teacher gave that role to a light-skinned student and made him play a Mexican soldier instead. San Antonio school districts emphasized "the history of the Missions and the Alamo in particular, but only gave us one side of the story," recalls the artist. "They did not attempt to explain how it related to us as the students and children of San Antonio. The story that was being taught was not my story." de la Cruz could not play a hero in this morality play because his ethnicity automatically rendered him a villain.

de la Cruz was particularly upset when he learned that El Rey Feo (the Ugly King) was first selected by the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) because people of Mexican descent were excluded from the Texas Cavaliers, a group whose mission is to "promote and preserve the bravery and independence for which the heroes of the Alamo died." He deemed it "insulting" that the Texas Cavaliers appointed King San Antonio every year, while LULAC appointed their Ugly King. de la Cruz selected the title *Alamo Cracker* because of its phonetic similarity to animal crackers. The title was an "inflammatory insult directed back at the Texas Cavaliers and their glaring whiteness. Crackers are white," notes the artist.* "The Alamo building is white, too."

* For the complicated history of "cracker" as a term for white people going all the way back to Shakespeare, see: Gene Demby, "The Secret History of the Word 'Cracker,'' *Code Switch: Race and Identity Remixed,* Texas Public Radio, July 1, 2013. https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2013/07/01/197644761/word-watch-on-crackers

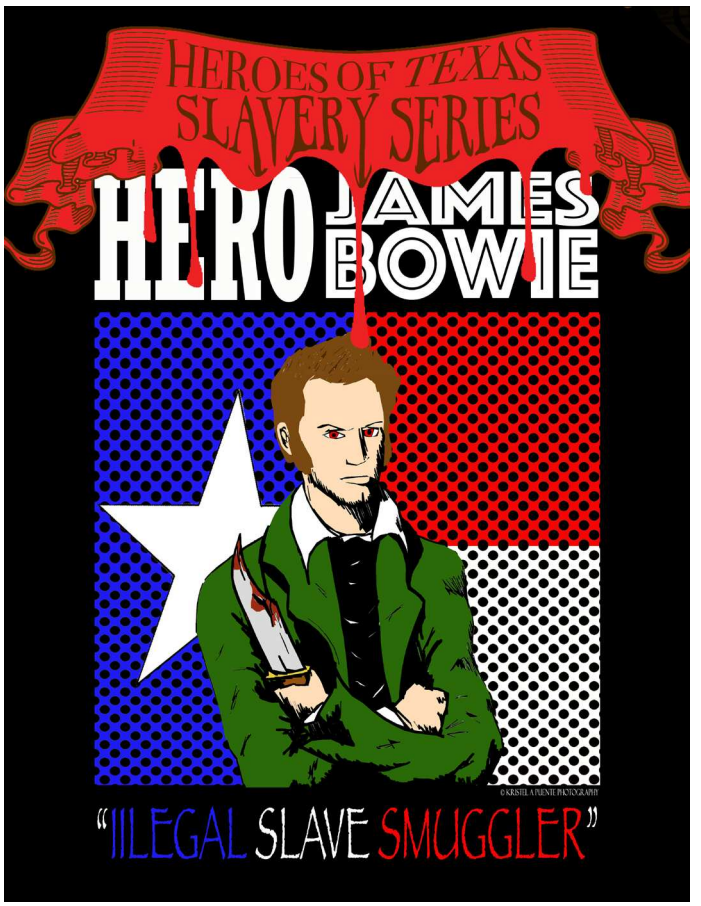
Kristel A. Orta-Puente, ***Heroes of Texas Slavery Series, El Empresario [Stephen F. Austin],*** 2018
digital prints, each 14 x 11 inches, courtesy of the artist

KRISTEL A. ORTA-PUENTE

Orta-Puenta depicts participants in the Battle of the Alamo and the Texian revolt in her *Heroes of Texas Slavery* Series. The men who fought (and sometimes died) to bring slavery to Texas are each given their own image, in a manner akin to a baseball card. One can imagine collecting a complete set of slavery cards, just as one might collect baseball cards. The following is Orta-Puente's piercing commentary on one of the most overlooked aspects of Alamo/Texas history:

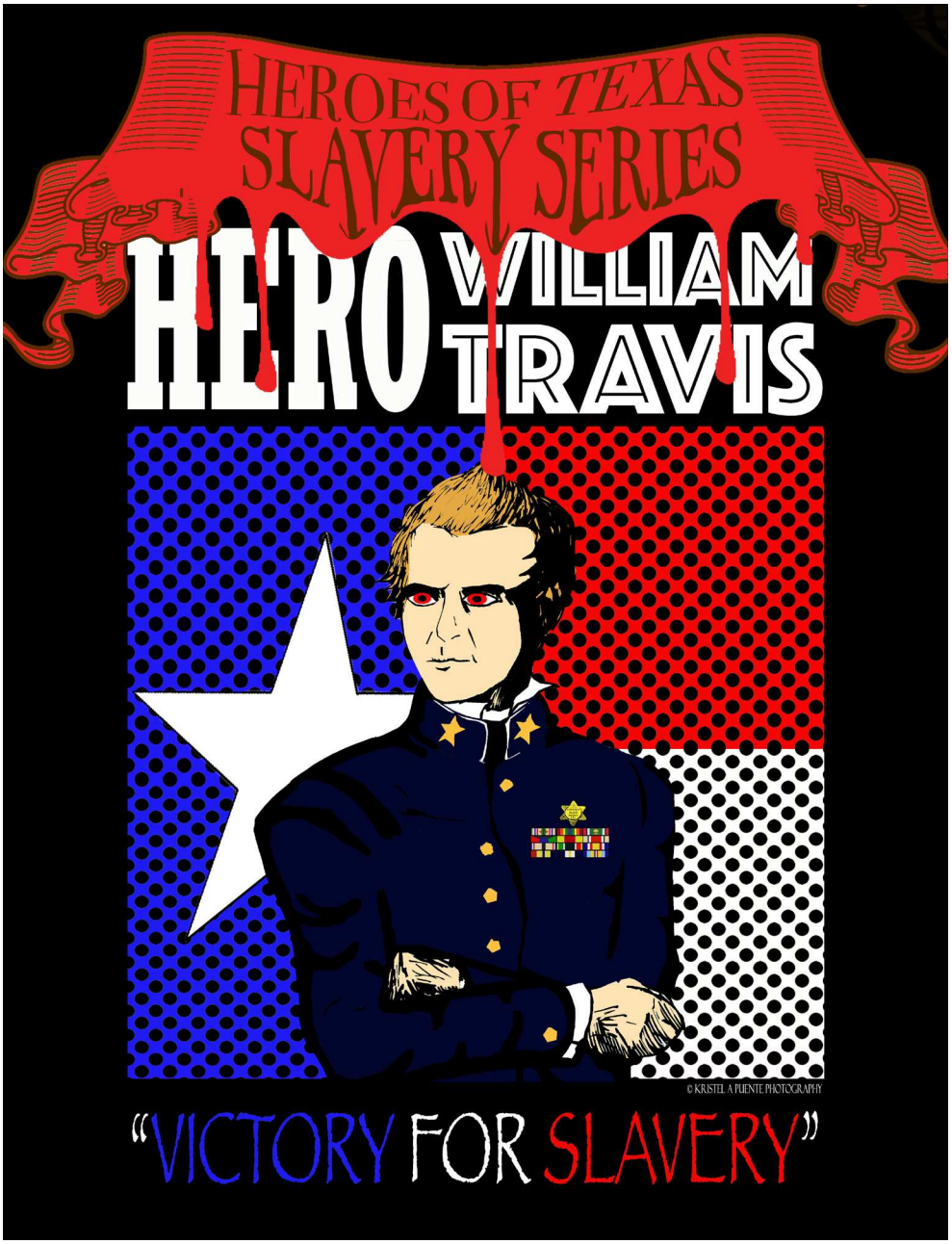
"Texas presents the most glorious, heroic and best of her sons in this series, *the Heroes of Texas Slavery*. We are highlighting one of the lesser know aspects of their service to Texas and The Alamo, the perpetuation of the peculiar institution of chattel slavery in mother Texas. Without the devotion and sacrifice of these men, slavery might never have come to Texas and we might never have joined the blessed and honorable Confederate States. Can you imagine Five Flags over Texas? It doesn't have the same ring as Six Flags Over Texas. Finally there is a series of remembrances that truly honors their noble character and service to Texas and The Alamo."

The four prints are capped by a large root, to which the artist has affixed blood-stained balls of cotton and yellow roses. This element alludes to plantation slavery as the "root" of the Anglo-American colonization of Texas. The dripping blood-red banners and the red eyes of each hero endow them with a sinister, sanguinary quality, which is compounded by the bullet-ridden Texas flags in the background.

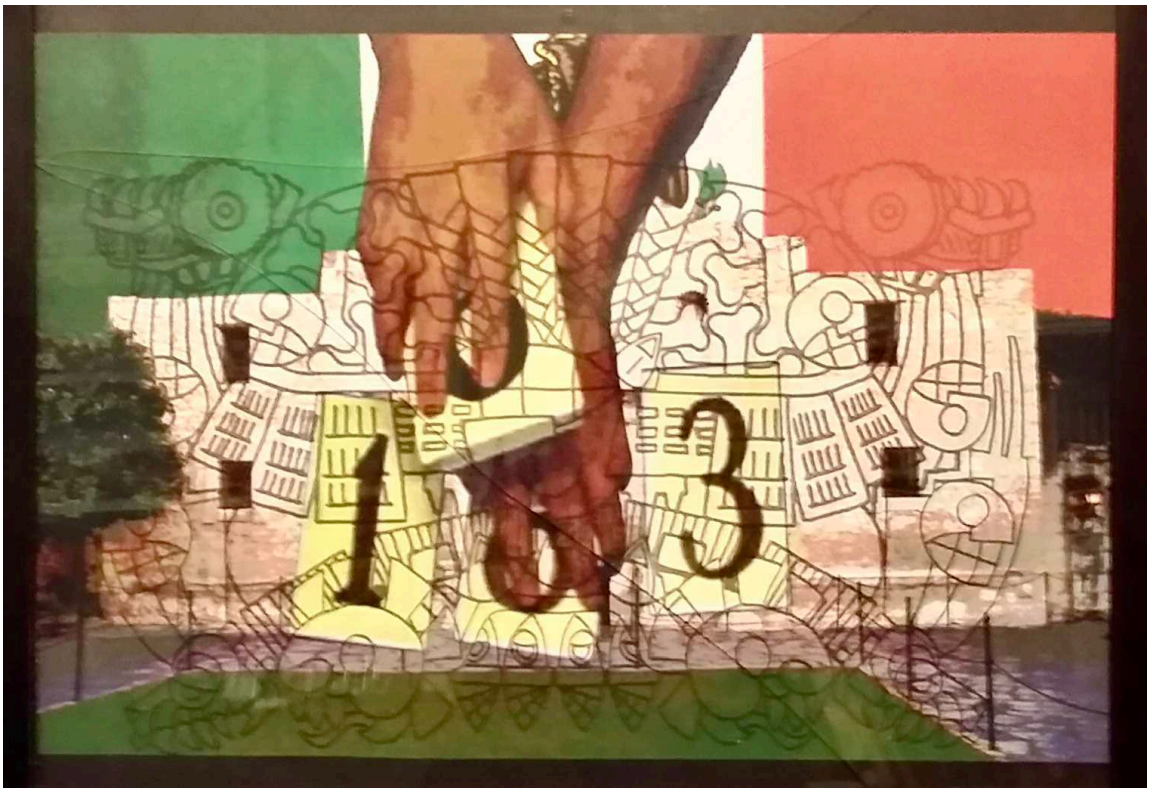


Left: ***Heroes of Texas Slavery Series, The Smuggler [James Bowie],*** 2018
digital print, 14 x 11 inches, courtesy of the artist

Right: ***Heroes of Texas Slavery Series, The Hunter [Juan Seguin],*** 2018
digital print, 14 x 11 inches, courtesy of the artist



Heroes of Texas Slavery Series, Lt. Col. Commander Vainglorious [William B. Travis],2018
digital print, 14 x 11 inches, courtesy of the artist



Luis Valderas (b. 1966), 1836, *A-La-Mo-There!,* 2008
still on photographic paper from the art film *183618361836* by Luis Valderas, 18 x 24 inches, courtesy of the artist

LUIS VALDERAS

Valderas' *183618361836* is an art film that uses the Alamo church "as a setting to question the arbitrariness of numbers as markers for histories that come from a collective wound between cultures." As the green, white, and red fields of the Mexican flag bear witness in the background, a pair of hands "reaches down from a foggy mist and continuously shuffles numbered boxes on top of the iconic facade of the mission." Valderas' stylized drawing of a Coatlicue-Earth Mother "fades in and out" over the sometimes foggy facade.

Valderas chose this moment of the film to extract a still because it suggested "a multiplicity of meanings." The hands were modeled by the artist's mother, Victoria Moctezuma Valderas, "a Mexican citizen who became a U.S. citizen so that my brother could join the U.S. Navy." Her hands move the numbers that constitute the year the Battle of the Alamo took place. When the mist disappears, the Mexican flag is fully revealed. The Coatlicue-Earth Mother "reveals herself" by covering the Alamo church facade. "Then she fades away into the fog and the whole cycle is repeated."

Ed Saavedra (b. 1979), ***Go Back To Mexico*****,** 2015
lacquer and acrylic on plywood, 22 x 10 x 1 inches, courtesy of Señor Veggie

ED SAAVEDRA

Phillip Thomas Tucker argues that slavery was the driving force of the Texian Revolt and that the seizure of Texas was planned by President Andrew Jackson (1829-1837).* His protégée, President James K. Polk (1845-1849) deliberately provoked a war whose purpose was to take half of Mexico, from Texas to California.** Both Presidents wanted to further the expansion of slavery. During the Mexican-American War, zealots increasingly argued for the annexation of all of Mexico, and a few even wanted to annex the entire hemisphere.** Racism put the brakes on imperialism because expansionists wanted Mexico, but not Mexicans. Senator John Clayton of Delaware sarcastically expressed this dilemma a few years later: "Yes! Aztecs, Creoles, Half-breeds, Quadroons, Samboes, and I know not what else—'ring-streaked and speckled'—all will come in, and, instead of our governing them, they, by their votes, will govern *us*."*** President Polk decided to take a third more of Mexico than he had initially sought, but Nicholas Trist, who was negotiating the treaty in Mexico, refused to demand more territory and he also disobeyed Polk's orders to relinquish his post.** Ulysses S. Grant, who served in the Mexican American War, told a journalist in 1871: "I don't think there was ever a more wicked war."** In his memoirs, Grant called the Civil War "our punishment" for the Mexican American War.**

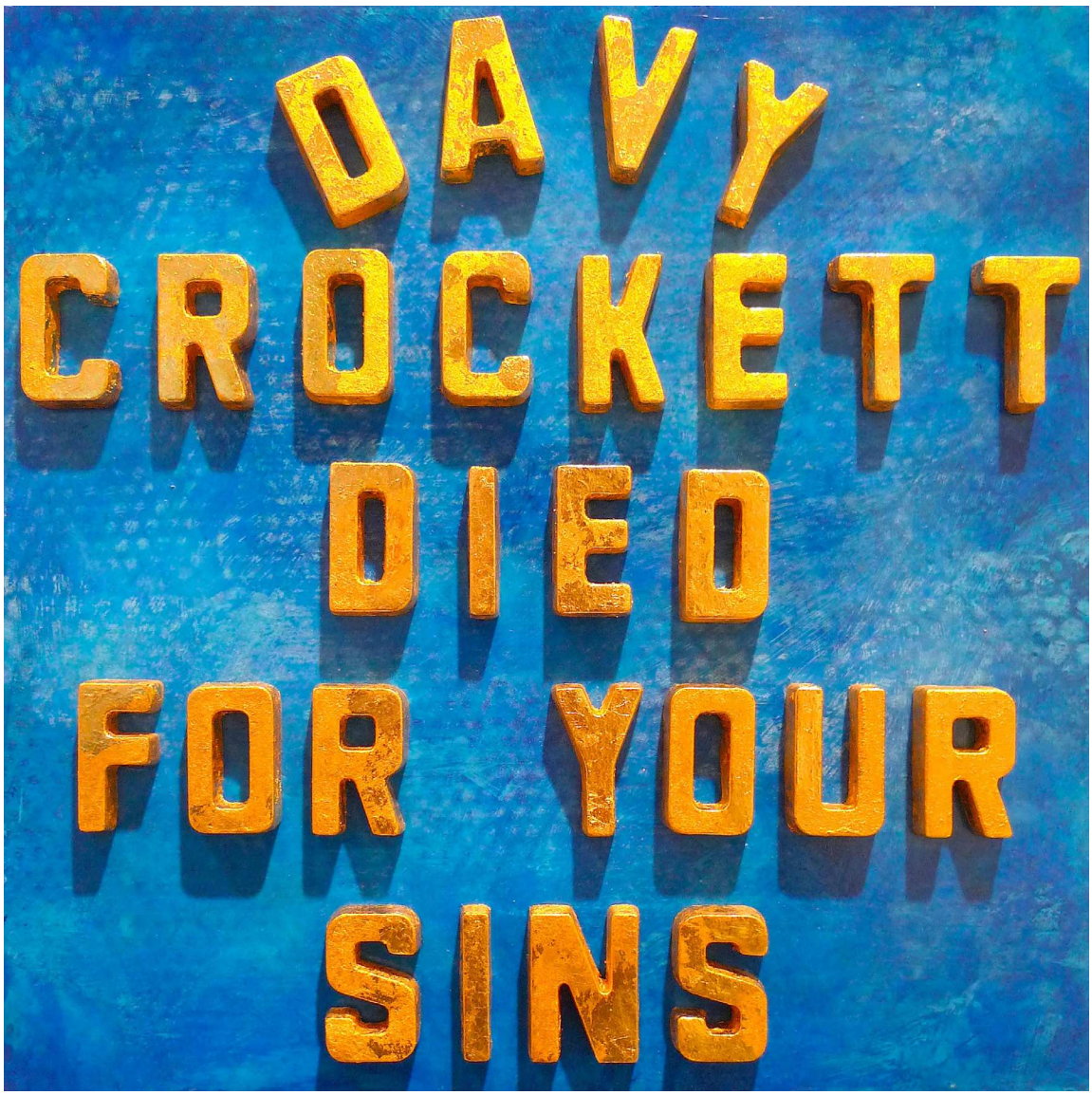
This is Saavedra's commentary on this work:

> It was another flavor of "Go Back To Africa!," that bumbling schoolyard heckle flung like dung at students whose ancestors were forcibly relocated to this continent. And like that boneheaded phrase, "Go Back To Mexico!" spewed from the mouths of children who, for generations, had been conditioned to be particularly ashamed when out-shined by non-Anglo peers. Were these half-pint racists ahead of their time by advocating for swift deportation as a remedy for brown excellence? Or were they unlikely advocates for reverse Manifest Destiny who longed for the Imperio Mexicano of 1822 when five million square kilometers made that fleeting post-colonial monarchy the largest sovereign state in North America? Whatever their motivation decades ago, the phrase is back in vogue, and this sculpture was designed as a pedagogical billy club for the historically illiterate among us who will be horrified to learn that a cowboy hat is nothing more than a sombrero folded into the shape of a taco.

* Phillip Thomas Tucker, *America's Forgotten First War for Slavery and Genesis of the Alamo*, vol. 1. lulu.com, 2017.

** Amy S. Greenberg, *A Wicked War: Polk, Clay, Lincoln, and the 1846 U.S. Invasion of Mexico.* New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

*** Reginald Horsman, *Race and Manifest Destiny: The Origins of American Racial Anglo-Saxonism.* Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 1981, p. 246.

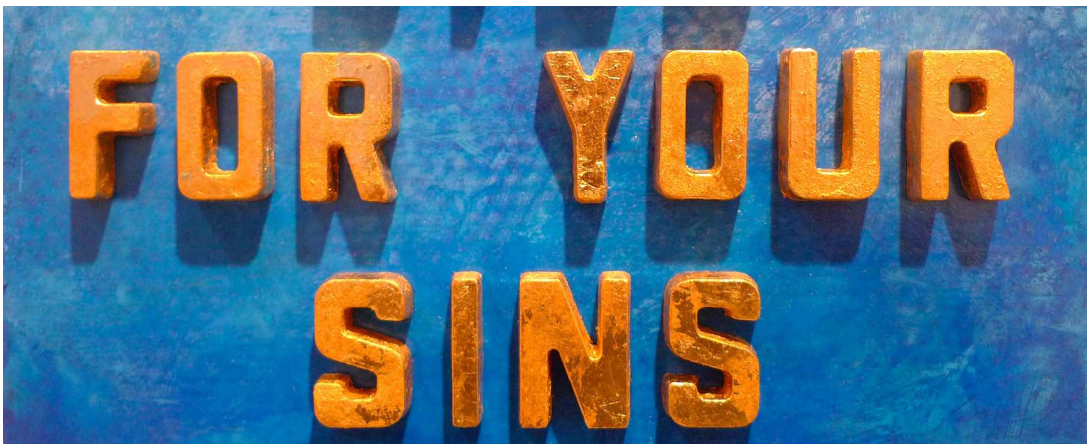


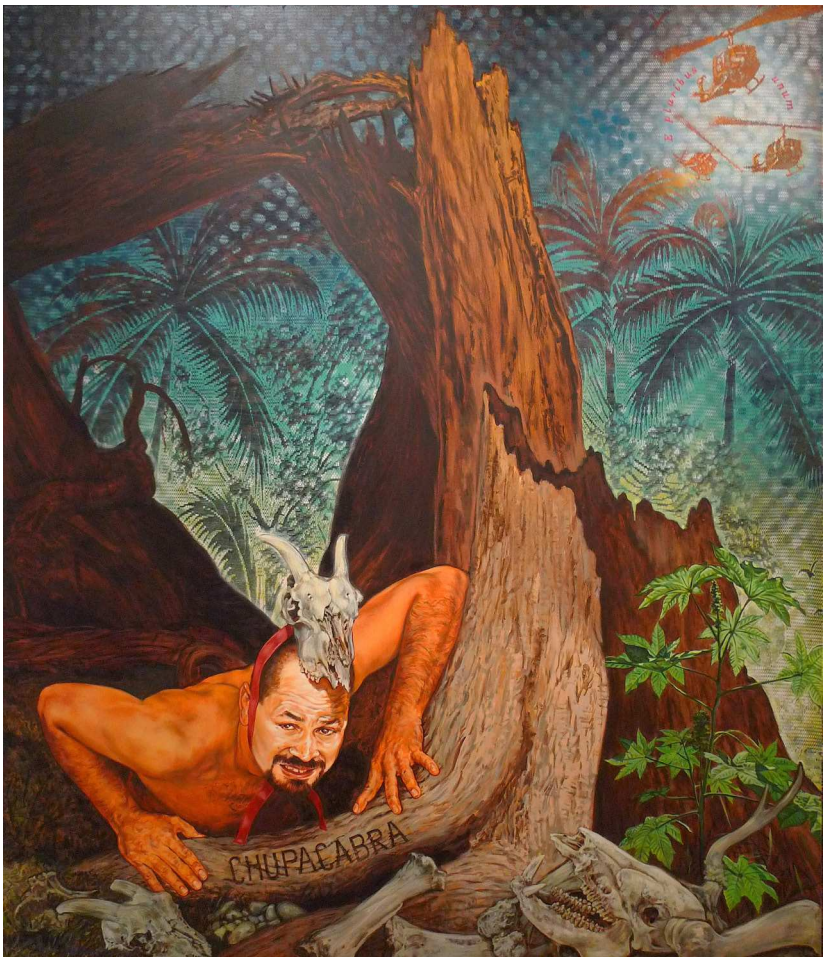
Ed Saavedra (b. 1979), ***The Gospel of Juan,*** 2018
gold leaf, lacquer, refrigerator magnets, acrylic, spray paint, gesso on panel, 10 x 10 x 2 inches, courtesy of the artist

ED SAAVEDRA

Ed Saavedra's slogan was inspired by an American Indian Movement (AIM) bumper sticker he saw at the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian in Washington DC, which reads: "CUSTER DIED FOR YOUR SINS." By substituting CROCKETT for CUSTER, Saavedra's *The Gospel of Juan* "likens the Alamo-as-shrine fable to fundamentalist religious dogma."

The artist clarifies what they have in common: "Both must accept myths and protect their heroes at all costs against evidence-based conclusions." Crockett, of course, is the preeminent "martyr" of the Alamo. Saavedra points out that Crockett's glorified death provided the pretext for vengeful atrocities and policies that were carried out in his name: "This piece imagines a multiverse wherein the only Alamo 'defender' with his own Disney theme song must pay (in advance) for becoming the posthumous messiah of land-grabs, 'ethnic cleansing,' and segregation under the coonskin banner of 'liberty.'"





Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz (b. 1955), ***El Chupacabra,*** 1998
acrylic and oil on canvas, 84 x 72 inches, courtesy of the artist

*Within a year, the chupacabra was allegedly rampaging across Florida, Texas, California, Long Island, and Mexico, as well as other parts of Latin America. Some believe chupacabras are alien's pets; others are convinced they are the progeny of top-secret experiments (either nefarious ones, or experiments gone bad). In any case, believers suspect the U.S. government cynically suppresses evidence of the chupacabra's existence. See Bucky McMahon, "Goatsucker Sighted, Details to Follow," *Outside Magazine,* September, 1996
http://www.outsideonline.com/1845106/goatsucker-sighted-details-follow

**For a lengthier analysis of this painting, see: Ruben C. Cordova, *Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz: A Retrospective, 1982-2014.* San Antonio: Centro de Artes, Department of Arts and Culture, 2017, p. 17-19.

ÁNGEL RODRÍGUEZ-DÍAZ

El Chupacabra was made to mark the centennial of the Treaty of Paris that brought an end to the Spanish American War. This war launched the United States as a world power by ceding Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines to the U.S. (it also made Cuba a U.S. protectorate). This was the apogee of U.S. imperialism under the banner of Manifest Destiny, which had been ignited by the Mexican American War (a direct consequence of the Texian Revolt).

El Chupacabra was part of an installation that featured two enormous chalk drawings that compared the Mexican American War (which resulted in the forcible annexation of the present-day Southwestern U.S.) and the Spanish American War. The Alamo faced the battleship Maine because "Remember the Alamo" and "Remember the Maine" were the rallying cries of these two wars.

Rodríguez-Díaz depicts himself as the modern mythological creature known as the chupacabra (goat-sucker), first reported in Puerto Rico in 1995.* As the personification of the chupacabra, Rodríguez-Díaz becomes the ultimate "exotic Latino." He has applied whiteface to emphasize his assumption of this tragicomic role. The word chupacabra is branded on the tree root on which he rests, underscoring the fact that he is figuratively "branded" as an exotic. In the artist's view, Latinos are either ignored to the point of cultural invisibility, or they are endowed with fantastic, fetishistic qualities. For Rodríguez-Díaz, impersonating the chupacabra is yet another masquerade of his "Puerto Rican-ness," for the chupacabra is the most chimerical of all exotic Latino creatures. It has been described in numerous ways: as a grey alien with red eyes and multicolored spines on its back; as a dinosaurian lizard; as a panther-like stalker. Sometimes they are said to hop like kangaroos while exuding an odor of sulfur; other witnesses have them floating like butterflies or gliding like bats.*

In *El Chupacabra*, Rodríguez-Díaz wears a goat's skull, which is attached to his head with a red ribbon as a sign of his blood-sucking character. The background sky and tropical foliage are woven together with a snakeskin pattern camouflage that is simultaneously natural and un-natural. Toppled trees shelter Rodríquez-Díaz, helping him evade the trinity of helicopters that stalk him like a horde of killer bees.

Rodríguez-Díaz holds that Latinos are excluded from full participation in society. Like the chupacabra, the Latino immigrant is simultaneously demon and victim. He is dispossessed and hunted—even in his native land. Though this chupacabra has no magical or extra-terrestrial powers, he possesses the resiliency of the many men and women who have protected their homelands in the face of superior U.S. military technology, and who have successfully traversed increasingly militarized borders in the new world order.**

Adan Hernandez (b. 1951), ***La Migra Gets Zapped by Illegal Aliens,*** 2001
oil on canvas, 72 x 54 inches, courtesy of private collection

ADAN HERNANDEZ

La Migra Gets Zapped by Illegal Aliens treats immigration in a comic vein: the border patrol is smitten by a flying saucer that emanates futuristic rays. The single legible insignia makes the nature of *la migra's* mission clear: "*INS*NO MEXICANS." Hernandez—who has a penchant for retro-style—has outfitted the patrolmen in archaistic uniforms that one might expect to find in *fin de siècle* France rather than the contemporary U.S. This anachronistic equipment underscores *la migra's* helplessness before the superiority of the engulfing Alien technology. The U.F.O. is already levitating one hapless guard with a mysterious ray of light. Other guards express surprise and terror as they attempt to flee—though one ignorantly runs directly into the path of another fearsome alien ray that beams down from the spaceship. A close look at the underbelly of the U.F.O. reveals the head of the Virgin of Guadalupe, a kissing Chicano couple, and—in the very center of the disc—a Chicano with a protruding tongue that recalls the deity in the center of the Aztec Stone of the Sun. These aliens are obviously conversant with foreign cultures much closer to home than the planet Mars. A view of distant galaxies in the background provides a hint of the possibility that countless enlightened beings might wish to transgress the U.S. border without having their papers in order.

Jose Esquivel (b. 1935), ***Dreamers in Space*****,** 2014/2018
acrylic on canvas, 60 x 48 inches, courtesy of the artist

JOSE ESQUIVEL

Dreamers in Space refers to the Dreamers, a popular term for people whose U.S. immigration status is currently in limbo. Esquivel notes: "The political reality for the Dreamers is not knowing where they belong, so they are suspended in space." His Dreamers are all wearing graduation caps and gowns. Jeans and tennis shoes protrude beneath the gowns, indications of their youth and working class origins. The Dreamers appear to be in a trance-like state, frozen, as if they are in suspended animation. They could be dreaming. If so, their dreams are deferred until such time as their legal status is clarified.

Dreamers are people who came to the United States as children and are currently students, or have a G.E.D. or a diploma, but who are not citizens of the U.S. The 2001 Dream Act, if enacted, would have provided them with a path to citizenship. A program initiated in 2012 by President Barak Obama, known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA), blocked the deportation of these people, but did not include a pathway to U.S. citizenship. President Donald Trump ended the program, directly affecting 800,000 people, and potentially 1.8 million, most of whom were born in Mexico. Trump's decision led to a temporary government shut down. Negotiations are underway to provide a replacement program for DACA, though Republicans are seeking concessions, one of which calls for approval of Trump's proposed border wall with Mexico.*

The cruciform pose of each Dreamer is like that of a person floating on water. But this shape also recalls a crucifixion, which implies that they are martyrs to a larger political conflict. The concept of floating figures that Esquivel uses in *Dreamers in Space* was inspired by *Golcome* (1953), an oil painting by the Belgian Surrealist René Magritte in the Menil Collection in Houston, Texas. Magritte's painting features numerous men in black coats and bowler hats who seem to be floating in air. (The title *Golcome* refers to a ruined city in India known for its wealth.) Initially, Esquivel's painting had a solid background. Esquivel felt that the painting was in need of more painterly depth, so he added clouds to produce a more Surreal effect that suggests a dream state.

*See: Caitlin Dickerson, "What is DACA? Who are the Dreamers? Here Are Some Answers," *New York Times*, Jan. 23, 2018, updated Jan. 25, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/01/23/us/daca-dreamers-shutdown.html and

Sheryl Gay Stolberg and Michael D. Shear, "Senate Rejects Immigration Plans, Leaving Fate of Dreamers Uncertain," *New York Times*, February 15, 2018. https://www.nytimes.com/2018/02/15/us/politics/immigration-senate-dreamers.html?emc=edit_th_180216&nl=todaysheadlines&nlid=53809889

Adan Hernandez (b. 1951), *They Don't Want Me in My House,* 2005
oil on canvas, 66 x 44 inches, courtesy of private collection

ADAN HERNANDEZ

Hernandez's dark, emotion-charged narrative canvases—which often feature menacing imagery—have been dubbed "Chicano Noir" in reference to the classic black-and-white crime films produced in the 1940s and 1950s. Director Taylor Hackford utilized Hernandez as the on-screen Chicano artist in his feature film *Blood In/Blood Out* (1993), for which Hernandez also executed original paintings.

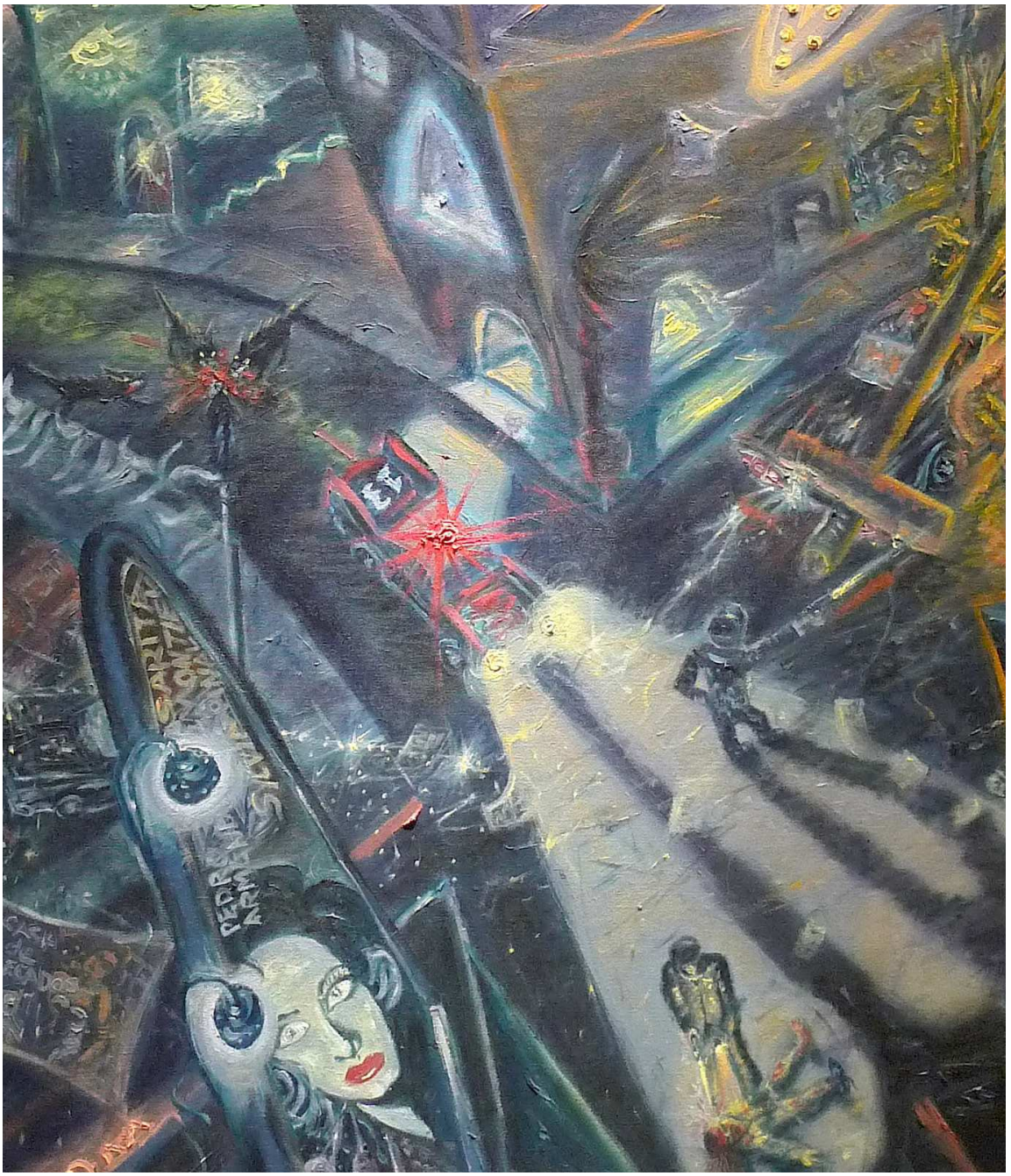
During the making of *Blood In/Blood Out*, Hernandez interviewed L.A. gang members. One day they told him that two friends had gone cruising into the wrong neighborhood, where they were chased by rivals. In their haste to escape, they crashed into a telephone pole. One homie got out of the car and assisted his more seriously injured friend. Before he could drag him to safety, a Los Angeles Police Deaprtment (LAPD) car drove up and the police shot both of them in the head, killing them instantly. The students told Hernandez that police brutality and the use of deadly force directed against Chicanos is still an endemic problem in L.A. People of color are much more likely to be the victims of police violence than whites.

Hernandez painted the first version of this composition soon after the filming of *Blood In/Blood Out* had wrapped. In this second version, the artist displays his love of vintage film posters as well as neon. The facing *vato*/devil motif was inspired by a *paño* (a handkerchief) painted by a prisoner in the Bexar County Jail.

Hernandez felt strongly about making this painting because his family was subjected to racial violence from the time its first member arrived in the U.S. His grandfather Julian Hernandez came to the U.S. during the Mexican Revolution in 1910, at a time when Texas Rangers, as Hernandez puts it, "killed Mexicans on sight."* He says his grandfather "had to sleep in cemeteries, because they were the only places that the Rangers didn't go." Julian told stories about how farmers would hire Mexican workers, and, after two weeks, the farmers would murder them, "just so they wouldn't have to pay them." Hernandez saw a documentary in which an eyewitness recalls seeing Rangers killing Mexican Americans "like gophers."**

* The Texas Rangers are thought to have massacred up to 5,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans. See: Ralph Blumenthal, "New Charges Tarnish Texas Rangers' Image and Reopen Old Wounds," New York Times, October 31, 2004.

In 2016 the Bullock Texas State History Museum in Austin hosted the exhibition "Life and Death on the Border: 1910-1920," which acknowledged the Texas Rangers' role in what it calls "some of the worst racial violence in United States history." See: Tom Dart, "Life and death on the border: effects of century old murders still felt in Texas," January 22, 2016. https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/jan/22/texas-rangers-killings-us-history-life-and-death-on-the-border-mexico
Danielle Lopez, "Remembering Life and Death on the Border," Alcalde, February 25, 2016. https://alcalde.texasexes.org/2016/02/remembering-life-and-death-on-the-border/



Adan Hernandez, *They Don't Want Me in My House,* details

** The documentary is Border Bandits (2004), directed by Kirby Warnock, which features the recorded voice of his grandfather Roland Warnock, who, as a 19-year-old, witnessed the Rangers shooting two unarmed men in the back, one of which was an ancestor of actress Eva Longoria. See: http://www.borderbanditsmovie.com/

Mark Savlov calls Border Bandits "an invaluable record of a hysterical, racist, and ultimately bloodthirsty version of the American West few willingly recall, replete with itchy trigger fingers, political corruption, and wasted lives." The director notes: "I'm not a crusading liberal…. I came to this story the same way that most white redneck Texans would. At first I was kind of skeptical, too, but the more information I uncovered, the more I discovered my grandfather was telling the truth.… there's nothing about this in the history books." See: Mark Savlov, "Wrong Place, Wrong Time: Kirby Warnock's 'Border Bandits' raids the Alamo with the ugly truth of 1915 Texas," The Austin Chronicle, December 3, 2004. https://www.austinchronicle.com/screens/2004-12-03/240351/

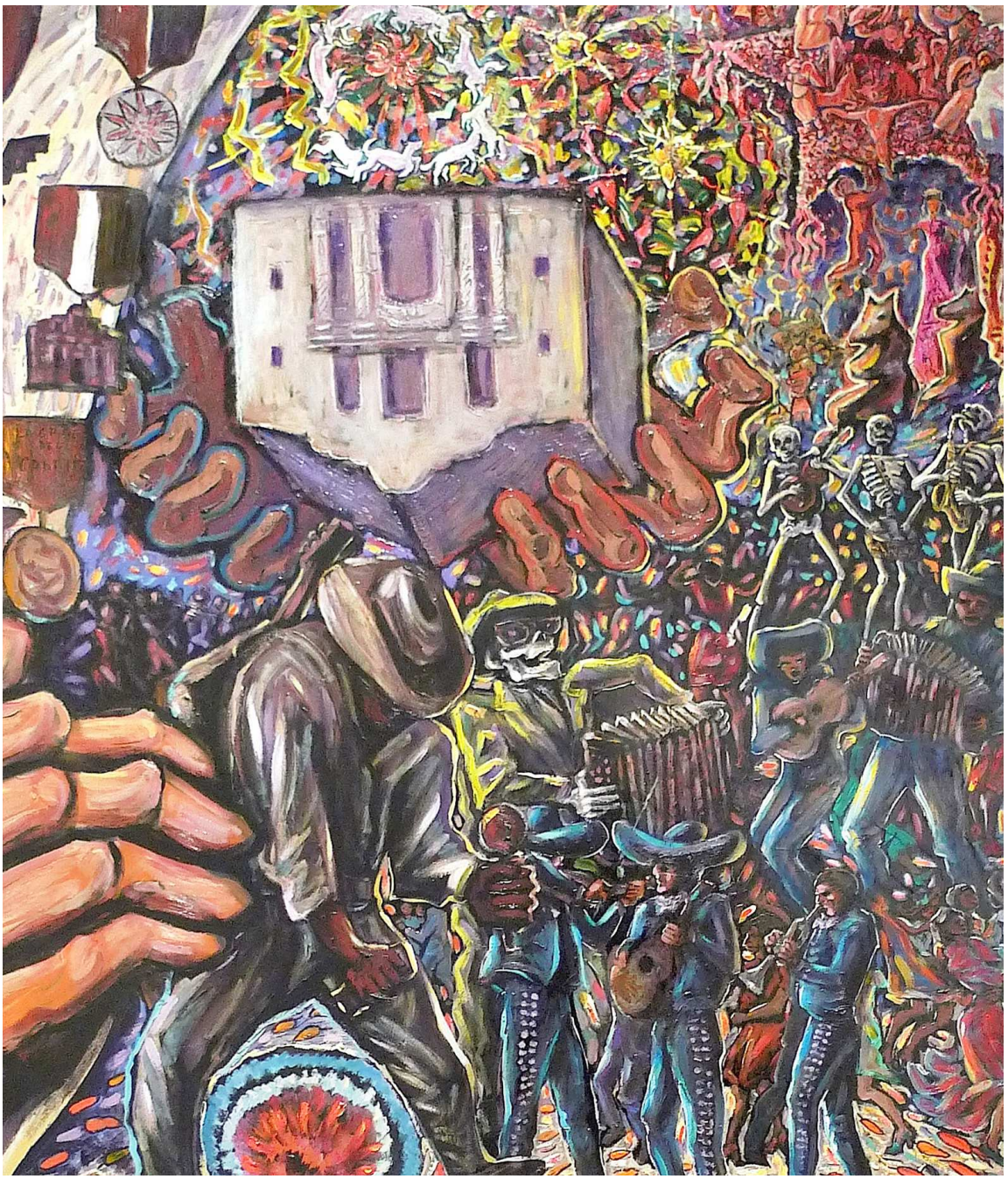
Raul Servin (b. 1946), ***The Music of Fiesta,*** 1999
acrylic and mixed media on masonite, 72 x 60 inches, courtesy of the artist

Servin recalls: "The idea of placing the Alamo upside down came during Fiesta week when they close many of the streets of downtown giving you the feeling that the city is upside down." He believes, however, that "the music of Fiesta decreases this feeling."

The Music of Fiesta also provokes other thoughts about Fiesta, which commemorates the Battle of the Alamo and celebrates the Texian victory over Santa Anna at San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. During Fiesta, the most exalted cabals of the Anglo American power elite (which until very recently excluded people of Mexican descent) convene private rituals in the former Alamo church, where they crown their royalty.* One of Fiesta's prime events is the Battle of Flowers Parade, which was inspired by a parade in Mexico City at which competing groups threw flowers at one another. The defeat of Mexico is celebrated in San Antonio on a massive scale with Mariachi music, Mexican food and beer, and tequila-fueled Margaritas. One might reasonably say that this entire victory celebration is upside down—not just the Alamo church building in this painting.

The Texian victors frequently referred to themselves as Anglo-Celts and claimed cultural as well as racial superiority over Mexicans, whom they referred to as "greasers," "half-breeds," and worse. Here are a few tidbits from a vast smorgasbord of racism:

> The *New Orleans Bee* printed a letter in 1834 by a Texian who described Mexicans as: "degraded and vile; the unfortunate race of Spaniard, Indian and African, is so blended that the worst qualities of each predominate." A leader of the Texian rebellion against Mexico referred to Mexicans in 1836 as "the adulterate and degenerate brood of the once high-spirited Castilian." ... Two weeks after Houston captured Santa Ana and massacred his army at San Jacinto, Steven F. Austin invoked racial pollution and natural law in his letter to Senator L. F. Linn of Missouri on May 4, 1836: "A war of extermination is raging in Texas—a war of barbarism and of despotic principles, waged by the mongrel Spanish-Indian and Negro race, against civilization and the Anglo-American race... . Indians, Mexicans, and renegades, all mixed together, and all the natural enemies of white men and civilization." David G. Burnet, president of the interim revolutionary government, cited the "utter dissimilarity" between the "Anglo Americans" and "a mongrel race of degenerate Spaniards and Indians more depraved than they" as a cause of the Texas revolt. The "insuperable aversion"



Raul Servin, *The Music of Fiesta* (detail)

> to mixing with "the Mexicans, a mongrel breed of negroes, Indians and Spaniards of the baser sort" was retrospectively deemed a prime cause of the war. Senator Robert J. Walker of Mississippi, who favored the annexation of Texas in 1844, dismissed most Mexicans as "mixed races... composed of every poisonous compound of blood and color." Senator James Buchanan, who would soon negotiate the peace treaty as secretary of state, declared on February 14, 1845: "The Anglo-Saxon blood could never be subdued by anything that claimed Mexican origin."**

Given this outpouring of racist contempt, one would think that the Anglo-Celts would want to celebrate with their own traditional delicacies: haggis (sheep liver, lung, and heart cooked in stomach lining), neeps and tatties (turnips and potatoes), porridge, black (blood) pudding, watercress sandwiches, boiled cabbage, Bubble and Squeak (fried leftovers, often potato or cabbage), Stargazy Pie (fish pie with the heads sticking out the crust), Toad in the Hole (sausages in Yorkshire Pudding), finished off with Spotted Dick (sponge cake) and Devils on Horseback (prunes wrapped in bacon). They could blow their bagpipes, strum their banjoes, Riverdance on the Riverwalk, and parade in their tartan kilts.

Instead, having appropriated a Texas-sized chunk of Mexico, Texians also appear to have annexed her cuisine, music, and festive traditions.

* See: Holly B. Brear, *Inherit the Alamo: Myth and Ritual at an American Shrine.* Austin, Tex: Univ. of Texas Press, 1995, and Laura Hernandez-Ehrisman, *Inventing the Fiesta City: Heritage and Carnival in San Antonio.* Sante Fe: Univ Of New Mexico Press, 2016.

** Ruben C. Cordova, *"Mestizaje, mexicanidad, y arte neomexicanist y chicano,"* in Luis Miguel Leon and Josefa Ortega, eds., *¿Neomexicanismos? Ficciones identitarias del México de los ochenta*. Mexico City: Museo Moderno, 2011, p. 33 (the text is rendered here in its original English).


ESQUIVEL

Jose Esquivel, *Dreamers in Space* (detail)

Curator's Biography

With the Aztec Stone of the Sun at the Anthropology Museum, Mexico City.

Ruben C. Cordova is an art historian and curator with a BA from Brown University in Semiotics and a PhD from UC Berkeley in the History of Art. He has taught at UC Berkeley, UT Pan American, UTSA, Sarah Lawrence College, and the University of Houston. Cordova has written or contributed to 17 books and catalogs, including *Con Safo: The Chicano Art Group and the Politics of South Texas* (2009). Nine artists in this exhibition were in the Con Safo group. Cordova has curated or co-curated more than 30 exhibitions, commencing at the Mexican Museum in San Francisco in 1996. He organized several exhibitions in San Antonio devoted to artists in this show: Felipe Reyes (2006); Enrique Martinez (2007); Jesse Treviño retrospective (2009-10); Mel Casas memorial exhibition (2014); a four venue retrospective of Mel Casas Humanscapes (2015); Roberto Gonzalez exhibition of pre-Columbian themes (2016); a three-part retrospective of Ángel Rodríguez-Díaz (2017); Mel Casas exhibition of indigenous themes (2018).

"One of the most revelatory exhibitions mounted for the city's tricentennial." --Josh Feola, Artsy

"The catalogue is a fascinating and invaluable historical review of the Battle of the Alamo and the making of the Texas Republic." --David Montejano, author of *Anglos & Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*