

RUNAWAYS AND THE RÍO GRANDE RIVER: THE TEXAS UNDERGROUND
RAILROAD TO MEXICO AND MEXICO'S RESOLVE TO UPHOLD THE RÍO
GRANDE RIVER AS A LINE OF RESISTANCE TO SLAVERY, 1836-1861

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DEDICATION

For my pillars of support el profe Raúl Reyes, his wife Magali and daughter Brooke, and my mom Elaine Wiebe, whose love and mentoring has instilled needed confidence to rise above every daunting odds and become the “trailblazer” that I am. Balliet/Wiebe/Reyes Family: this one is for you.

ABSTRACT

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The tale of a runaway, an enslaved Black man or woman choosing to abscond, is nothing short of miraculous. Listen between the lines a runaway speaks, and their story will be found as a testament entailing multiple dynamics. Reflective of the unifying theme, this thesis investigates resistance to slavery in the Texas borderlands, from 1836 to 1861. This thesis examines the existing body of scholarship on Mexico-bound escape routes used by Blacks fleeing captivity. Moreover, in following the direction archival evidence points to, this thesis argues the existence of an Underground Railroad in Texas to Mexico that facilitated the escape of at least 4,000, perhaps up to 10,000 Blacks, to Mexico. The Texas Underground Railroad is an important segment of history that is little known about. Issues explaining the erasure of Mexico, inclusive of the paradigm in Texas public education further averting historical attention, are explained. Evidenced in this research is the formation of a multiethnic and interracial coalition of forces that arose in Texas to assist runaways to Mexico, which to effect, created a system of networking unique to Texas. These operatives or "architects" of the Texas Underground Railroad consist of ethnic Mexicans and Germans, primarily in central Texas, as well featuring contributive roles exhibited by Native Americans, plausibly Irish immigrants, white abolitionists, and free and enslaved Blacks. Following Mexico's loss of Texas in 1836, two spikes in the number of runaways occurred. The first one was in 1836 as part of the aftermath of the Texas Revolution, and another spike occurred following the formalization of the U.S.-Mexico border by the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. This

thesis features the study component of geopolitics to reveal the long-standing tradition of enslaved Blacks equating protection behind Spanish, later Mexican lines. Relative to the various recourses drawn by Anglo enslavers, and much to Anglos' dismay, resistance to slavery became a source of national pride in Mexico. Concluding Mexico a safer haven than escape towards Canada, addressed are impacts felt in Mexican border communities such as Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico, and factors responsible for the successful assimilation of runaways into Mexican society.

KEY WORDS: Runaways; Architects of the Texas Underground Railroad; Mexican godparents; Acts of enticement; Civil disobedience to Texas law; Piedras Negras; Cultural citizenship and assimilation.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

To a greater measure, conducting research and writing on a south of the United States (U.S.) border Underground Railroad embodies the pioneer spirit, as this field of research is yet to be cultivated. Representative of the central theme, this chapter analyzes the existing body of scholarship on the subject of slave flight to Mexico, especially as it pertains to ongoing research and new emerging evidence suggestive of a Texas Underground Railroad. Scholars in this field of research on the historical exodus of enslaved Black men, women, and children, no matter their specialty, typically focus on the U.S.-Canadian border and highlight the importance of crossing the Mason-Dixon demarcation line.¹ While scholars may list Mexico as a destination various enslaved individuals escaped to, excepting a handful of historians, Mexico is not further explored beyond mention.² Consequently, the history of slave flight tends to be explained as strictly unilateral in direction, thereby omitting the history of assistance networking in Texas that points to Mexico. This study brings front and center the issue of historical inattention despite a sizeable number - estimates range from 3,000 to 4,000, and possibly upwards to 10,000 - of enslaved Black men and women escaping to Mexico (primarily) from 1836 to the eve of the Civil War, 1861.³ Specifically, this chapter calls for the

¹ History.com Editors, "Mason and Dixon draw a line, dividing the colonies," *History*, updated October 16, 2019.

² Jazma Sutton, "Beyond Harriet African American Women's Work in the Underground Railroad," *Process: a blog for American History*, October 31, 2019.

³ Ronnie C. Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico," *The Journal of Negro History* 57, no. 1 (January, 1972), 3. See also Becky Little, "The Little-Known Underground Railroad That Ran South to Mexico," *History*, August 24, 2019. Article entailed interview with María Hammack, who is currently writing a dissertation on the topic. Hammack states her research has led to stating estimates from 5,000 to 10,000 runaways escaping to Mexico during the nineteenth century.

inclusion of Mexico into academic conversation by analyzing what aspects historians have addressed. In addition to familiarizing readers to the concept of a Texas Underground Railroad, this chapter explains contributing factors to Mexico's erasure as a country enslaved Blacks attained freedom. Unique to this thesis, this chapter argues Mexico to be a safer haven than escape towards the U.S.-Canadian border. Provided the length and extensive coverage of this chapter, this chapter incorporates the use of subheadings (written in bold lettering) and subsections (non-bold lettering) to better facilitate the articulation of critical points.

A Historiographical Analysis

Empirical studies (in respect to scholarly research) on the historical character of underground railroad activities did not begin until after the work of Ohio State University professor Wilbur H. Siebert, who first introduced the term “Underground Railroad” in his 1898 monograph, entitled *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom*.⁴ This monograph's usage of “underground railroad” is not to confuse, however, with earlier appearances of the term. One Washington newspaper in 1839 referenced underground railroad, when an enslaved Black fleeing captivity expressed hopes in escaping “on a railroad that went underground.”⁵ Similarly, William Still's *The Underground Railroad* in 1872, which is a compilation of stories told by runaways who trekked to or through the state of Pennsylvania, indicates the term use had already entered into more media

⁴ Eric Foner, *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2015), 12-13.

⁵ María Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad: Hidden Histories of Slavery and Freedom across the Porous Frontiers of Nineteenth-Century United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean.” (Master's thesis, East Carolina University, 2015), 5.

channels of communication.⁶ Siebert's research, however, provides the scholarly caliber to the ubiquitous term by introducing the term into the academic arena, when and where Siebert defined "Underground Railroad" as "a form of combined defiance of national laws, on the ground that those laws were unjust."⁷ Methodology behind Siebert's research includes mailing questionnaires to surviving abolitionists, conducting interviews, along also retracing routes interviewees described. Siebert's *The Underground Railroad From Slavery to Freedom* portrayed a "great and intricate network," whose operators totaled in numbers upward to 3,211 "agents," tasked with hiding and to safely transport runaways from one "station" (locality) to another.⁸

Historian Eric Foner assesses the faults and strengths to Siebert's work in his book titled *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*. In terms of demographics, Foner underscores how Siebert's described "agents" had comprised mainly of white men. The role of African Americans like Harriet Tubman or William Stills is rather downplayed or marginalized, when it came to explaining the task of ferrying enslaved Black men, women, and children to safety into the northern free states.⁹ While Siebert is accredited for bringing the subject into scholarly spotlight, faults in his analysis, however, cannot go unaddressed. For instance, Foner crucially identifies Siebert's faulty analysis was in part due to failure to take into consideration the ad hoc nature of escape (ebb and flow in volume of runaways), as well as in part due to his

⁶ Wilbur Henry Siebert, *The Underground Railroad from Slavery to Freedom* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1898), 3. See also Hammack, "The Other Underground Railroad," 5.

⁷ Siebert, *The Underground Railroad*, viii.

⁸ Siebert, 62-68, 71, 120. According to Siebert, a station is a hiding place or a checkpoint coordinated by abolitionists involved in ferrying the runaway to safety.

⁹ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 12-13.

tendency to dismiss questionnaire replies. According to Foner, Siebert dismissed questionnaire responses if it did not conform to his idea of a highly organized system.¹⁰ Case in point, whereas Siebert claims how in southeastern Pennsylvania there was “scarcely any limitation upon the number of persons...willing to assume agencies for the forwarding of slaves,” one Massachusetts abolitionist had emphasized “we had no regular route and no regular station.”¹¹ While Siebert's placement of fascination before transparency marks an error in use of methodology, the utmost critical importance about Siebert's work rests on where it stands in terms of the *longue durée*. Siebert's projection of escape from captivity as strictly northward bound (towards Canada), in emphasizing the “role of benevolent whites” and “free northern communities,” has been the dominating (traditional) narrative proving impactful in shaping both “scholarly and public conceptions of an underground railroad.”¹²

The “Gold Standard”

Critiquing Siebert's methodology and conclusion is revisionist historian Larry Gara, who wrote in 1961 *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad*. Prior to Gara, Siebert's monograph has marked the gold standard on topic studies over underground railroad activities. This “gold standard” pertains to Siebert's narrative having gone decades unchallenged in shaping slave flight history, which was framed as strictly unilateral in direction (northward bound) as well as being characterized with white help dependency. Concerning themes such as space and time on the study of slave

¹⁰ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 12-13.

¹¹ Foner, 13.

¹² Foner, 13.

flight and Underground Railroad activities, Gara maintains the focus over the importance of crossing the Mason-Dixon Line towards Canada, during the first half of the nineteenth century. As point of difference, however, Gara insists on it being more myth than real the idea of runaways receiving on a continuum or consistent basis any regular supply of outside help from abolitionists.¹³ Chiding Siebert's portrait of enslaved men and women as wholly help dependent, Gara introduces the concept of agency exercised by the individual his/herself. Self-agency, as a concept, credits the runaway by explaining how the onus ultimately was on the enslaved individual to initiate their escape. Gara's introductory concept of self-agency, therefore, brings into discussion an examination of the various strategies enslaved peoples had to employ relative to individual flight.¹⁴

1961-Post Research Studies

Following 1961, historians began devoting greater amounts of attention to individual flight and expanding the historic discussion on strategies enslaved Black men and women used, in respect to self-agency. In 1972, Ronnie C. Tyler (one of few historians addressing Mexico) explored the subject of escape to Mexico in his article, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico." Tyler describes the route to Mexico as "difficult and hazardous."¹⁵ Moreover, he stresses only a small number of runaways "knew the route," in instead possessing a general knowledge of Mexico as being positioned south-southwest across a river called the Río Grande.¹⁶ In this context, exposure to weather

¹³ Larry Gara, *The Liberty Line: The Legend of the Underground Railroad* (Lexington, Kentucky, 1961), vii, 91-95.

¹⁴ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 13-14. Foner expands upon and breaks down the definition of self "agency," by which Gara had coined in his monograph titled *The Liberty Line*.

¹⁵ Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico" 3.

¹⁶ Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico," 3.

elements and starvation, especially as it may have been cautioned on lighting a fire (for warmth or to roast fresh game) at night since fire could be seen from a distance away, signify some of the dangers in travel.¹⁷ Tyler places into perspective how enduring potentially life threatening extremities marks part of the status transition from enslavement to gaining betterment of life.¹⁸ In 1993, Patricia Smith Prather and Jane Clements Monday, in *From Slave to Statesman: The Legacy of Joshua Houston, Servant to Sam Houston*, made mentionable the different tricks runaways had instrumented in order to confuse bloodhounds or other track dogs used by enslavers. According to, runaways may had placed pepper into their shoes and/or walk through cow manure in order to conceal any scent trail the dogs could potentially detect.¹⁹ In 1995, Texas historian Alwyn Barr wrote *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*. In his monograph, Barr addresses how time calculation represents a strategy. Barr explains enslaved persons, prior to running, strategized in the timing of their escape. Because summer and winter presented less labor demands than spring planting and fall harvesting of crops, enslaved persons strategically planned escape during summer or winter in more relatively relaxed times.²⁰ Perhaps in response to Tyler's analysis, Barr adds due to escape proving taxing on the body, the age range of runaways typically consisted of those at the prime of their health between 20 to 40 years old, though

¹⁷ Seth Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies: Migrant Farmworkers in the United States* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 92. Holmes highlights timeless parallels in migration hardships, particularly the dangers unique to traversing Texas and the American Southwest.

¹⁸ Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico," 3. See also Holmes, *Fresh Fruit, Broken Bodies*, 92.

¹⁹ Patricia Smith Prather and Jane Clements Monday, *From Slave to Statesman: The Legacy of Joshua Houston, Servant to Sam Houston* (University of North Texas Press, 1993), 15.

²⁰ Alwyn Barr, *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, 2nd ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996), 30.

runaways also consist of men age 60 and older.²¹ Lastly, in 2016 Karl Jacoby wrote his *The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire*. Jacoby points how “passing” became a strategy, where if an enslaved person was (in terms of skin complexion) “above the mulatto grade,” he/she could successfully pose as “white,” thereby eluding detection.²²

Adding further dimensions to escape, historians have also begun weighing into discussions identification of various dangers unique to specific localities. In 2015, Eric Foner published his book *Gateway to Freedom: The Hidden History of the Underground Railroad*, which provides a history of underground railroad networking unique to New York City. While Foner fails to explore Mexico as an alternative destination site, he does, however, expound upon the difficulty of achieving northbound escape. According to Foner, authorities in slave states exercised protocols to “regularly search ships [and] railroad cars.”²³ Historian Barr documents one case instance that confirms the “daunting odds” Foner spoke of. According to Barr, in 1852 four Negro sailors from Boston attempted to safe transfer a runaway from Galveston, Texas. Prior to their departure Galveston authorities halted the crew in order to perform a search of the ship, by which Galveston authorities discovered the runaway.²⁴ In 2018, historian Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz published her book entitled *Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second*

²¹ Barr, *Black Texans*, 30. Typical age range of runaways consisted of those 20 to 40 years old, though runaways as young as 5 months old and runaways age 60 years and older, have also made it to Mexico.

²² Karl Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave Who Became a Mexican Millionaire* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2016), xvii-xxiv. See also Little, “The Little-Known Underground Railroad that Ran South to Mexico.” *History*, Aug. 29, 2019.

²³ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 5.

²⁴ Barr, *Black Texans*, 11.

Amendment. In addition to search and seizures, historian Dunbar-Ortiz adds slave patrols as perhaps even posing a greater danger towards runaways. According to Dunbar, “all Euro American males” were required to “serve in militias or slave patrols,” in states legalizing enslavement.²⁵ Specific to Texas, in addition to slave patrollers, runaways by the 1830s also had to escape the Texas Rangers, who served much in part as a backup security measure for enslavers (if runaways managed to escape plantations). Dunbar-Ortiz points Texas Rangers actively “hunted down enslaved Africans escaping.”²⁶ Continuing on slave flight in Texas, knowledge having been passed down from one generation to another has also as of recent ago, begun to surface. Researcher Roseann Bacha-Garza explains in one article from 2017, titled “This underground railroad took slaves to freedom to Mexico,” that following the U.S.-Mexico War, military forts (as remnants from the war) were in place along the Río Grande. Officials stationed at the forts carried instructions to capture and return runaways. Yet, as Bacha-Garza clarifies, these forts, much like today's Border Patrol, stood “far from each other.”²⁷ Accordingly, runaways and/or persons escorting runaways learned to look for the existing gaps (or unpatrolled areas) between the forts.

Beyond the historic discussion of strategies used in self-initiated escape, revisionist historians have to some measure or another begun to focus on the *possibility* of Mexico as a place runaways sought refuge. In what is considerably a short period of

²⁵ Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, *Loaded: A Disarming History of the Second Amendment* (San Francisco, CA: City Lights Books, 2018), 63.

²⁶ Dunbar-Ortiz, *Loaded*, 66.

²⁷ Reynaldo Leanos Jr., “This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico,” *The World*. March 29, 2017. Roseann Bacha-Garza manages the Community Historical Archaeology Projects with Schools program, at the University of Texas Río Grande Valley.

time Mexico has, at least to a handful of historians, experienced a relative increase in historical reckoning as a place formerly enslaved persons experienced newfound freedoms. This increase in the measure of historical awareness about Mexico, over the course of time (specifically, 1961-post research studies), is indicated in the lineup of efforts by historians Rosalie Schwartz, Arnolde De León, Kenneth W. Porter, and John Hope Franklins and Loren Schweninger.

In 1975, Rosalie Schwartz published *Across the Río to Freedom: U.S. Negroes in Mexico*. Her analysis of slave flight augmented serious re-considerations about the importance of Mexico, in arguing that the number of runaways escaping to Mexico was in part to networks.²⁸ In this context, though it is stated in a textbook, other revisionists like Robert Calvert, Gregg Cantrell, and Arnolde De León in *A History of Texas*, point to how enslaved persons used a route starting from central Texas that then runs south-southwest through the semi-arid frontier towards the Río Grande River.²⁹

This textbook's recognition over the importance of the Río Grande River can be in part traced to De León's earlier monograph titled *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900*. In 1983, De León elucidated within his monograph the Anglo concept of Mexican “insubordination.” Accordingly, Anglos in Texas viewed Mexicans as insubordinates due to Mexicans having “placed themselves on an equal level with slaves.”³⁰ De León hints Mexico as a destination for runaways by

²⁸ Rosalie Schwartz, *Across the Río Grande to Freedom: U.S. Negroes in Mexico*, 44, *Southwestern Studies* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1975), 5-10, 17, 30-60.

²⁹ Robert A. Calvert, Arnolde De León, and Gregg Cantrell, *The History of Texas* (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014), 94.

³⁰ Arnolde De León, *They Called Them Greasers: Anglo Attitudes toward Mexicans in Texas, 1821-1900* (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1983), 20.

illuminating a direct correlation between planters sighting Mexicans and reports shortly thereafter issued of enslaved workers having absconded. Some of the source material used for his work included newspapers containing reports relayed by enslavers of seeing Mexicans running enslaved Blacks south to Mexico.

Adding yet another aspect, in 1996 Porter wrote his *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People*. Porter examines the role of Native Americans, namely Seminole tribes, with the arrival of Blacks into the state of Coahuila, Mexico. Porter's south of the U.S. border study, specifically, on the Black Seminole heritage and of their journey from Florida to Mexico, acts as a counterweight narrative to historians focusing on Canada, such as Eric Foner. In Foner's *Gateway to Freedom*, Foner examines runaways escaping to or making their passage through New York City. In his monograph, Foner identifies that by 1860 anywhere from 3,500 to over 20,000 runaways had established permanent residence in present-day Ontario.³¹ Tracing the movement and history of Black Seminoles (former enslaved men and women Seminoles had maintained reciprocal relationships of equality with), Porter underscores that the formation of border communities in Mexico by formerly enslaved Blacks had occurred just as so to those north of the U.S. border in Canada. The border community such as Nacimiento de Los Negros is one of several pointed examples Porter states in his case study.³²

Increasingly over time, Mexico became estimated with greater confidence by historians as a country where like Canada, enslaved persons could find freedom. In 1999, both John Hope Franklins and Loren Schweninger co-authored *Runaway Slaves: Rebels*

³¹ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 136.

³² Kenneth W. Porter, *The Black Seminoles: History of a Freedom-Seeking People* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 150-188.

on the Plantation, which marked one of the first works to explicitly address Mexico as an alternative “destination” for runaways across the American South. Though commenting Mexicans as a people “ready and willing to help the slave off,” Franklins and Schweninger, however, fail to explore Mexico beyond mention.³³ Indeed, the number regarding how many times Mexico is explicitly referenced as a south of the U.S. border destination site, according to another researcher, counts to a one-time mention.³⁴

While groundwork has been established for inculcating a sense of historical appreciation on Mexico relative to African American studies, specifically, the topic of slave flight, the mention of a Texas underground railroad, however, remains virtually nonexistent in historic discussions. Few challenges, to name, remain in place that severely complicates progress in establishing alternative Underground Railroad sites and networking histories as part of American-Southwestern and U.S.-Mexico border studies. Regarding what a handful of historians do succeed to spotlight Mexico as safe harbor for runaways, any learned findings, especially given this largely untapped and relatively infant field of research, appear rather as a succession of aspects. These aspects remain yet to be interweaved together into one all-inclusive portrait in pertinence to the diverse cultural groups of people who were involved in networking and/or acting as escape facilitators. To this, an effort at synthesis is needed. The role of one group of people in assisting runaways, who were involved in networking or acting in whatever capacity as escape facilitator, needs to be explained in (however relative) conjunction with the role of any others. Additionally, new interpretations shedding light on Underground Railroad

³³ John Hope Franklin and Loren Schweninger, *Runaway Slaves: Rebels on the Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 26.

³⁴ Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 6-7.

activities, such as Foner's *Gateway to Freedom*, typically keep within the narrative parameter of northbound escape. Latest research on enslaved Blacks fleeing captivity during the nineteenth century is not to be depreciated by any means, but rather to merely point out how the scope of research has tended to focus solely on flight towards Canada.

To current knowledge, minus the exception of two scholarly works: one master's thesis written by María Hammack, (thesis titled “The Other Underground Railroad: Hidden Histories of Slavery and Freedom across the Porous Frontiers of Nineteenth-Century United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean”), and an online publication by one doctoral student from the Netherlands, Thomas Mareite, (titled “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats: Assistance Networks for Fugitive Slaves in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1836-1861”), no precedent is established for actually interpreting evidence into explicit coinage: Texas Underground Railroad.³⁵ Documentary and archaeological evidence, however, act as indicators in pointing to one. For instance, the Eli Jackson Cemetery, which is located deep in the Río Grande Valley near the river banks of the Río Grande, marks one Underground Railroad site (circa 1857). Headstones in the cemetery consists those of runaways who chose to stay on the U.S./Texas side of the border.³⁶

Addressing the Paradigm

Because Siebert's narrative has gone decades unchallenged, in that it has powerfully influenced conceptions of an underground railroad, greater identifiable forces warrant attentions. By and large, Siebert's portrait of a sophisticated network of “agents”

³⁵ Reference to the work made by Hammack and Thomas Mareite, “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats: Assistance Networks for Fugitive Slaves in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1836-1861,” *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* (December 14, 2018).

³⁶ Meagan Flynn, “A Potential Underground Railroad site rests along the border. A lawsuit seeks to protect it from Trump's wall,” *Washington Post*, March 15, 2019. Nathaniel Jackson is identified as one escape facilitator by voluntarily ferrying runaways to Mexico, if the runaway(s) did not wish to stay.

and “stations” has been the prevailing narrative (or “gold standard”) that transpires into grade school learning curriculum. In the state of Texas, for example, if to look at the Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) objectives, only the name of Harriet Tubman appears relative to any mention of an underground railroad.³⁷ Elementary and middle school students learn of “heroes” (defined by TEKS) in ways that pigeon holes understanding of the topic into the resounding conclusion that escape from bondage strictly entailed a unilateral direction of slave flight. Moreover, lesson plans such as one created by *Scholastic*, the world's largest book publisher for children, though mentioning some enslaved persons escaped to Florida, further enforces the idea that “the Underground Railroad did not exist as an organization in the south.”³⁸ The danger of this assertion rests on the formation of paradigms in a student's subconscious mind, as transmitted by an establishment of learning curriculum, that to a student's unknowing, programs their pattern of thinking to dismiss alternative escape destination possibilities. Part of the uphill climb in breaking new grounds on research is in delegating energies to re-shape public conceptions.

Integral Academic Works for Introducing an Alternative Underground Railroad

Provided an outline of the challenges in place and in responding to the need of an effort at synthesis, academic works integral for creating a study on an alternative Underground Railroad history, unique to Texas history, consist of those identifying voids in the scholarship writing on the history of the U.S.-Mexico border. Sarah E. Cornell's

³⁷ Texas Essential Knowledge and Skills (TEKS) §113.14.14(A) Social Studies, Grade 3, Beginning with School Year 2011-2012. Harriet Tubman mentioned once under Culture 14(A). The provisions of this §113.14 adopted to be effective August 23, 2010, 35 TexReg 7232.

³⁸ *Scholastic* Inc., lesson plan activity titled “Myths of the Underground Railroad: An Underground Railroad Activity.” <https://www.scholastic.com/teachers/activities/teaching-content/myths-underground-railroad-underground-railroad-activity/>.

(2013) “Citizens of Nowhere: Fugitive Slaves and Free African Americans in Mexico, 1833-1857,” James David Nichol's (2013) “The Line of Liberty: Runaway Slaves and Fugitive Peons in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands,” and Ronnie C. Tyler's (1972) “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” are three crucial pieces of scholarship. The discovery process behind the identification of what gaps exist, specifically, topics historians may have mentioned but failed to explore, and where to look in finding archival sources in order to fill those gaps, as part of effort at creating a synthesis, would suffer had it not been to a degree guided by their chronicling of research. Each historian responds to an existing void in the historiography writing of U.S.-Mexico border history by addressing a critical aspect.

Tyler's analysis provides the baseline in arguing the statistic of at least (minimum) 3,000 to 4,000 runaways escaping to Mexico, primarily in the northern states of Mexico “between the Río Grande and the Sierra Madres.”³⁹ While Chapter II takes a minor departure from 1836 in order to reveal the bigger picture of exodus patterns (1790-1861), this study focuses on 1836 to 1861 for reason being that following Texas independence, (notably two) spikes in the number of runaways amounted on level to where the number became “thousands.”⁴⁰ This statistic Tyler asserts derives from archival sources, specifically, military reports and correspondences such as those made by John S. “Rip” Ford, who led incursions into Mexico to recapture runaways.⁴¹ His article “Fugitive

³⁹ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 6. See also Barr, *Black Texans*, 30. According to Barr, by 1851 an estimate of 3,000 runaways had gone to MX. Between 1851 and 1855, another 1,000 runaways escaped to Mexico. This places estimates to be at the minimum of 4,000.

⁴⁰ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 1.

⁴¹ Tyler, 5. For his article, Tyler also researched biographical information on Ford. Ford was a doctor, lawyer, journalist, Mexican War veteran, and a Texas Ranger.

Slaves in Mexico” largely jumpstarted ideas for this thesis's fourth chapter, as Tyler underscores the role of media newspapers in inciting outrage amongst Texas slaveholders, who on a number of accounts, called on state and federal government to issue extradition treaties. Consequently, border communities become a focal point representative of a contest of will between proslavery and antislavery ideologies, especially as vigilantism became the reactionary response when extradition treaties repeatedly failed.⁴²

Adding to Tyler's statistical analysis, Cornell responds to the void in scholarship writing on the lives of enslaved African Americans who escaped to Mexico. Specifically, her work touches on the theme of human legacy, in exploring what became of African Americans in Mexico. Despite wide gaps in scholarship, largely in part due to the scarcity of archival evidence, Cornell, nonetheless, “investigates the nature of freedom” African Americans experienced.⁴³ Critical terminology standing unique in Cornell's scholarly work is the introductory term of *cultural citizenship* in Mexico. Cultural citizenship is explained in light of how formerly enslaved Blacks typically had to rely on the good nature of Mexican local authorities in order to avoid imprisonment or fines by Mexican federal authorities, relative to a law statute requiring a *carta de seguridad* (passport or identity card).⁴⁴ In this aspect, protection in Mexico necessitated an African American's earning of respect and staying in the good graces of local officials via assimilation.

⁴² Tyler, 9-10. One extradition treaty in 1858 had passed, but with limited success. Mexican authorities continued to welcome runaways and provide legal protections irrespective to the treaty.

⁴³ Sarah E. Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere: Fugitive Slaves and Free African Americans in Mexico, 1833-1857,” *The Journal of American History* 100, no. 2 (September 2013), 351-352.

⁴⁴ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 362, 368.

Complementary to particularly that of Cornell's research is Nichol's research on the migration of Mexican peons in the aftermath of the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. Cornell and Nichols critically highlight what the Río Grande represented and to whom. Different from Cornell and Tyler, Nichols hones in on the foot traffic of Mexicans south of the border escaping debt peonage. Whether by lawful enslavement or economic enslavement, the status as an oppressed people is the very circumstance Nichols argues as giving way to Mexicans and enslaved African Americans becoming “unexpected allies.”⁴⁵ Regarding contribution to scholarship on the history of the U.S.-Mexico border, Nichols brings to the table the concept of solidarity relative to the topic of human migration from a transnational perspective.

Issues Compounding Mexico's Erasure from Historiography Writing

In assessing, on the whole, the omission of histories pertaining to Texas Underground Railroad networking (1836-1861) and Mexico as a destination for freedom-seeking runaways, all research, taken in sum, magnifies the problem of how certain historical elements are overanalyzed. In effect to this disproportionate allotment of historical attentions on certain elements, lesser known topics suffer from lack of scholarly attention. The Texas Underground Railroad represents one of these lesser known topics having been bypassed for historical attention, in that this research field remains virtually untapped and inadequately explored.

The shortage of historical knowledge on border histories (regarding Texas and Mexico) attributes to several factors. According to Nigerian historian Anthony Asiwaju, one impediment to conducting bi-national border studies is the “reluctance” on part of the

⁴⁵ James David Nichols, “The Line of Liberty: Runaway Slaves and Fugitive Peons in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands,” *The Western Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Winter 2013), 413.

researcher to “master a foreign language.”⁴⁶ Due to the needs of devoting extra energies and time in making sense of sources written in a foreign language, a turn to the study of geopolitics in focusing on the border without yet having to cross it, has become of other option. But even in focusing on geopolitics, however, mistakes can be made as explained by historian Sean Kelley, author of “Mexico in His Head: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860.” Kelley firmly advises that scholars not overlook either by failure to identify or by failure to consider the following changes as historical events: redrawing of a boundary, and the interpretative meaning of the border once redrawn.⁴⁷ Moreover, if the researcher focuses on sources written from within one's national boundaries, it becomes imperative to distinguish what undercurrents may be driving the narrative writing of the source. David Copeland adds how “national officials” tend to “make proposals that always negotiate national interests.”⁴⁸ The elision of Mexico from the historiography of the American Southwest and in the historic discussion of slave flight indeed marks one teachable lesson able to flag, what historian David Weber affirms, as the “dangers of ethnocentricity.”⁴⁹

In his article titled “Scare More than Apes: Historical Roots of Anglo-American Stereotypes of Mexicans in the Border Regions,” Weber tracks the beginnings of Anglo

⁴⁶ Raúl Reyes, “‘Gringos’ and ‘Greasers’ and the Rio Grande Border: Race Resentment in the Mexican Revolutionary Era in El Paso, 1914-1916 (master's thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1997), 2. Reyes cited information from presentation, which is stated as follows: Anthony Asiwaju, “Borderlands Research: A Comparative Study,” Paper presented at the Border Studies Seminar, at the University of Texas at El Paso, September 12, 1983.

⁴⁷ Sean Kelley, “Mexico in His Head’: Slavery and the Texas-Mexico Border, 1810-1860,” *Journal of Social History* 37, no. 3 (Spring 2004), 709.

⁴⁸ David Copeland, “Introduction: From Empiricism to Theory in African Border Studies,” *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25, no. 10 (June, 2010). DOI. 1080/08865655.2010.9695757.

⁴⁹ David J. Weber, *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846 The American Southwest Under Mexico* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1982), xii.

racial stereotypes of Mexicans in the American Southwest. Elucidated in his analysis is how the character of race relations between Anglo Americans and Mexicans were abysmally shaped by inimical generalizations.⁵⁰ This pertains to the history of writing that shapes the U.S. nationalistic narrative on the American Southwest in several ways. Firstly, historian of U.S., Texas, and Mexican history Raúl Reyes, explains how stereotyping was used as justification on part of Anglo Americans to not alone “supplant the region's indigenous cultura but also [in providing] a pretext” for Mexicans to become dispossessed of their lands.⁵¹ In the case of Texas, while Anglo Americans forfeited their American citizenship by opting Mexican citizenship, the idea to abandon “their Americanism” was typically viewed with disdainful rejection. In effect, Anglos in the Mexican state of Texas during the 1820s began redefining their identity. Historian James Crisp, in furthering what Reyes identifies as pretext, explains Anglos once after having observed Tejanos living in a state of “abject poverty,” begun labeling Mexicans as a “lazy, cowardly, backward, and ignorant people.”⁵² Responding to Crisp, Reyes underscores how preconceptions made by Anglos were drawn in light of Anglos failing to factor frontier hardships as the reason behind impoverishment.⁵³ In either's analysis,

⁵⁰ David J. Weber, “Scare More than Apes: Historical Roots of Anglo-American Stereotypes of Mexicans in the Border Regions,” in *New Spain's Far Northern Frontier: Essays on Spain in the American West, 1540-1821* (Albuquerque, New Mexico: University of New Mexico Press, 1979), 296. Assessed is an overview of the article written and a critical analysis made in pertinence to nationalistic narrative writing, specifically on noting what in another work written by Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, affirms as the “dangers of ethnocentricity.”

⁵¹ Reyes, “Gringos and 'Greasers,’” 4.

⁵² James Ernest Crisp, “Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845” (PH.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976), 22, 148. See also Andrew J. Torget, *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 40.

⁵³ Reyes, “Gringos' and 'Greasers,’” 6.

both Crisp and Reyes illuminate how Anglo “culture-bound preconceptions,” in part to the process of Anglo identity redefinition on foreign soil, eventuated in casting Mexicans as “a negative symbol.”⁵⁴ This “negative symbol” eventually becomes what Anglos use as point of reference in benchmarking American progress, not only in the taking of Texas but also the American Southwest. The said is as indicated by historian Andrew J. Torget, who points to comments stated by James Pinckney Henderson. In 1837, Henderson admitted to the British foreign secretary the founding of the Republic of Texas had represented one step forward in “extending the Anglo Saxon Blood, Laws and Influence in this South Western Region of the Western World,” by removing Mexicans deemed “weak, ignorant, and degraded.”⁵⁵ Accordingly, Weber explains this ethnocentric thought marks the undercurrent in the (U.S.) nationalistic narrative of the American Southwest, thus making one-sided any history on the succession of lands won by the U.S., as well the incorporation of inhabitants into American society. For example, traditionalist historian T.R. Fehrenbach argues the Mexican elite in Texas were protected from spoliation, while defending spoliations as “perfectly legal” for the “*hacendado* class (landowners)” to become dispossessed of their land.⁵⁶

Concluding his remarks on nationalistic narratives, Weber points either one of two imageries appears, depending on which side of the border. In Weber's case, this border is the Río Grande River or the Río Bravo. The nationalistic narrative (U.S. side)

⁵⁴ Crisp, “Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845,” 13.

⁵⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 191. James Pinckney Henderson, in his mission to elicit British support for the recognition of the Republic of Texas, had out of frustrations following drilled questions by British foreign secretary Lord Henry Palmerston, admitted the mission of Texas's founding.

⁵⁶ David Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987), 52. Mexicans having parted with land was the result of having been placed under financial duress, in being subject to use of coercion, scare tactics, or fraud charges.

glorifies the ideologies of American expansionism. Moreover, Weber subtly draws attention to the issue of freedom defined by whiteness in the U.S. (up to the 1960s), which enabled the perpetuity of U.S. ethnocentric thought (or Anglo writers maintaining Anglo perspectives in how history is told). Part of Mexico's erasure from the historiography of the American Southwest, if to deeper investigate, rests on how the power to write about the historiography of Texas and the American Southwest was (for the greater length of time) reserved to Anglos like Fehrenbach. In Mexico, the nationalistic narrative exhibits what Weber describes as "a dark age in the historiography" concerning the period from 1821 to 1854.⁵⁷ In this context, a shortage in the historical knowledge is also in part to Mexico's silence. Providing an explanation is Mexican historian Josefina Vázquez. According to Vázquez, due to the "nation's humiliation during its darkest hours," Mexican scholars, though regrettably, tended to forget the years between 1821 and 1854 in effort to protect national pride.⁵⁸ Not wishing to address the loss of Texas and more than half their lands to the U.S., Mexican scholars have then, in turn, created a void coinciding the time spectrum of this study. Mexico's silence has substantially factored the history of enslaved Blacks escaping to Mexico to largely remain a marginalized history.

Nonetheless, revisionists like Arnoldo De León, Rosalie Schwartz, and Kenneth Porter, as pointed ago, concur that enslaved persons tapped into forms of mutual support networking prior to arriving into Mexico. This thesis, in focusing on this networking giving rise to an Underground Railroad, does not purpose to incite controversy but to

⁵⁷ Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, xii.

⁵⁸ Weber, xii. Included in foreword is input added by Mexican scholar Vázquez, who commented why Mexican scholars have neglected to study the said time period following the loss of Texas.

generate interest for further inquiry. One so, that calls for the inclusion of Mexico relative to the exodus of enslaved Black men and women who esteemed Mexico a safer haven over flight towards the U.S.-Canadian border.

Creating the Understructure for a Texas Underground Railroad Study

For introductory purposes, in response to the level of public unawareness about the history of Blacks in Mexico, much less Underground Railroad networking specific to Texas, an understructure must be provided as part of introducing the concept of a Texas Underground Railroad. Groundwork needs to be established by defining what it is, who it involves, and why it matters. To begin understanding the Underground Railroad, it should firstly be understood that “underground railroad” is “an umbrella term for local groups that employed numerous methods to assist [runaways], some public and entirely legal, some flagrant violations of the law.”⁵⁹ The Texas Underground Railroad is an important segment of Texas history, though it has eluded academic recognition. Entailed in this history is a uniting of various minority groups in assisting runaways to Mexico. These minoritized groups paved a general escort route, which is defined as the route field guides took in leading runaways toward the Río Grande. The Texas Underground Railroad was a networking and support system that spans from the terrain of central Texas Hill Country to the semi-arid frontier south-southwest towards the Río Grande. Architects (another name for operatives) of the Texas Underground Railroad exhibit roles ranging from those providing safe housing to becoming volunteer suppliers of food, water, horses and/or mules, and those acting as field guides. In light of how under Texas law (1836-1860) the act of aiding and abetting slaves was deemed criminal activity, perhaps most of written evidence has been kept hidden out of necessity to conceal.

⁵⁹ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 15. Reference to how Foner defined the Underground Railroad.

However, in surfacing documentary records (newspaper reports, judicial records, U.S. and Mexican government papers, letters and correspondences, observations stated by travelers, and in assessing the historical memory of Mexico amongst enslaved communities), which in other words, speaks for the actions of architects, evidence stacks up the case of there once being in activity forms of assistance networking. Evidence, specifically, points to Mexicans and Germans (located in central Texas) acting within a diverse range of abilities in providing aid. While the level of organization in creating a system may remain somewhat unclear, nonetheless, these individuals, knowingly or unknowingly, formed however sophisticated of a system that facilitated the escape of thousands from bondage.

Furthermore, using Foner's *Gateway to Freedom* to exemplify, it is after surveying historical literature on slave flight that discoveries are made relative to an observable evolution in the conveyed meanings of commonly used vocabulary. Setting and context must be given every due attention for the reason being that terminology used by historians to discuss escape towards the Canadian border will differ in meaning when applied to Texas. One example is the role of a vigilance committee. While Foner's case study depicts the role of "urban vigilance committees and rural slavery activists" as pivotal in the success of the underground railroad in New York City, the case study of Texas requires special attention.⁶⁰ The role of a vigilance committee in Texas is not one and the same in nature of a vigilance committee in northern cities, like New York City. Whereas Foner specifies the role of a vigilance committee as including the hiding of runaways, at times even to boldly confront slave catchers, and providing legal

⁶⁰ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 20.

representation in the courtroom or raising money on behalf of the runaway to purchase their freedom, in Texas, following 1836, it is the entire opposite. As antithesis to the described, in both the Republic (1836-1845) and State of Texas (1846-1861), the role of a vigilance committee is to preserve and protect the enshrinement of slavery as an institution. Opposite to how officials in the North appeared to express minimal interest in prosecuting person(s) assisting runaways, any free person(s) discovered in the act of aiding and abetting an enslaved person, under Texas law, faced potential fines and/or imprisonment, and ran the potential risk of being sold into slavery.⁶¹ In other words, the act of providing assistance to a “fugitive slave” equated criminal behavior punishable by law.

Additionally, a few conventions need to be followed in the interest of clarity when it comes to the identification of historical actors. As this study pertains to Texas during the first half of the nineteenth century, when and where the “Texas borderlands served as the epicenter for so much migration and transformation,” what is needed is to find accurate terms, as well to maintain consistency in the use of terms for identifying the multiple groups of people who enter and exit the historical stage.⁶² As stated ago, ethnic Mexicans and central Texas Germans are recognized as the main identifiable architects of the Texas Underground Railroad. The broad term use of “ethnic” is intentional in order to paint a general picture when bringing into discussion the role of persons of Mexican-descent. The term use of “ethnic,” being that it refers to someone of Mexican descent who identifies with the culture, heritage, and traditions of Mexico (versus Texas or the

⁶¹ “An Act,” January 15, 1839, reprinted in H.P.H. Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, 12 vols., (Austin, Texas: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 246-247.

⁶² Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, xii.

U.S.), is deemed suitable and appropriate for this study. As later chapters will work to reveal, in a time where Texas protected and idolized the institution of slavery as opposed to Mexico eradicating slavery, the term use “ethnic” immediately implies antislavery. This descriptive term and identifier is applied when and where no distinction can be made as to whether the Mexican descent person being discussed had identified self as a Tejano, Mexicano, or Mexican. Throughout this research, greatest thoughtful attention will be paid to detail in highlighting and distinguishing, especially as peoples' different interests create anomalies in the historic discussion of ethnic relations, the role of Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans.

Questions needing to be raised in regard to the use of different identification terms are such as those along the lines: What is the reasoning behind the use of these different terms? How is Tejano, Mexicano, and Mexican defined? In answering to, factored into conversation is Neil Foley, author of *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture*, and Andrés Reséndez, author of *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850*, with additional input by historians such as David Weber, David Montejano, James Crisp, Andrew J. Torget, and Jerry D. Thompson.

Concerning individuals who share the same ethnicity, distinctions in identity are made largely in response to Foley's research, which creates a historiography over the ethno-racial boundaries of Texas by how it crisscrosses cultural regions of east and south Texas with south-central Texas. Notable, Foley bridges southern history (Anglo-African American relations) and southwestern (Anglo-Mexican American) by using central Texas as a “laboratory” to explore how Mexicans, Blacks, and poor whites “negotiated and

manipulated [racialized] space.”⁶³ According to Foley, Texas was part of the Spanish borderlands prior to 1821 and was a state of Mexico until 1836, in respect to Texas independence.⁶⁴ Interjecting a point of clarification needed for Foley's timeline analysis, historian Torget, author of *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850*, underscores Mexico never came to terms in recognizing the political independence of Texas until after the U.S.-Mexico War. Torget reiterates the U.S. annexation of Texas is an event that in Mexico's historical memory marks the loss of Texas to the U.S. as “nothing less than an outright attack on Mexican sovereignty.”⁶⁵ In examining Texas under Mexican statehood during the 1820s, much in what harmonizes with Weber's research and complementary to Foley's historiography is James Crisp's “Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845.” Crisp explores how the arrival event of Anglo pioneers into Texas resulted in Anglos eventually creating a pejorative group identity of Mexicans. Refusing to leave all cultural baggage behind in terms of their past experiences in the subjugation of Africans and expulsion of Native Americans, Anglo Americans had instead, according to Crisp, purposed to “re-define it.”⁶⁶ Anglo pioneers in Texas, proving non culturally embracive, self-segregated in communities located in the east between the Colorado and Sabine Rivers, while designating the areas west towards Goliad and San Antonio to Tejanos.⁶⁷ The few

⁶³ Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 19. In Texas, land ownership rights tied to ancestral claims. Whiteness became a quintessential property for citizenship and landownership.

⁶⁴ Foley, *The White Scourge*, 1.

⁶⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 254.

⁶⁶ Crisp, “Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845,” 13.

⁶⁷ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 140, 160.

interactions that did occur typically revolved around trade interests. In this context, Tejano identity began to take on peculiarities.

In explaining the development of peculiarities in Tejano identity, Weber's *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846* stresses while Mexico won political independence from the Spanish Crown, it did not necessarily mean economic independence.⁶⁸ Torget's *Seeds of Empire* adds how markets introduced by Anglo Americans, specifically, cotton trade, resulted in Tejanos relying on "trade connections with New Orleans."⁶⁹ Combining Foley's analysis on east Texas, where Anglos transplanted cultural practices of the antebellum South, and Torget's assessment on Tejanos, in learning customs thereof via trade interactions, increasingly clearer to tease out is how Tejano association with American enterprises leads to an eventually situational paradox impacting Tejano identity choices. Due to their associations with American enterprises, Tejanos became increasingly viewed in accordance to what one Mexico City official remarked, as "not Mexicans except by birth."⁷⁰ Crisp describes Tejanos believed they could be simultaneously both a proud Mexican and loyal Texan. However, this assertion of optimism in welding different cultural elements into one national identity did not fully foresee the paradox in situation relative to the polarity in standpoint on the issue of slavery between Mexico and Texas.⁷¹ Tejanos were put to the test after 1836, as

⁶⁸ Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, 122.

⁶⁹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 124.

⁷⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 124-125.

⁷¹ Crisp, "Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexicans, 1821-1845," 324-327. Tejanos became a "people of paradox," in that Mexico had viewed as traitors for siding with the Texas rebellion and Anglo Texans failed to distinguish loyal Tejanos from Mexicans. In this essence, Tejanos became a people without a country.

Montejano points “the character of revolt” changed dramatically, in that Tejanos became treated with suspicion, faced county-wide expulsion, and in other instances, receiving death threats by their white counterparts.⁷² Factoring the flood of Anglos coming to Texas and the undignified treatment Tejanos suffered from, both representing events resulting in traumas that otherwise made Tejanos “overwhelmed,” Montejano explains how Mexicans in Texas, between 1836 and 1846, fled to protected Río Grande towns. After 1846, the region known as the Nueces Strip had, in addition to areas west of the Nueces River, remained “predominantly Mexican in population.”⁷³ Between structural commercial forces shaping identity and in this tracking of an incredible amount of movement in terms of different migrations, all points considered by various historians, drawn into conclusion is Foley's ethno-cultural analysis of Texas in his markup of regions. East Texas shares more commonalities with the American southern culture, whereas South Texas shares more commonalities with Mexico and the “trans-Río Grande North.”⁷⁴

While Foley analyzes the history of Texas in light of its changes in ethno-racial boundaries, Reséndez adds perspective by illuminating the historical experience of frontier situations as one that frontiersmen became split between state and market forces.⁷⁵ Specifically, Reséndez examines how “identity choices,” especially in regard to

⁷² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 26.

⁷³ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 30-31. Demographically speaking, Mexicans represented 80 to 90% of the population, in outnumbering Anglos by 25 to 1.

⁷⁴ Foley, *White Scourge*, 2.

⁷⁵ Andrés Reséndez, *Changing National Identities at the Frontier: Texas and New Mexico, 1800-1850* (Cambridge, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 7.

the Tejano population, “almost always follow a situational logic.”⁷⁶ Between Mexico City “nationalists bent on control” (in effort to protect Mexican rule over Texas) and Anglo Americans, who upon introducing markets had provided a sense of economic security, Tejanos, stood caught in the crosshairs of “state and market [forces] pulling in opposite directions.”⁷⁷ Reséndez explains Tejanos, in the series run of making identity choices had to learn how to navigate between, interpret, and bridge two entirely different cultural worlds when it comes to establishing identity.

Lastly, historian Jerry Thompson's monograph *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray* provides the finishing touch to the various insights made by Foley, Torget, Montejano, and Reséndez relative to understanding anomalies within the generally speaking of Tejanos demonstrating a non-identity with slavery. Torget reveals Tejano support for the idea of Texas independence, which, if Texas won, as it did, would consequence in the perpetuation of slavery. Tejanos siding with Anglos exemplifies an identity choice weighing economic survival over allegiance to their nation's core. This decision led to behaviors like Tejanos embracing Anglo counterparts, even if it meant disagreement with the idea of slave labor. While Tejanos welcomed American enterprises it did not necessarily mean Tejanos identified with slaveholding practices, provided Tejanos, if assessed by the overall population, could not identify with the institution of slavery by virtue of the fact Tejanos owned no more than sixty slaves, according to Thompson.⁷⁸ Reséndez's input to that of Torget, Foley, Montejano, and Thompson is significant in that it places *context* on borderlands settings, by which may explain potential anomalies in

⁷⁶ Reséndez, *Changing National Identities*, 3-7.

⁷⁷ Reséndez, 7.

⁷⁸ Jerry D. Thompson, *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray* (Austin, Texas: State House Press, 2000), 11.

human behavior. Following 1836, Montejano highlights what events explain why many Tejanos fled towards the Río Grande, which in Foley's historiography, marks an ethno-racial boundary sharing more commonalities with Mexico than the American South. Concerning Tejanos who remained in east Texas as well those in the San Antonio area, evidence points some Tejanos acting as slave catchers, while other Tejanos assisting runaways. Each historian's analysis marks interplay of context and setting in relation to how different interests result in anomalies in the historic discussion of ethnic relations, basing upon how Tejanos responded to the situation of becoming a numerical minority in the land once theirs.

Emerging for clarity is how ideas and values expressed by one person of Mexican descent were not homogenous with the ideas and values of other ethnic Mexicans. Duly noted, identity formation on part of Mexicans in Texas typically denoted one's linkage of self to their region and land. Case in point, Mexicans located in the region between the Nueces River and the Río Grande referred selves as *Mexicanos* (also spelled as “Mejicanos”), not as Texans.⁷⁹ For this reason, due attention must be given in recognizing one's development of their cultural identification as well taking into account their nationality, when specifying the finer details of identification over any particular individual. Due to the aforementioned paradox, caution is issued on referring any Mexican assisting runaways by Tejano. In attempt to exercise greatest sensitivity and respect to these historical actors, the term use of *Tejano*, provided evidence supports that is how one identified self, will be given the descriptive term and identifier as either proslavery or antislavery (given the paradox between one Tejano assisting runaways and

⁷⁹ Weber, *The Mexican Frontier*, xix.

another Tejano acting as a slave catcher). The term *Mexicano* is applied if it is made known by record how one referred and viewed self, and as part of following lead in respect to how people of Mexican heritage addressed selves in ways that tended to emphasize one's connection to their homeland. Taking into account how a 300-mile wide strip of land (between the Nueces and Río Grande) remained for so long in political limbo due to contested border claims, and it being in this historical context rather the border crossing Mexicans, not vice versa, *Mexicano* then applies to those in aforesaid region. Lastly, as research, admittedly to surprise, indicates that Mexicans from south of the Río Grande represent the greater number of faces behind the cumulative efforts in dismantling the institution of slavery, such individuals will be addressed in accordance to national origin as Mexican or Mexican national.

Similarly, the region specification of central Texas is intentional when it comes to explaining the role of Germans in Texas. The Peters Colony (west of Dallas and Grayson) that was established in 1840 to 1841, in credit of Mirabeau Lamar's administration modeling the colonization program after Mexico's, "established a cultural atmosphere reminiscent of their Yankee...origins."⁸⁰ Two other major colonies, however, consisted of German nationals without a history of exposure to American proslavery sentiments of thought. These two colonies, namely one by Henri Castro and another by Prince Carl of Solms-Braunfels, were situated in lands west of San Antonio and in central Texas Hill Country. By 1846, an estimate of 7,000 Germans settled in central Texas.⁸¹

⁸⁰ Calvert, Cantrell, and De León, *The History of Texas*, 90.

⁸¹ Calvert, Cantrell, and De León, *The History of Texas*, 90.

Germans from central Texas and people of Mexican heritage represent the two main architects because of their shared histories of mistreatment by Anglos. These two groups' discoveries of a shared experience in mistreatment by Anglos, as the third chapter will expound upon, gave way to solidarity, or the uniting of these two groups in part to soften hardships felt, and in part to take a stand against perceived injustices. Montejano and Foley exemplify the types of mistreatment both groups of people endured in Texas. For instance, Montejano points to deliberations in the Texas legislature, under terms of statehood (Texas annexation in 1845), which concerned the question of whether to retain the qualifying adjective “white” relative to Mexicans. Though the adjective was retained, if it had been considered otherwise it would have then created the legal machinery to wholly strip Mexicans in Texas of their landownership and suffrage rights, since citizenship (both U.S. and Texas) was reserved for whites.⁸² In the case of Germans in central Texas, Foley explains that in the Anglo construction of a racial order to society, one that inscribes privilege over another by right of whiteness, this “whiteness,” increasingly pointed to rather “a particular kind.” Foley clarifies “not all whites...were equally white.”⁸³ German immigrants, due to their sharing the same Catholic faith as the Mexican population, opining slavery as “abhorrence,” and in socializing with Tejanos and Mexicans, came to be viewed as culturally un-American. Foley explains for these reasons Germans in central Texas were labeled as the “other” white.⁸⁴

In the interest of clarity for this study, full disclosure must be made in regards to additional use of terms. The term use of *Anglo* refers to whites who retained proslavery

⁸² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 30, 38.

⁸³ Foley, *White Scourge*, 5.

⁸⁴ Foley, *White Scourge*, 6-8.

views and/or belief in the supremacy of their own race. For groups of people typically considered white but retained antislavery views, such will be identified in accordance to their cultural and/or national origins. Wherever applicable, the term use of *enslaved* has been placed in lieu of *slave* when it comes to addressing a historical actor, as verbiage is to represent the status of a person, not the identity. In this case study, the term *runaway* is also preferred over “fugitive slave,” provided how the status of an enslaved person on the run remained fluid in transition, and it is not condoned for criminality to be interlinked with the act of escaping bondage. If “fugitive slave” is used, it is strictly stated in quote or to strategically stress a particular point in highlighting the interests of enslavers and pro slavery activists, who framed runaways as lawbreaking “fugitives.”

Lastly, for the purpose of this study, Texas is described as a “borderlands” territory. Texas is considered as a Spanish borderland (1790-1821) and a U.S.-Mexico borderland (1821-1861) due to the flux in rule over its lands and the inhabitants, thereof, remaining at the periphery of the internal core. Texas remained by and large a frontier that, while claimed, had been left widely unchecked by governing officials and unincorporated into each respective mainstream society (of the nation power laying claim to Texas). Historian Torget explains how regions presently known as Texas in the first half of the nineteenth century “were never controlled or dominated by any single people or nation.”⁸⁵ Consequently, this resulted in a significant level of political autonomy that took on an entirely different shape and form alien to the culture and principles characteristic of the internal core of the nation claiming Texas lands. Because these regions known as Texas underwent multiple changes in nation-power jurisdictions,

⁸⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, xii.

events in Texas must be assessed from a transnational angle. Examining Texas in transnational perspectives works to show how international events profoundly impacted “developing proslavery and antislavery ideologies,” and inspire the level of activism on both ends of the ideological spectrum.⁸⁶ For example, the U.S. may have been first to legislate a Fugitive Slave Act (of 1793), but the Republic of Texas was first to make the recapture and return of runaways a government responsibility, not a civilian one.⁸⁷

In sociological aspects, Montejano, author of *Anglos and Mexicans in the Making of Texas, 1836-1986*, examines race, labor, and the frontier in response to the virtually absent sociological memory in race relation studies in the American Southwest. Specifically, Montejano examines the consequences of events relative to “incorporation” and “annexation.” Specifying incorporation as the assertion of national authority, the infusion of a national market, and the transfer of national culture by settlers, “frontier” and “borderland,” in effect, marks the periphery of an “expanding nation-state.”⁸⁸ Under incorporation, stratifications in frontier order reflect in social class divisions based on who had what in property (ex. livestock, land, and water) and access to by privilege.⁸⁹ Under “annexation,” however, the context becomes set for the formation of multiple “races,” as annexation produces outcomes of political subordination and in the minority status of former inhabitants.⁹⁰ This change, essentially, reveals the developments of race

⁸⁶ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 353.

⁸⁷ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 39. See also “An Act,” January 15, 1839, reprinted in H.P.H. Gammel, *The Laws of Texas, 1822-1897*, 12 vols., (Austin, Texas: Gammel Book Co., 1898), 246-247.

⁸⁸ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 75.

⁸⁹ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 76.

⁹⁰ Montejano, 309.

questions, when and where ethnic relations turn racial as one group asserts privilege over another by using biological differences as justification to enact policies in maintaining the said privilege.⁹¹ This in turn, brings it back to Torget describing Texas as representative of a “central crossroads for overlap, collusion, and conflict” between historical actors.

Argument on why Mexico a Safe(r) Haven

While the greater half of this chapter has, in so far, addressed the omission of Mexico in the historical narrative of slave flight, this component argues Mexico was a safer haven than the U.S. northern free states. Focusing now on the question of *why*, behind the assertion of Mexico a safer haven than northbound escape, is presented as this chapter's approach to rectify Mexico's erasure from underground railroad-related studies, which should be included into the historiography of the American Southwest. So, why Mexico? Answering this question is done by offering a critical analysis over the U.S. and Mexico, in respect to distinguishing each nation's progressivism relative to racial equality.

Slave flight south to Mexico proved more promising in the security of newfound liberties than slave flight north into U.S. non-slaveholding states. Points of argument consist of highlighting historic cross-cultural encounters in Pre-Classic Mesoamerica versus colonial New England, as this pertains to discussing key differences in the historical arrival of Africans to modern-day Mexico versus modern-day U.S., and in explaining how Mexico's independence is inseparable from Afro contribution. In addition to, explicated is how historians talk about the theoretical freedom in Mexico (after the 1821 Plan de Iguala) versus the economic ties between U.S. free states and slaveholding

⁹¹ Montejano, 1, 5. Montejano clarifies “race situations exist when defined by public policy.”

states. Accordingly, argument maintains international border crossings offered better protections in status by claim of political asylum than domestic border crossings, where a change in status was strictly contingent upon keeping certain safeguards. Else wise, without prudent measures taken as to stay north above the domestic border, enjoyed freedoms proved rather tentative.

Firstly, the history of Mexico exhibits a greater level of progressivism than the U.S. in terms of how intermixing and colorblind interactions were tolerated and/or celebrated. Relative to cross-cultural encounters involving Africans, both historians and anthropologists have traced the presence of Africans in Mexico back to Pre-Classic era Mexico. Anthropologists such as Nigel Davies trace the Afro presence in Mexico (modern-day states Veracruz and Tabasco) to as early as 900 BC.⁹² Davies theorizes Africans from Cambodia had reached ancient Mexico and into Central America by crossing the subcontinent landmass once connecting Asia and the Americas. This theory derives from archaeological evidence by which Cambodian artifacts share Negroid similarities to artifacts discovered in Mesoamerica.⁹³ Adding to Davies, other scholars theorize Afro-Phoenician seafarers successfully navigating the 1,500 mile trans-Atlantic, and setting afoot in modern-day Mexico as early as 750 BC. When European travelers visited what is present-day Panama and Honduras, numerous reports were made in sighting Blacks as part of the indigenous population groups.⁹⁴ The significance to

⁹² Nigel Davies, *The Ancient Kingdoms of Mexico: A Magnificent Re-creation of their Art and Life* (New York, New York: Penguin History, 1991), 11, 19, 28.

⁹³ Davies, *The Ancient Kingdoms*, 28.

⁹⁴ Raúl Reyes, "Beyond the Tragic: The Untold Story of the Triumphant Afro Legacy and the Americas," Research presentation in Celebration of Black History Month, at Lone Star College-Cy Fair, February, 2019. See also Manuel Gonzáles, *Mexicanos: A History of Mexicans in the United States* 2nd. ed. (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2009), 18. See also James W. Loewen, *Lies My*

underline is in people of Mexico interacting with Africans for over a thousand years, according to Reyes, who has presented his study on the history of Blacks in Mexico.⁹⁵ This marks an extensive historical record of multicultural interactions as well in multicolor relations, in that it was not necessarily novel in developing reciprocal relations of equality across the color line. This history marks one long predating the first arrival of Africans onto the U.S. east coast, specifically, in Jamestown, Virginia, 1619, which was rather due to mishap than intentional as the slave ship *San Juan Bautista* had been plundered by pirates. The twenty Angolan captives sold in Jamestown were those brought as contraband loot from the original *San Juan Bautista*.⁹⁶

Secondly, considering the aforementioned, differences in the arrival of Africans set a different tempo in the attainment of racial equality. Regarding the early beginnings of cross-cultural contact involving Africans and Europeans in the trans-Atlantic world, the arrival of Africans as travelers in (modern-day) Mexico starkly contrasts with the arrival of Africans as captives onto North American shores. Consider for instance the role of Afro-Latino Pedro Alonzo Niño, who captained *La Niña*, one of the three flag ships in the voyage of Christopher Columbus during 1492.⁹⁷ Furthermore, in the history of Mexico, during colonial New Spain, Africans were given more latitude in terms of being provided opportunities to elevate their socio-economic status. Historians such as Matt

Teacher Told Me: Everything Your American History Textbook Got Wrong (New York and London: The New Press, 2007), 36-38.

⁹⁵ Reyes, “Beyond the Tragic,” presentation.

⁹⁶ Ibram X. Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* (New York: Nation Books, 2016), 38. The twenty Angolan captives sold to Virginia governor George Yeardley, who owned 1,000 acres. *San Juan Bautista* originally had in tow 350 captives but came under attack by two pirate ships in the Gulf of Mexico. It is estimated 60 captives were taken as spoils. Kendi traced 20 to Jamestown, in August of 1619.

⁹⁷ Reyes, “Beyond the Tragic,” presentation.

Restall, highlight the role of Black conquistadors during the Spanish conquest. While indeed Africans arrived in mass number to colonial New Spain (modern-day Mexico) via forced migration, Restall also reveals how other narratives indicate not every African was enslaved. According to Restall, African-descent persons served as Black conquistadors during Spanish conquests. African-Iberian born Black conquistadors, “wherever Spaniards set foot,” demonstrated great combat prowess during military stints that in turn, scored enough reputation in becoming what Reyes describes as “first generation” conquerors.⁹⁸ By the 1510s, Spaniards had esteemed Black conquistadors as “worth their weight in gold.”⁹⁹ African-descent Juan Garrido, for instance, gained respect by Caucasian counterparts for his role in the taking of the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán, along also participating in the conquest of Cuba.¹⁰⁰

The experience of Black captivity in the U.S. represents one antithesis to the history of Blacks in Mexico. Historians Ibram X. Kendi and Charles W. Mills provide insights on how the history of racist ideas turned into U.S. policy. Kendi's *Stamped from the Beginning: The Definitive History of Racist Ideas in America* surveys the thinking of segregationist, antiracist, and assimilationist figures by strategically selecting and following historical figures such as Cotton Mather (1663-1728) and Thomas Jefferson (1743-1826), who largely represent the racial thinking of the time period. Kendi references these two historical figures as “tour guides” for exploring the “landscape of

⁹⁸ Matthew Restall, “Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America,” *The Americas* 57, (2000), 173, 175.

⁹⁹ Restall, “Black Conquistadors,” 175-178, 180, 189.

¹⁰⁰ Matthew Restall, *Seven Myths of the Spanish Conquest* (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 55, 57, 61. See also Miguel Leon-Portilla, *The Broken Spears: The Aztec Account of the Conquest of Mexico* (Boston, Massachusetts: Beacon Press, 1992), 34.

racial ideas.”¹⁰¹ Firstly, Kendi debunks the folktale claiming racism developed from ignorance and hatred by clarifying racist ideas were produced to justify racist policies in order to protect one’s political, economic, and/or cultural self-interest.¹⁰² He selects preacher Cotton Mather (as representative of America’s first century) to reveal origins of racist ideas in America began with a theological-based framework. According to Kendi, racist theological ideas were critical to “sanctioning...American slavery,” and Mather played an influential role making slavery “acceptable” to Christian churches.¹⁰³ To establish the credibility of slavery, Mather preached assimilationist ideas stating while African slaves were biologically inferior their “dark” souls could turn “White.”

Mather's argument utilizes the same racial thinking between justifying enslavement to convert and slave-trading purposes to civilize, if to compare to the anti-Black sentiment first aired by Gomes Eanes de Zurara in his manuscript, *The Chronicles of the Discovery and Conquest of Guinea*.¹⁰⁴ Moreover, eighteenth-century “Enlightened” thinkers such as Thomas Jefferson expanded the racist discourse with the use of pseudo-scientific reasoning. According to Kendi, two competing ideologies in debates pertained to deliberations on whether Africans could be “civilized” or were a separate race classified somewhere between the lowest rank of human and primate species. As Kendi points, hierarchy-making was crafted in “service of a political project:

¹⁰¹ Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning*, 6-8. Kendi's remaining “tour guides” are Thomas Jefferson, William Lloyd Garrison (1805-1879), W.E.B. Du Bois (1868-1963), and Angela Davis (1943-present).

¹⁰² Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning*, 9.

¹⁰³ Kendi, 6.

¹⁰⁴ Kendi, 6, 24, 68.

enslavement.”¹⁰⁵ Enlightenment intellectuals justified racial inequalities by ruling Blacks as subhuman. While Jefferson stated “all men created equal,” Kendi reiterates Jefferson didn’t believe all human groups are equal.¹⁰⁶ This dichotomy of thought acts as the enabler behind forms of systemic racism. While in 1863 (and 1865 for Texas) de jure slavery ended, Anglos (as the ruling majority) still maintained a culture of white supremacy.¹⁰⁷

Accompanying Kendi’s research into the history of racist thinking in the U.S., Charles Mills, author of *The Racial Contract*, addresses the issues of conquest, imperialism, colonialism, race and racism, and slavery. Specifically, Mills explains how racial privilege is political and marks a “form of domination.”¹⁰⁸ As Enlightenment thinking frames government as a social contract by defining “government on the popular consent of individuals taken as equals,” Mills explains that by government enacting policy in determining who counts, is entitled, and benefits versus those who do not, the social contract turns racial. In theory a people may be equal, but in actuality are treated as subordinates in order to maintain racial privilege.¹⁰⁹ Black enslavement, therefore, is a political form of racial domination, in that it made the exploitation of African-descent persons justifiable by reason of ancestry. The enslavement of Blacks in the U.S. was for

¹⁰⁵ Kendi, 82-83. Enslavement of Africans reflects racism and a political form of domination by virtue of how people of African-descent were singled out from others, in being labeled as sub-human and animalistic on account of ancestral heritage.

¹⁰⁶ Kendi, 104.

¹⁰⁷ George M. Fredrickson, “A Man but Not a Brother: Abraham Lincoln and Racial Equality,” *The Journal of Southern History* 41, no. 1 (1975), 49-58.

¹⁰⁸ Charles W. Mills, *The Racial Contract* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.

¹⁰⁹ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 1-4.

the sole purpose to economically sustain a nation, and U.S. enslavers did not register into concept the eventual incorporation of Blacks as citizens.

Thirdly, while a history of racism in the interiors of Mexico (during colonial New Spain times) does exist, underscored is how Mexican independence was forged in a revolutionary atmosphere hell-bent on the eradication of slavery. Historian Kelley points to Padre Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla's *Grito de Dolores* (1810), which explicitly calls for the abolition of slavery.¹¹⁰ The war for Mexican independence entails the fight for social justice as well equal equity across color lines, in especially tackling racist ideas held by Spanish elites like the “one-fourths clause,” which referred (in terms of labor output) one African better than four Indians.¹¹¹ Additionally, Mexican independence heavily involved the recruitment and participation of African-descent freedom fighters, making independence inseparable from the Afro contribution. If to examine Mexico's population in 1810, Afromestizos comprised (at minimum) 10% of the population or roughly 624,461, along with Blacks comprising another 0.2% (roughly 10,000), though the census count does not necessarily provide accuracy. Historian Meyer clarifies due to miscegenation, which produced additional racial categories such as *zambos* (black-Indian), in addition to manumission, “perhaps two hundred thousand” more precisely reflected the number of African-descent persons.¹¹² During the war for Mexican independence, African-descent insurgents stood equal in suffering, and this, as imaginable, instilled equal entitlement to rights.

¹¹⁰ Kelley, “Mexico in His Head,” 711.

¹¹¹ Michael C Meyer, William L. Sherman, and Susan M. Deeds, *The Course of Mexican History* 6th ed. (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 205.

¹¹² Meyer et. al., *The Course of Mexican History*, 195, 206-207.

Furthermore, while Hidalgo is considered “the father of Mexican independence,” historians such as Reyes, Ted Vincent, and Kelley point the Afro contribution cannot go unrecognized in terms of leadership relative to the birth of the Republic of Mexico. Following Hidalgo's decapitation, José María Morelos y Pavón, a “mestizo with African ancestry,” provided clear vision and leadership critical to the overthrow of Spanish colonialism.¹¹³ As “a mestizo priest turned freedom fighter,” Morelos demanded slavery's end, male suffrage, and the eradication of classism distinction, as well for the reallocation of wealth among the poor.¹¹⁴ According to Reyes, Morelos “manifested superior political talents” as Morelos, comparing to Hidalgo, had actively recruited Blacks from plantations. Moreover, Morelos succeeded to have guerilla forces successfully encircle Mexico City, the Spanish capital.¹¹⁵ While suffering the same fate as Hidalgo, being that he was captured, executed, and decapitated in 1815, New Spain by time of his execution irreversibly had fallen under insurgent control. Indeed, scholar Ted Vincent in his article “Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President Vicente Guerrero,” points one of the officers in leading freedom fighters, commander in chief and Afromestizo Vicente Guerrero, a protégé of Morelos, became “the consummator of independence.”¹¹⁶ In the process of brokering negotiations during the fall of 1821, Spanish negotiators rather tested Guerrero's integrity by seeing if Guerrero would accept anything less than full

¹¹³ Rodolfo Acuña, *Occupied America: A History of Chicanos*, 5th ed. (Pearson Longman, 2004), 42. Reference made also to Reyes, “Beyond the Tragic,” presentation.

¹¹⁴ Donald Chipman and Harriett Denise Joseph, *Spanish Texas, 1519-1821* (Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1992), 221. See also Lesley Byrd Simpson, *Many Mexicos* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, California: University of California Press, 1966), 217, 219, and Meyer et. al., *Course*, 6th edition, 280-281.

¹¹⁵ Reyes, “Beyond the Tragic,” presentation. See also Acuña, *Occupied America*, 42.

¹¹⁶ Ted Vincent, “Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President Vicente Guerrero,” *Journal of Negro History* 86, no. 2 (Spring, 2001), 148, 151.

equity across color lines. Specifically, Spanish negotiators presented a tendered proviso affirming to extend political rights to all, but with stipulation in excluding persons of African ancestry. To this, Guerrero “angrily declared...he could not be a signature to any agreement that did not include full rights to all Mexicans.”¹¹⁷ Vincent's analysis on the character and leadership of Guerrero, in tracing freedom fighter turned Mexico's first Black President, who abolished slavery (just ninety days into his term) on September 16, 1829, comes to show how Mexico's birth was in historian Kelley's words, “hostile to slavery.”¹¹⁸ While some historians like Kelley may describe Mexico as resembling more “antislavery rhetoric” than antislavery enforcement, the legacy of Hidalgo, Morelos, and Guerrero cannot go underestimated relative to their infusing a spirit of antislavery activism into everyday common workers.¹¹⁹

Finally, the attainment of freedom is arguably more secured when crossing an international border and requesting political asylum by authorities outside the nation than keeping within the domestic borders and relying on the goodwill of authorities inside the nation. Runaways seeking freedom north of the Mason-Dixon Line encountered the situation of their freedom wholly contingent on staying one step above the practical limit of U.S. slavery. Historians Ira Berlin, Eric Foner, and Andrew Torget point the very dangers unique to the racialized economic terrain of U.S. northern states. Torget addresses how the industrialization of the North was interdependent on the South for raw

¹¹⁷ Vincent, “Contributions of Mexico's First Black Indian President Vicente Guerrero,” 150. Source indicates Mexico had a slave population of 15,000 by 1810.

¹¹⁸ Kelley, “Mexico in His Head,” 711.

¹¹⁹ Kelley, “Mexico in His Head,” 711. Kelley argues antislavery rhetoric due to Mexico exempting Texas from law abolishing slavery, though this is arguable as Mexico, while exhibiting white appeasement, had weighed the importance of peopling Texas in order to govern.

material supply. For example, New York City, according to Torget, served as the primary port for receiving Texas cotton bales.¹²⁰ Foner also adds while in 1827 New York City abolished slavery, it remained in abiding by “southern and federal law on protecting slavery.”¹²¹ Referencing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, justice of New York's Supreme Court Samuel Nelson, commented in 1834 that while a state may abolish slavery, it “may be said still to exist.”¹²² This comment was stated in assessing the harmful effects of the Fugitive Slave Act of 1793, which had placed responsibility on the slaveholder to retrieve their runaway. Because it placed the onus on the slaveholder to track, which often resulted in little to no success in finding, it was not to be entirely left out of question on the formation of gang rings resulting in part to slaveholders guaranteeing a share of profits, or in the eagerness of northerners to make a profit.¹²³ Economic ties between the North and South, to remarkable effect, riddled liberty with reminders cautioning runaways how it was only a line protecting a person of color from re-enslavement. In this purview, whereas Mexico exhibits a revolutionary atmosphere “hostile to slavery,” the U.S. sponsors one friendly to slavery by virtue of indirect economic sponsorship.

Moreover, Ira Berlin's *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* focuses on the business of kidnapping freepersons, which marks the frontline of slave sponsorship. While U.S. Congress banned the Atlantic Slave Trade in 1808, it did not ban interstate or domestic human trafficking. More than two million persons between

¹²⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 125.

¹²¹ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 8.

¹²² Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 39.

¹²³ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 1. Tyler explains how slaveholders maintained expectations to lose a number of enslaved workers due to workers running away, and attempt s to find, if the runaway had especially received outside help, often prevailing in no success.

1820 and 1860 were sold from New England colonies along the east coastline (older states) to “importing” states of the Lower South.¹²⁴ According to Berlin, “the practice of plucking free people or soon-to-be free people from the streets of northern cities” often entailed the “cooperation of corrupt sheriffs,” and was done so with a “frightening frequency.”¹²⁵ Densely populated cities like New York and Philadelphia represent two major cities targeted by gangs. Reports of children and family members gone missing, such as the case of Solomon Northup, were rather common as they had been targeted by enslavers, who would lure, potentially drug, to have tossed onto a boat heading towards the Upper and Lower South.¹²⁶ Berlin also explains other methods used by enslavers involved taking the abductees to a participating sheriff, who would green light the eventual sale of individuals by officiating paperwork in labeling abductees as “fugitive.”¹²⁷ Suffice to say, for this reason, safety in northern cities is rather precarious as safeguards against re-enslavement had to be taken.

The nature of freedom formerly enslaved Blacks found in Mexico is brought into examination. Sarah E. Cornell argues theoretical freedom in Mexico in light of the *carta de seguridad* (passport) legal conundrum situation. Mexican law required all male

¹²⁴ Eric Foner, *Give Me Liberty!: An American History* (New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2014), 398-400. See also Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 167.

¹²⁵ Ira Berlin, *Generations of Captivity: A History of African-American Slaves* (Cambridge: Belknap Press of Harvard university Press, 2003), 167.

¹²⁶ Prather and Monday, *From Slave to Statesman*, 10, 35. Reference also to Eric Foner, interview by Amy Goodman and Juan González, March 11, 2015. In the interview a discussion is made over the academy award-winning movie *12 Years a Slave*, directed by Steven McQueen (Beverly Hills, CA: Twentieth Century FOX, 2013), DVD, relative to the subject of kidnapping.

¹²⁷ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 167-168. See also Foner, *Give Me Liberty*, 403. Berlin points to a correlation between rise in slave prices in the South and reports of “abduction” in the North. In 1840, the price of a “prime field hand” was \$1,000. By 1860, the price rose to \$1,800, according to Foner. Berlin explains the kidnapping of freepersons became a business in response to demand in the South.

citizens and male foreigners to obtain a carta de seguridad, which in order to do so, necessitated providing proof of citizenship from native country or consulate. This creates a unique dilemma for enslaved Blacks running to Mexico, who in Texas and the antebellum South, had been considered as sub-human “property.” The gravity of this dilemma especially becomes more apparent when paired to what one other Texas historian, Alwyn Barr, notes, men comprised 90% of runaways escaping to Mexico.¹²⁸ For female runaways, law statute requiring a carta did not apply due to gender cultural conventions and customs of a patriarch society (much to their benefit).¹²⁹ For this reason, male runaways, particularly, had to attain a cultural citizenship by inserting selves into as many institutions of Mexico, specifically, their respective host border community. In Mexico, U.S. formerly enslaved Black men attained cultural citizenship via marriage, conversion to Catholicism, volunteering services in the military, or community involvement.¹³⁰ God parentage also represents an important tool used by runaways, where carta fines had been waived by intervention of adoptive patrons, who explained that the person facing potential charge was rather their “baptismal godson.”¹³¹

The capstone of this argument finalizes into conclusion the following points regarding theoretical freedom across the Río Grande River versus escape towards the Mason-Dixon Line. While Cornell argues Mexican law requiring a carta having made

¹²⁸ Barr, *Black Texans*, 30.

¹²⁹ Elizabeth R. Escobedo, *From Coveralls to Zoot Suits: The Lives of Mexican American Women on the World War II Home Front* (Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 19, 26, 107, 113. Male patronage society, in that females required chaperonage in social outings and it was left assumed any woman having a husband, father, or male guardian.

¹³⁰ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 368. See also Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis*, 12.

¹³¹ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 368.

freedom more theoretical, it is also to be argued intent behind the law was rather to guarantee the expulsion of Spaniards following Mexican independence, not runaways turned border community members.¹³² Though it is correct to caution Mexico's absence of slavery as “wholesale freedom,” it is also safe to say formerly enslaved Blacks experienced reciprocal relationships of equality amongst members of the border community, and had the protection of their Mexican family and friends “to appeal to the Mexican government.”¹³³ Lastly, unlike the U.S., the Mexican government did not cater to the demands of U.S. slaveholders. Whereas U.S. Congress succumbed to the pressures of slaveholders by passing the Fugitive Slave Act of 1850, which negated the purpose of the Mason-Dixon Line, the Mexican government maintained position in refusing to return runaways.¹³⁴ In fact, history shows Mexican local leaders, in learning of runaway(s) turned community member(s) captured by invading slave catchers, went so far as to chase after and if necessary, engage violent confrontations, to re-snatch those considered as family and friend.¹³⁵

The layout of subsequent chapters is as follows. Chapter II provides an analysis of societal constructs with the history of slavery in Texas as a borderlands territory, in order to reveal patterns over time regarding an enslaved person's envisage of freedom. Specifically, Chapter II points how an enslaved person's envisage of freedom is

¹³² Cornell, 362.

¹³³ Cornell, 368, 374.

¹³⁴ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 18, 34. See also Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 9-10.

¹³⁵ Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis*, 117. In 1851 outside the village of Guerrero, locals saw that a runaway who was living in their town had been seized by a Texan, who tied the runaway to his saddle. The mayor of Guerrero ordered the release of the runaway. Both the mayor and locals managed to re-snatch the runaway following a shootout, which ended with the Texan's death.

inseparable from the study component of geopolitics. Whereas this chapter centers on why Mexico, Chapter II explains how the idea of Mexico as a freedom land reached enslaved communities hundreds, if not thousands, of miles away. Chapter III focuses on explaining what circumstances were in place that led to individuals creating a Texas Underground Railroad and argues how solidarity factored the uniting of diverse groups. Additionally, Chapter III diversifies the focus in addressing case instances exemplifying the role of the Irish, English, free Blacks in the U.S., and Native American tribes such as the Seminole, the Comanche, the Creeks, and the Cherokee. Chapter IV highlights what various recourses were drawn by enslavers in Texas and focuses on the scale of impact felt by border communities such as Piedras Negras. Moreover, Chapter IV traces a key change in Mexico's attitude towards slavery, in arguing the case whereas of 1857, resistance to slavery became a source of national pride in Mexico. Lastly, Chapter V marks a return to a synthesis over the collection of research that has been found thus far. Concluding this thesis is an exposition of evidence highlighting the newfound realities of freedom formerly enslaved Black men and women experienced in Mexico.

CHAPTER II

Geopolitics, Migration, and the Nature of Slavery: A Comparative Analysis of Societal Constructs between Spanish, Mexican, and U.S. Rule over Texas

During the heart of winter, 1819, a trio of runaway slaves “stole” away two horses and a mule under the cover of night. Upon approaching the Sabine River, which marked the international border between New Spain and the U.S., each of the three sitting atop their hooved mode of escape, though compelled forwards with urgency heightened by need to escape undetected, maintained steadiness as they descended the ice-crusting muddy banks.¹³⁶ Wading through the water towards the other side, the three runaways identified as Marian (recorded as Martin), Richard (recorded as Ricardo Moran), and Fivi sought to inquire the intervention of Spanish authorities in concern to their conditions in enslavement. Soon after stepping afoot onto Spanish soil, the three soon encountered a detachment of Spanish soldiers and willfully surrendered in the hopes of claiming political asylum. Escorted by Spanish soldiers, the trio’s trek (to current knowledge) concludes at Monterrey, Nuevo León, where Spanish officials temporarily housed for interrogation purposes. Via an interpreter, officials questioned all three individuals in addition to permitting each to create a defense of their actions. According to the exchanges, which was recorded by a clerk to transcribe as part of investigation protocol,

¹³⁶ Joseph Jones, *Quarantine and Sanitary Operations of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana, During 1880, 1881, 1882, and 1883* (Baton Rouge, 1884), CXLII-CXLVII. Jones is a M.D. and President of the Board of Health of the State of Louisiana. Book printed by Leon Jastremski, State Printer. Reconstruction of story in part incorporates the use of historical imagination based on weather phenomenon observations documented, as part of the report was an outbreak of yellow fever in New Orleans, 1819, which did not disappear until December at the return of frigid temperatures. Yellow fever epidemic outbreak according to the estimations drawn by the First Quarantine and Board of Health was due to “heat, humidity, and local causes.” After claiming upwards of 3,000 lives, disease, which had begun spreading as of May 7, prolonged, only “terminating in December.” According to one resident, Mr. Peter Maspero, who was a “maker of thermometers,” weather patterns in Louisiana have exhibited “extremely mild temperature of the summer climate” followed with “much greater severity of the cold of winter.” In the case of 1821 on December 23, where temperatures recorded “stood” no higher than 20 degrees Fahrenheit and “ice one inch thick.”

what compelled the individuals to petition the help of Spanish authorities consists of the abuse each suffered and the longing for freedom. To best summarize the purpose of their escape is what one of the individuals reiterated to the officials: each had experienced “very bad treatment” from their enslaver and sought “protection in the domains of Spain.”¹³⁷ As Ricardo forwardly expressed, his trek, like others in the group, two of whom having come from as far as the Carolina States, was made “*que con el objeto de su libertad entendiendo que en pasando la linea quedaria libre* (translation: that with the object of his liberty with the understanding that in passing the line he would be free).”¹³⁸

This chapter interweaves a critical analysis of societal constructs with the history of slavery in Texas in light of the unifying theme of transnational migration. Within the scope of this theme, this chapter underscores how an enslaved person’s envisage of liberty is inseparable from the study component of geopolitics. The topic of migration entails the identification of push and pull factors. As featured throughout this chapter, the identification of push and pull factors is paired with a critical examination on the nature of slavery in terms of how slavery operated in Texas under Spanish rule (Spanish Texas defined as the far northern frontier of New Spain, 1790-1821), Mexican rule (1821-1835), and Anglo rule (Texas Republic, 1836-1845). This comparative analysis encompasses an explanation on the significance of Texas annexation as an event (1846)

¹³⁷ “Declaracion del Negro Esclavo Martin,” April 24, 1820; “Declarar del Negro Esclavo Ricardo Moran,” April 25, 1820; “Declaracion de la Negra Esclava, Fivi,” April 25, 1820. Ramsdell Transcripts of Documents in Mexican Archives Concerning Negroes. Copy 3, Volume/Box 2Q238 in Negro Slaves in Spanish America, 156-1820, at the Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Documents origin referenced Provincias Internas, volume 187, expediente 9, Archivo General de la Nación, Mexico City, Mexico. See also Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 1-2, 282. Torget also assessed statements recorded by the runaways upon investigation by Spanish authorities.

¹³⁸ “Declarar del Negro Esclavo Ricardo Moran,” April 25, 1820, Ramsdell Transcripts of Documents in Mexican Archives Concerning Negroes, Box 2Q238, in Negro Slaves in Spanish America, 1563-1820, Briscoe Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin. Statement is a direct quote from Ricardo.

and in respect to consequences related to the ideological development of Mexico as safe harbor in historical memory. Whereas the historiography constructs the argument on *why* Mexico is a safer alternative than escape to U.S. northern Free states (by having examined various points addressed by historians), this chapter looks at *how* the idea of Mexico transcended across Texas borders. Specifically, this chapter calls attention to what Mexico began to symbolize and indeed had meant to both free and enslaved Blacks in and outside the state of Texas from 1846 to 1861. Importantly, a comparative analysis of slavery reveals that slave practices operated very differently and results in drastic differences regarding master-slave relations as well as in relations between free and enslaved persons. This comparative analysis approach highlights the development and/or changes of social constructs in any society between free and enslaved persons over time, based on the statutory law and de facto rule shaping every aspect of relations between master and slave. The utilization of this approach aims to deepen one's level of understanding concerning the question as to what could compel any person to risk their life for the idea of freedom. Furthermore, provided how such differences in slavery did exist, this approach will prove useful in tracing the idea of Mexico with freedom amongst enslaved communities in and outside Texas.

The institution of slavery operated during eighteenth-century colonial Texas under the government of New Spain. However, since that of the sixteenth-century humanitarian efforts of Bartolomé de las Casas, attentions over the treatment of indigenous groups, later African-descent persons imported to the Americas, had been

initiated.¹³⁹ Consequently, stark differences evolve relative to the Spaniards' collective stance on slavery as opposed to people of white skin color from the New England colonies, later the United States of America.¹⁴⁰ Differentiating from New England colonists the Spanish were embracing of cultural diversity to extents as the government of New Spain recognizing the formulation of an Afro-Mestizo population. Greater still, is how the Spanish government maintained the position of permitting a level of acceptance in enabling the process of cultural syncretism between African and Spanish. According to the 1792 civil census summary over the province of Texas, enslaved Blacks numbered at 40 out of a population of 2,961, meanwhile listing 415 mulattoes and another 367 categorized as "other." Though this census is reflective of "the ethnic ambiguity of many mixed-blood members" of colonial Spanish Texas, it is, however, an indicator that Spanish colonists in the Texas province embraced diversity.¹⁴¹

Historian Alwyn Barr underscores two critical points in the case study of slavery in Spanish Texas. Firstly, both the Catholic Church and state promoted the manumission of enslaved Blacks. Secondly, intermarriage between Spanish, African, and Native

¹³⁹ Reference made to previous written work done in a paper I titled, "Race Relations, Runaway Slaves, and the Reaching Beyond the Borderlands: Texas Underground Railroad, 1790-1861." Paper published in the *Journal of South Texas* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2017). See page 157.

¹⁴⁰ Thomas Benjamin, "A Time of Reconquest: History, the Maya Revival, and the Zapatista Rebellion in Chiapas." *The American Historical Review* 105, no. 2 (2000): 417-42.

¹⁴¹ Jesús F. de la Teja, "BLACKS IN COLONIAL SPANISH TEXAS," *Handbook of Texas Online*. Accessed March 03, 2020. Census excludes military personnel. Detected is a slight variation in numbers when de la Teja's study pairs with historian Alwyn Barr's, who states rather "34 Negroes and 414 mulattoes in a total population of 2,992." See *Black Texans: A History of African Americans in Texas, 1528-1995*, page 3. Nonetheless, research aligns with one statement from *The History of Texas* textbook (West Sussex, UK: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 2014) that was compiled by Robert A. Calvert, Arnoldo De León, and Gregg Cantrell. Statement reads that in the latter-end of the eighteenth century, the number of enslaved Blacks "barely exceeded fifty, the majority of which resided in East Texas," and many of whom found "adopting Spanish surnames and learning the Spanish language" (on page 37). Regardless of slight variation, number of enslaved Blacks did not exceed far over fifty.

Americans frequented enough times as to prove an ordinary occurrence, and in so doing, having “virtually eliminated the concept of Negroes as a separate ethnic group” by the end of the eighteenth century.¹⁴² Indicative of the frequent occurrence of intermarriage, at least 75% of manumitted children were of “mixed racial origins.”¹⁴³ In comparison to the densely populated interiors of New Spain, the remote province of East Texas presented a unique situation relative to leniency in the enforcement of slave codes. While the institution of slavery did extend its reach into the province of East Texas, let it be said that any enforcements of were rather loose provided how demands of frontier living served to strengthen bonds between black and brown. In Spanish Texas, Spanish frontiersmen esteemed enslaved persons more as partners than subordinates, and it is more plausibly Spanish frontiersmen and Africans labored side by side as an integrated workforce. According to one research, occupations that African-descent persons filled include but it is not limited to working as “farmers, tailors, masons, blacksmiths, carpenters, field hands, and day laborers.”¹⁴⁴

Illustrative of a symbiotic relationship, Spanish officials paved a legal pathway for enslaved persons to attain freedom in return for their loyalty as Spanish subjects. Adding to Barr’s case study of slavery in Texas is Ira Berlin’s study on slave manumission in Spanish society. Though Berlin compares the strictures on self-emancipation between French Louisiana, Spanish Louisiana, and American Louisiana,

¹⁴² Barr, *Black Texans*, 5.

¹⁴³ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 94.

¹⁴⁴ De la Teja, “BLACKS IN COLONIAL SPANISH TEXAS,” *Handbook of Texas Online*.

his study is applicable to Spanish Texas as Spanish Louisiana, nonetheless, focuses on Spanish society.

According to Berlin, the presence and growth of a free colored population was *encouraged* by Spanish officials out of good faith that when and where should need arise for militiamen, the free colored population would provide a “ready supply.”¹⁴⁵ Unlike the French *Code Noir*, which concentrated power to inaugurate “slave freedom” into the hands of enslavers, the Spanish *Siete Partidas* and the *coartación* maintains the opposite. In Spanish society, the power “to initiate...emancipation” rests on the enslaved person in terms of negotiating conditions for attaining freedom.¹⁴⁶ Demographically speaking, two-thirds of freed persons comprise of women and children, as slaveholders “freed their slave wives, and the children they bore, for reasons of love and affection.”¹⁴⁷ Concerning situations where the enslaver denies negotiating power to the enslaved person, whether male or female, the enslaved person may petition the governor’s court. In such cases, the court would issue a *carta de libertad* (freedom letter) in addition to holding the enslaver liable for setting a fixed price for the enslaved person to pay. Failure on part of the enslaver to stipulate a price may result their required appearance before a judicial tribunal, who in lieu of the enslaver would settle a price.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁵ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 93.

¹⁴⁶ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 94. Regarding the French *Code Noir* and restrictions on slave manumission, see also Hans W. Baade, “Law of Slavery in Spanish Luisiana, 1769-1803,” in Edward F. Haas, ed., *Louisiana’s Legal Heritage* (New Orleans, 1983), 49-50, 60.

¹⁴⁷ Berlin, 94.

¹⁴⁸ Berlin, 94. See also Hans W. Baade, “Law of Slavery in Spanish Luisiana, 1769-1803,” in Edward F. Haas, ed., *Louisiana’s Legal Heritage* (New Orleans, 1983), 48-63, 63, 70, and Leslie B. Rout Jr., *The African Experience in Spanish America, 1502 to the Present Day* (Cambridge, UK, 1976), 87-93.

Lastly, Berlin's highlighting of legal procedures as defined in Spanish society for manumitting slaves most starkly contrasts with ideals upheld by Anglo American enslavers. Whereas Spanish authorities valued the free colored population for their loyalty, Anglo American enslavers feared the potentiality of slave revolts should at moment any enslaved individual began to entertain or become acquainted to ideas of freedom. Under American jurisdiction, enslaved persons were to know a life only in that of bondage and to see their status (or perhaps more correctly phrased, their *existence*) through the limelight of a paternalistic framework slaveholders constructed, as matter of suasion (on part of the enslaver) to get the enslaved man or woman into believing their lot was good.

What is requiring of attention in regard to societal constructs between Spanish Texas and how slavery operated under Anglo American rule, boils down to this one very critical point. The concept of equality in Spanish Texas was fluid, as characterized by social class mobility where an enslaved person's socioeconomic status stood reflective of contribution to the survival of their community. Under Anglo rule, however, the concept of equality (as later addressed) was color inscribed, manipulated by the stratagem of paternalism, and fixed.

It is through paying microscopic attention towards the setting of which the 1819 Spanish-runaway encounter occurred in, that this incident, though isolated it might seem, rather begins to shed light upon large-scale processes and patterns of continuity. Firstly, as illuminative of large-scale processes is the causal relationship between a change in geopolitics and the re-conceptualization of the line of liberty on part of enslaved persons. The history of Spanish Florida and the Treaty of 1819 between the U.S. and Spain

provides the needed context to explain. During the U.S. presidency of Andrew Jackson, Spanish Florida posed a problem for enslavers due to a long history involving Spanish Florida as a safe haven for runaways. As early as 1739, the Seminole tribe, much to the dismay of Anglo enslavers, facilitated the escape of runaways by escorting those seeking the protection of Spanish authorities. Tensions between U.S. enslavers and Seminole tribesmen percolated but did not boil into war until that of 1819, when the U.S. led a hostile takeover of Spanish Florida.¹⁴⁹ Following the U.S. acquisition of Spanish Florida, the linkage of Spanish Florida with freedom largely ceased (since New Spain no longer lay claim to Florida). What did occur, however, is the linkage of freedom with crossing the newly hammered out political border of the Sabine River, since the U.S. recognized Spanish sovereignty over Texas. Whether persons in captivity had conceptualized their own line of liberty as Spanish Florida or reoriented the idea of freedom towards Spanish Texas, in either case, consistent is the equation of “protection” with “Spanish domains.” This consistency is indeed the matter of historical importance exhibited by the actions of Marian/Martin, Richard/Ricardo, and Fivi. Enslaved persons plead for the assistance and intervention of Spanish authorities repeatedly, in hopes of starting anew their lives in a community characterized as culturally embracive.

Part of deconstructing the historical importance within the 1819 migratory route and the Spanish investigation of Marian/Martin, Richard/Ricardo, and Fivi, is to identify outside forces as proving impactful in altering for better or worse the everyday world of

¹⁴⁹ Aaron Hyams, “Untitled,” (lecture section over Native Americans, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas, October 6, 2016). Andrew Jackson’s hostile Native American policy (exemplifying a disregard to the Seminole tribe nation) combined with American expansionism is what led Americans to invade Spanish Florida, who justified their actions as recovering the loss of slave property. Moreover, historian Porter explains that there was an “influx of slaves who escaped from Georgia” and who assisted the Spanish by providing services at garrisons such as the one at St. Augustine, through 1813. See Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 9.

enslaved persons. The framework of push and pull factors needs applying in order to truly appreciate the migratory route and broaden the scope of this event into that of an interdisciplinary and U.S.-Spain bi-national study. According to historian Torget, the 1790s invention of the cotton gin not alone revolutionized the cotton industry, but it also factored the capitalistic nature of slavery within the Gulf Coast region. During the 1810s, hundreds of thousands of U.S. farmers migrated to the Gulf Coast (U.S. states of Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama) to raise cotton, as it became a highly profitable enterprise with each pound of cotton scoring thirty cents at market price. As part of the migration event, U.S. farmers transplanted tens of thousands of enslaved persons to serve as the labor force. Following the economic boom in cotton sales is the establishment of a new regime that enslaved plantation workers came face-to-face to. Provided how the Gulf Coast region entails labor-intensive work such as swamp draining, for instance, a correlation emerges between rising need to extract “large drafts of labor” and use of “extraordinarily coercive measures” by enslavers.¹⁵⁰ Consequently, a new work regime begins to take form into the shape of pure exploitation. Enslaved persons labored from “dawn...until the approach of night,” with only a two-hour break, and began to find increasingly less time to cultivate their gardens or hunt small game that would have otherwise provided a critical supplemental nutrition.¹⁵¹ Evidently, the institution of slavery throughout the U.S. antebellum South, under Anglo Americans, evolves into a form of capitalism designed to sustain an agricultural society. The estimated forty million pounds

¹⁵⁰ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 149.

¹⁵¹ Berlin, *Generations of Captivity*, 150.

that cotton-growing plantations and farms yielded annually is a statistic basing on the exploitative use of slave labor by Anglo American enslavers.¹⁵²

Whereas in Spanish Texas an enslaved person was valued for their contribution towards the survival of the community, in the U.S., Anglo American slaveholders viewed those enslaved as property owned, and subject to being traded, gifted, or disposed.

Auction squares, slave markets, and printed announcements about sales exemplifies the strategical use of psychological trauma mechanized to destroy, refashion, and stamp the identity of the human individual towards that equivalent to livestock. At slave markets from that of Galveston, Texas, to markets across the U.S. Deep South, slave prices ranged from sale of \$1 raffle ticket drawings to \$1,800.¹⁵³ Regarding the sale of slaves, some auctioneers opted for the “scramble method,” according to historian Reyes.¹⁵⁴ In the scramble method, the auctioneer posts numerous advertisement signs in announcing time and location throughout the local community. Preparatory to the official sale event hour, the auctioneer would situate the slaves in an enclosed pen and assign a price tag for each to wear. At the appointed time of sale, slave purchase claims occur on a first-come-first-serve basis. During the decision-making process on part of the purchaser, it was not necessarily an uncommon practice for a prospective buyer to assess a female by poking her sides to estimate the number of babies the female can hold, or by cupping the breasts. A question needing to be asked is whether there were any sexual overtones on females in

¹⁵² Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 35-36, 43, 65. In 1806, an estimate of some 80 million pounds of cotton picked based on the blood and sweat of slave labor. The U.S. Gulf Coast arises as the “world’s leading cotton producer” by 1820.

¹⁵³ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 409.

¹⁵⁴ Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, TX, November 10, 2016).

auction? Arguably, this assessment was more about procreation and not necessarily about sex. The capitalistic nature of American slavery effectuated in the concept of a “breeding woman” more “profitable” for enslavers.¹⁵⁵ Accordingly, enslavers were encouraged to promote reproduction amongst enslaved females in efforts of stretching every dollar of purchase. According to the *CJ Western Plantation Manual*, enslavers could see anywhere from 6% to 8% rise in profits if an enslaved woman produced six or more babies.¹⁵⁶

It is this capitalistic framework, one having defined enslaved persons as a form of currency, which gave way and licensed many enslavers to exact demands without experiencing a crisis of conscience. Abuse that enslaved men and women suffered from consists of that (though not limited to) having to live in deplorable housing, to work “sun-up to sun-down” on an unsustainable high-fat low-protein diet, and to submit to cruel forms of punishment (potentially resulting in bodily dismemberment).¹⁵⁷ Enslavers typically spent no more than \$20 per year regarding food supply for plantation slaves, and no more than typically \$10 to clothe all enslaved persons.¹⁵⁸ Additionally, enslaved

¹⁵⁵ Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning*, 136. Thomas Jefferson explained to his friend, “I consider a woman who brings a child every two years as more profitable than the best man on the farm.” Kendi cites Thomas Jefferson, “To John W. Eppes, June 30, 1820,” in *Thomas Jefferson’s Farm Book: With Commentary and Relevant Extracts from Other Writings*, ed. Edwin Morris Betts (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1953), 46.

¹⁵⁶ Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, TX, November 10, 2016).

¹⁵⁷ Reference to Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, Texas, October 12, 2016). *CJ Western’s Plantation Manuel* was published for “enlightening” the master how to increase production from slaves (encouraging 6-8% profit if 6 or more babies born) and furthers the dehumanization of the slave in treating as an animal. Honor code for slaveholders based on having to feed their slaves without yet obligation to nutritional value. Refer also to Prather and Monday, and Rather, *From Slave to Statesman*, 5. Slave quarters were constructed at lowest cost possible and the minimum expense of the planter. This denotes how slaves were rather treated as mere animals. Enslaved Blacks improvised out of necessity to survive their living conditions. Improvisations include placing mud within cracks in the wall to help insulate heat during the winter, and later removing in springtime for facilitating a cool breeze.

¹⁵⁸ Barr, *Black Texans*, 18-19. At each spring and fall, each enslaved Black may receive 2 shirts, 2 pants, hat and/or coat.

persons typically maxed out on their medical care coverage after reaching an \$8 limit.¹⁵⁹ Essentially, the enslaved person must follow any and every order directed by the enslaver without resistance or complaint, lest he/she falls liable to more cruel forms of punishment. It is within this context that the “very bad treatment” claimed by Marian/Martin, when speaking to Spanish officials, constitutes a push factor to run from Louisiana towards the Sabine River.¹⁶⁰

Various scholars such as Sean Kelley, assert flight to New Spain, particularly the Texas area, was “prompted by the sparseness of settlement” as opposed to faith in the benevolence of the Spanish government.¹⁶¹ This assertion, while perhaps bearing some truth given how Spanish Texas was sparsely populated, is not to go entirely unchallenged either. According to historian Cornell, New Spain had enforced a sanctuary policy up to the year of 1790, which guaranteed to persons fleeing captivity that upon Spanish soil such persons were entitled to political asylum. While in 1790 this policy ended due to the U.S. pressuring New Spain to extradite runaways, this did not, however, necessarily mean that by *practice* the act of granting sanctuary ended.¹⁶² As Cornell explains, so long as an enslaved person seeking sanctuary could convince government officials the immorality of slavery, and else wise argue how the plight of their situation demands intervention, the possibility remained that sanctuary could be won. Indeed, as Kelley admits, in the time lapse from 1790 to years preceding the formalization of the 1819

¹⁵⁹ Barr, *Black Texans*, 19-21.

¹⁶⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 1.

¹⁶¹ Kelley, “Mexico in His Head,” 712.

¹⁶² Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 356.

border (relating to Texas), U.S. diplomats continued to bitterly complain to “Spanish officials” over how slaves from the Mississippi Valley were “escaping to region west of Sabine River.”¹⁶³

On approaching the study of Texas under Mexican rule and the Texas Republic, what is of historical importance is not the pointing out of an enslaved population in Texas within either period. Rather, the historical importance lies in distinguishing the seminal role slavery had in the peopling of Texas by the Mexican national government, and how Anglo American immigrants, then in turn, seized upon Mexico’s tolerance of slavery by establishing the Texas Republic as a nation bent on the enshrinement of slavery. In this purview, what becomes clear is how the enslaved population has always been at the center and a focal point between two polarized envisages of Texas and its future, namely between the Mexican government and Anglo American immigrants. Following independence from Spain in 1821, the issue having beset Mexico, concerning the province of Texas, was the same issue at hand from the Spanish government: Texas as a largely underdeveloped and under-populated region.¹⁶⁴ Mexico’s Colonization Laws (taking into effect as of 1822) were not set into motion necessarily by gleeful choice but

¹⁶³ Kelley, “Mexico in His Head,” 712.

¹⁶⁴ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 24. Mexico inherited consequences stemming from a centuries-long decision of choosing to ignore the region. It was upon the discovery of a French colony established by Robert Cavalier de la Salle, which Texas became a public relations project whereby New Spain encouraged society members to move northward to the frontiers. Yet, this mistake in having neglected to create developments within the frontier able to match developments established within the interior regions, proved it to be a hard sale and pricey demand for any family to willfully uproot selves from every privileged comforts of home. Because there were no shipping ports, no developed roads, it is as historian Torget explains, only “few settlers...proved willing...for the insecurities of this far-flung frontier.”

rather the option of last resort Mexico turned to, in hopes to remedy the situation of Tejanos living in a state of “abject poverty.”¹⁶⁵

Accordingly, Mexico presumed opening the doors to Anglo settlers would benefit the Tejano population by introducing new economic opportunities and revitalize the life of settlements therein. *Ideally*, colonization would prove mutually beneficial between stabilizing communities for Tejanos and offering Anglos, primarily from the Upper and Lower South of the U.S., to develop the land into an agricultural powerhouse. All the while, Mexico would achieve its objective to populate Texas, as best expressed in the aphorism: “to people is to govern.”¹⁶⁶ In accordance to terms specified by the Mexican government on colonization, a farmer may receive one labor of land (177 acres), and for persons seeking to raise livestock, each receiving one league of land (4, 428 acres).¹⁶⁷ Comparing to the charge price of \$1.25 per acre in the U.S., Mexico charged only 12.5 cents per acre.¹⁶⁸ *Empresarios* such as Stephen F. Austin (persons appointed by the Mexican government to establish a colony in Texas, or land agent), however, did not shy from taking any liberty as an empresario to reset the terms of available land grants by inconspicuously mandating slave ownership. For instance, rather than 177 acres Austin projected the availability of 1,360 acres for a farmer, provided the farmer was “a married

¹⁶⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 19, 31, 36, 40-41. Option to colonize Texas with Anglo settlers decided after U.S. sponsored the Gutierrez-Magee campaign as an indirect attempt to claim Texas from New Spain in the interest of land. Level of infuriation from viceroy of New Spain results army of over 1,800 men sent to crush rebel force. While successful, Tejanos who did remain in Texas were left defenseless, subject to Native American raids, and in the case of San Antonio, relying on men selected to go on buffalo hunts or else families to “perish to misery” due to starvation.

¹⁶⁶ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 58, 60. See also Neil Foley, *The White Scourge: Mexicans, Blacks, and Poor Whites in Texas Cotton Culture* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1999), 18.

¹⁶⁷ Foley, *White Scourge*, 18.

¹⁶⁸ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 64.

man with two children and ten slaves.”¹⁶⁹ This enticement of land coupled with the conniving wholesale encouragement to bring “slaves” by empresarios, results in the peopling of Texas by an overwhelmingly certain kind of people: Anglo American southern enslavers.

While Mexico's decision to welcome Anglo settlers weighed beneficial in theory, in actuality, this decision led to a demographical change that possessed the power to change the culture and politics of Texas. As of the early 1820s, the enslaved population of Mexico approximated 8,000 out of a population totaling more than 6,000,000. Statistically speaking (if to compute the numbers), only one out of every 750 people were enslaved in Mexico as of the early 1820s. Yet, if to examine and compare numbers with the 1825 census report of Austin’s colony, enslaved persons comprised one out of every four people.¹⁷⁰ Though the assessment of Austin’s colony is purely a microscopic analysis, what this analysis achieves to translate is how Anglo Americans in Texas wholly embraced slavery on such a level as “dwarfing Spanish predecessors.”¹⁷¹ General Manuel de Mier y Terán's visit to Texas resulted in his first-hand discovery of de facto segregation (Mexican communities segregated from Anglo communities), when

¹⁶⁹ *Richmond Enquirer*, November 20, 1821. See also *Washington Gazette*, November 15, 1821. *Richmond Enquirer* proslavery newspaper in Virginia, the latter from Washington, D.C. Refer also to Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 63.

¹⁷⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 71, 85. For further inquiry on statistical data related to the population of Blacks in Mexico, refer to Aguirre Beltrán Gonzalo. Torget explains that Gonzalo reported the estimates that were drawn by Fernando Navarro y Noriega on the African population during the nineteenth century as approximating 10,000 in 1810. Interestingly, Gonzalo appears to imply Mexico did not have any real or whole-blooded “Africanos” (0.1% of population), excepting those arriving to New Spain to escape slavery. Refer to Gonzalo, *La Población Negra en México, 1519-1810: Estudio Ethnohistórico* (Mexico: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1972), 234-235. Public access to parts of the book accredited to the Escuela Nacional de Antropología e Historia at the I.N.A.H. Library, with digital services provided by PDFSLIDE.TIPS. Book referral number is A009372.

¹⁷¹ Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis*, 13.

producing a fact-find report on the state of conditions in Texas in 1828. The stark difference between the 1:750 and 1:4 enslaved to free ratios is what grievously alarmed Terán, as he witnessed a widening cultural chasm between those believing in the eventual abolition of slavery (primarily Mexicans south of the Río Grande River) and those equating prosperity with the constitutional protection of slavery (Anglos and a handful of Tejanos in Texas).¹⁷² Terán feared the loss of Texas should this widening of a cultural chasm continue on course without intervention made by Mexico's central government to stop. Largely ignored by the government when urging necessity to temporarily cease and reform Anglo American immigration policy, a disheartened Terán, prior to taking his life by the sword, lastly remarked: “What will become of Texas? Whatever God wills.”¹⁷³

Relative to the Texas Revolution, while a number of historians minimize the role of slavery by focusing solely on the cultural clash argument (which states Anglo Americans were simply “too different”), if to look at the historical narrative drawn from Mexico’s side, slavery plays a key role.¹⁷⁴ When having detected any inkling of emancipation legislation underway, Anglo enslavers avidly called for action on part of empresarios to protect slaveholding practices in Texas. Stephen F. Austin and empresario-aspiring men like Peter Ellis Bean, in response to demands for action, devised schemes utilizing semantics to counteract Mexico's 1823 course of legislature regarding

¹⁷² Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 137-140. For further inquiry refer to *Manuel de Mier y Terán, Texas by Terán: The Diary Kept by General Manuel de Mier y Terán on His 1828 Inspection of Texas*. Book edited by Jack Jackson and translated by John Wheat. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). See page 56. In his journal, Terán remarked how Anglo Americans wholly believed that without slave labor “their settlement cannot prosper.”

¹⁷³ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 156-157.

¹⁷⁴ Randolph B. Campbell, *An Empire for Slavery: The Peculiar Institution in Texas: 1821-1865*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1989), 48-49. Argument presented by Randolph reinforces standpoint written by Barker, 1924. See also Eugene C. Barker, “The Influence of Slavery in the Colonization of Texas,” *Mississippi Valley Historical Review II* (June 1924): 3-36.

the emancipation of enslaved children under the age of fourteen. In 1826, for example, to circumvent an anti-slavery movement within the Saltillo and Coahuila-Texas state legislatures, the term use of “slave” was what Bean had rephrased as “indentured servants.”¹⁷⁵ By 1828, Austin managed to create a legal loophole for incoming American enslavers by redefining chattel slavery as debt peonage to Mexican legislatures. This “redefining” was instrumented through a contract, wherein establishing a fixed price in accordance to the slave’s net worth, the contract pledged the amount of \$20 in earned wages per year. Not disclosed to the signee, however, the contract subscribed the right of the contractor to deduct from the said earned wages the cost of clothing, housing, and food. Furthermore, any children born during the time of the signee’s “servitude” became slave property, and could not earn wages until reaching the age of their eighteenth or twenty-fifth birth day. The described is in essence, slavery by another name.¹⁷⁶

The aforementioned reveals the playout of drama caused by the existence of polarized visions, and how the question concerning the future of those enslaved in Texas sits at the center between two wills pulling opposite ways. Mexico’s tolerance of slavery opened the floodgate of Anglo American immigrants. As Texas lands and climate proved ideal for growing cotton, increasingly becoming clearer to see is the earliest beginnings of Anglo enslavers reframing Texas as a political project and cotton-growing enterprise founded upon the legal protection of slave labor. In his address to colonists in 1824, Austin declared “nothing but...the exportation of cotton to Europe, can enrich the inhabitants,” and via the inseparable tie between cotton cultivation and slave labor,

¹⁷⁵ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 97-98. In 1823, Mexico prohibits foreign slave trade and legislates the emancipation of slave children under the age of fourteen.

¹⁷⁶ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 133.

colonists will find deliverance from poverty.¹⁷⁷ As reliance upon slave labor became a way of life for Anglo American immigrants in Texas, the 1835 revolutionary cry, which had proclaimed war in the name of federalism, becomes increasingly clearer how it served rather as the pretext for securing slavery.

To begin understanding the role of the Texas Republic in relation to the emergence of a southbound underground railroad, one must see the creation of the Texas Republic as a ploy by enslavers whose cry for independence was a stratagem spurred by resistance to abolitionists. The Republic of Texas was not merely a passive proslavery political entity ready to sit contently on its claim to lands that had been colonized by the Anglo American populace during Texas under Mexican rule. Rather, the Texas Republic was a racist and an imperial slaveholding regime. Preceding the concept of U.S. “manifest destiny,” Texas Republic diplomats and law enforcement agents stood ready as early as 1837 to participate in the aggressive taking of lands, which would be done in the name of spreading the virtues of slavery. The said is as indicated by historian Torget, who points to comments stated by Texas Republic diplomat James Pinckney Henderson. In 1837, Henderson admitted to the British foreign secretary the founding of the Republic of Texas had represented one step forward in “extending the Anglo Saxon Blood, Laws and Influence in this South Western Region of the Western World,” by removing Mexicans deemed “weak, ignorant, and degraded.”¹⁷⁸ The use of “extending” and “removing” implied the expansion of slavery, which entailed expelling antislavery Mexicans.

¹⁷⁷ Foley, *The White Scourge*, 17.

¹⁷⁸ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 191.

Beginning in the April of 1836, the Texas Republic signaled the birth of a new political economy centered on slaves legislatively defined as capital. Notably, the Texas Republic's orient of prioritization on the protection of slavery necessitated a shift in the use of concise language for constitutional writing on the issue of slavery. In the U.S. Constitution, the term use of "slave" or "slavery" does not exist in mention until the Thirteenth Amendment. Prior to the Thirteenth Amendment, U.S. constitutional framers vaguely referred those in enslavement as "all other Persons," as specified by the three-fifths clause in Article 1, Section 2.¹⁷⁹ Evident in the case of the Texas Republic, however, constitutional framers explicitly penned "slaves" and "slavery." Accordingly, the 1836 Republic of Texas Constitution exhibits a shift from ambiguous language that implies slaves as sub-human (or an enslaved person equating three-fifths of a white person) to the use of explicitness in defining those enslaved as essential "property."

This change in conciseness is due in part to two factors. When examining the moral psychology behind Texas Republic legislation, particularly the legitimatization of "differential racial entitlements," the ideological baggage Anglo Americans had brought into Texas constitutes a significant factor.¹⁸⁰ For instance, John Locke, who drafted the pro-slavery *Fundamental Constitution of the Carolinas*, advised how one "should feel nothing at all of others' misfortune."¹⁸¹ Intellectuals like Swedish thinker Carl Linnaeus, who categorized humanity into a racial hierarchy, relegated peoples who were not

¹⁷⁹ Susan L. Boyd, "A Look into the Constitutional Understanding of Slavery," *Res Publica* 6, no.1 (April 1995). See also, US Constitution, art. 1, sec. 2.

¹⁸⁰ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 40.

¹⁸¹ Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning*, 49. Locke expressed quote in 1670. See also Ann Talbot, *"The Great Ocean of Knowledge": The Influence of Travel Literature on the Work of John Locke* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 3-4.

European, American, or Asian “to the bottom,” and describing such groups as “lazy...covered by grease [and] Ruled by caprice.”¹⁸² Hierarchy making, specific to U.S. history, involved the use of pseudo-scientific reasoning that led to people of color having become labeled as sub-human. From this perspective, evident is the Republic of Texas a public consumer of the pseudo-scientific reasoning aired by U.S. intellectuals (in debating whether Africans could be “civilized” as a race classified somewhere between the lowest rank of human and primate species). Secondly, because of the capitalistic nature of slavery in Texas and the imperial vision of the Texas Republic to expand, Texas constitutional framers inevitably stipulated the securement of slave labor by which the economy fundamentally depended on. Relative to the categorization of people, Texas Republic diplomats endeavored to capitalize ideas of eighteenth-century Enlightenment thinkers by wielding the Republic in the service of making enslavement a political project, or colloquially a “slaveholder’s project.”¹⁸³

The phrase “slaveholder’s project” is not simply descriptive but herein re-conceptualized as a noun identifying the Texas Republic as a political entity, whose political agendas is to be examined in analytical terms. Firstly, in explaining why the character of revolt underwent a complete metamorphosis when after Texas claimed independence, Texas independence centered on the objective to secure slave property by Anglos for Anglos. Secondly, the Texas Republic constitution focused on establishing slave labor as the foundation and benchmark for (white) progress. Consequently, not only

¹⁸² Francis D. Adams and Barry Sanders, *Alienable Rights: The Exclusion of African Americans in a White Man’s Land, 1619-2000* (New York: Harper Collins, 2003), 39-40. See also Kendi, *Stamped from the Beginning*, 82. The categorization of people into four groups was written in the 1735 *Systema Natural*.

¹⁸³ Kendi, *Stamped From the Beginning*, 82.

did the 1836 Texas Republic Constitution resemble a most blatant manifestation of U.S.-based racist discourses, but it formed its own “system of domination by which whites rule over nonwhites.”¹⁸⁴ This system of domination is most evidential in Section 9 under *General Provisions*, which declared all persons of color previously enslaved to remain in such status, and “shall be the bona fide property.” Moreover, congress had no “power to emancipate,” thereby indicating the Republic of Texas having placed enslaver rights above congressional powers.¹⁸⁵ Lastly, the Texas Republic’s claim to the Río Grande River instead of the Nueces River exemplifies not alone an arbitrary claim, but imperialism on part of Texas Republic diplomats and enslavers. Within this three-point analysis framework, what becomes clearer for teasing out are details related to the process of how ethnic relations turned racial as Anglo Texans sought to achieve and secure their political goals: the enshrinement of slavery.

Importantly, in 1836, a first spike in the number of runaways to Mexico occurred in connection to the aftermath of the Texas Revolution. The arrival of Santa Anna and Mexican forces into Texas irreversibly undermined the stability of master-slave relations, especially as the idea of freedom became planted in the mindset of those in bondage. As historian Barr further indicates, any correspondence between Mexicans and enslaved individuals posed a danger to the stability of white-black slave relations since “outside contacts” altered the enslaved person’s “image of life’s possibilities.”¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁴ Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 1.

¹⁸⁵ “Constitution of Republic of Texas” in *Laws of the Republic of Texas, in Two Volumes* (Houston: Printed at the Office of the Telegraph, 1838, vol. 1), 9-25. Texas Republic Constitution, General Provisions, sec. 9.

¹⁸⁶ Barr, *Black Texans*, 27.

The causal relation between Mexican presence and the 1836 spike in the number of runaways is a precursor to the linkage of liberty with Mexico by free and enslaved Blacks. For enslaved Blacks in Texas, the event of Mexicans marching into Texas “marked the beginning” of enslaved individuals equating “freedom behind Mexican lines.”¹⁸⁷ Enslaved men and women, perhaps emboldened by the proximity of the Mexican army, began fleeing their captors. In the April of 1836 alone, fourteen runaways approached General José de Urrea’s army.¹⁸⁸ Reportedly, General Urrea sent all fourteen runaways along with their families to live in Ciudad Victoria in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.¹⁸⁹ Furthermore, in effect to the Republic of Texas having been created as a ploy crafted by enslavers, free Blacks in Texas encountered the introduction of many first limitations. Under Texas Republic laws, free Blacks or any free person containing one-eighth of “Negro blood” could not vote, own property, intermarry, dispense medicine, own firearms, or testify in court against a white person.¹⁹⁰ Additionally, every free person of African descent had to attain permission of congress for “permanent residence” in the Texas Republic, lest becoming subject to enslavement.¹⁹¹ Accordingly, the absence of Mexican rule over Texas lands signified the loss of legal and/or human rights for free Blacks.

¹⁸⁷ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 172.

¹⁸⁸ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 172.

¹⁸⁹ Nichols, “The Line of Liberty,” 417.

¹⁹⁰ Barr, *Black Texans*, 8.

¹⁹¹ “Constitution of Republic of Texas” in *Laws of the Republic of Texas, in Two Volumes* (Houston: Printed at the Office of the Telegraph, 1838, vol. 1), 9-25. Texas Republic Constitution, General Provisions, sec. 9.

Relative to this change in political rule over Texas lands and its unfolding situation for would-be runaways, following 1836 (post Texas Revolution), a 300-mile strip of land described as a “no man's land” developed between that of the Nueces River and the Río Grande River. This area of land is what historian David Montejano refers as the “Nueces Strip.”¹⁹² Between 1836 and 1846, Native Americans by and large controlled and occupied the Nueces Strip. During this time window a handful of accounts exist of Mexico-bound runaways receiving mutual support from Native Americans. In 1841, for instance, when authorities of Monclova intercepted a band of Caddoes led by Chief Coyote, authorities discovered a runaway traveling amongst tribe members.¹⁹³ It was not until after 1846, specifically the U.S.-Mexico war, the Nueces Strip became predominantly Latino in population with Mexicanos outnumbering their Anglo counterparts by twenty-five to one.¹⁹⁴ Accordingly, enslaved men and women began to increasingly re-conceptualize the crossover boundary line of freedom towards the Nueces Strip, specifically the Río Grande River.

Several factors may explain why runaways did not equate freedom with the Nueces River, even though in all technicalities the Nueces River, especially when examining cartography such as the map drawn by Stephen F. Austin of the Texas Republic, marked the southern boundary.¹⁹⁵ Since that of the 1820s, commercially minded Anglo settlers like Austin have ambitiously eyed the Río Grande River by

¹⁹² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 30-31.

¹⁹³ Nichols, “Line of Liberty,” 417.

¹⁹⁴ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 30-31.

¹⁹⁵ Austin, Stephen F., Cartographer, and Henry Schenck Tanner. *Map of Texas with parts of the adjoining states*. (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: published by H.S. Tanner, 1830). Map. Call number/physical location at the Library of Congress is G4030 1830 .A9.

attempting to secure “navigation rights” from the Coahuila-Texas legislature. Described as commercially essential, the Río Grande River was estimated to become the rival of the Mississippi River as it linked northern Mexico’s commerce with world markets. Via the Río Grande, interior ports such as Santa Fe, San Luis Potosí, and Matamoros could access international trade waters of the Gulf of Mexico.¹⁹⁶ Historians like Montejano explain through this economical perspective that Texas Republic diplomats remained aggressive in their insistence on claiming the Río Grande River as their border. The harbor of Brazos Santiago (located 10 miles north of the mouth of the Río Grande River), for instance, channeled enough trade volume to value at \$10 to \$14 million annually.¹⁹⁷ Other historians such as Torget interlink cotton exportation and imperialism, an approach by which historians like Paul Gootenberg, who wrote *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug*, may call for the application of a commodity chain analysis (defined as the sociological-spatial conception of “production-to-consumption relationships”).¹⁹⁸ Provided the Texas Republic’s envisage to rise as a cotton empire (as expressed by Stephen F. Austin), claim to the Río Grande River centered on necessity to secure the exportation of cotton to Great Britain, which in 1837 alone, had imported over 400 million pounds of Texas cotton.¹⁹⁹

Given Anglos' commercial interests in the Río Grande River, crossing the Nueces River would not have been enough for the runaway in escaping the clutches of

¹⁹⁶ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 18.

¹⁹⁷ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 19.

¹⁹⁸ Paul Gootenberg, *Andean Cocaine: The Making of a Global Drug* (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 8, 103. The commodity chain analysis interlinks geographical sites of supply with production sites and consumer culture.

¹⁹⁹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 189.

slaveholders. This is evident by how several runaways did not stop in their flight to Mexico until reaching “the most attractive goal” like Matamoros, for instance.²⁰⁰

Whether crossing into largely Indian Territory, between 1836 and 1846, or encountering Mexican communities after 1846, runaways increasingly sought the Río Grande River in hopes of escaping bondage.

Throughout the antebellum era, Anglos and Mexicans in Texas, inclusive of the Tejano population, “compared, constructed, and challenged” each other’s place in Texas’s political economy.²⁰¹ The rise of white vigilantism in Texas was due to the Anglo perception of Mexicans as an impediment to their progress in expanding slavery. Mexican communities like Victoria, San Patricio, La Bahía (Goliad), and Refugio were among the first targeted by Anglos, who embodied a “spirit of revenge and abandonment.”²⁰² A.B.J. Hammett, biographer of the aristocratic family of the empresario Don Martín de León, described the injustice Mexican families of Victoria received by Anglos. According to, Mexican families of Victoria not only became dispossessed of everything they owned, but they were also “hated” on the premise of simply being “Mexican.”²⁰³ Not escaping Anglo contempt, the handful of Tejanos who fought alongside Anglos in support of the idea of Texas independence became what several historians phrase as a “people of paradox.”²⁰⁴ Hammett’s recollection of events is

²⁰⁰ Barr, *Black Texans*, 29.

²⁰¹ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 352.

²⁰² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 26. Events described took place in 1837.

²⁰³ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 26-27. Families were chased out of town, along becoming dispossessed of their land, cattle, and everything they had owned. For further inquiry, see A.B.J. Hammett, *The Empresario: Don Martín de León* (Waco: Texian Press, 1973), 4, 25, 28, 58-59, 189-190.

²⁰⁴ Montejano, 26.

foretelling of Anglos in Texas not considering people of Mexican heritage their equals nor distinguishing those born in Texas (Tejano) versus south of the Río Grande River (Mexican).

Antagonizing relations, Anglos utilized the Elizabethan ideal of “white beauty” to rationalize the enslavement of Blacks that characterized the Texas political economy. Explicated by the *Southern Intelligencer*, the color white signified the “emblem” of virtue and goodness, whereas the color of black stood as the “emblem” of darkness and evil.²⁰⁵ The ruling white majority, nominally Anglo-Saxon Protestants, propagated the racial ladder of whites on top and blacks on bottom. Mexicans, being neither white nor black, were placed somewhere in the middle who could scale up or down, but never at the top equal to white. Veterans of the Texas Revolution, for instance, relegated Mexican prisoners of war to servitude by “leasing...to any Anglo willing to house, clothe, and feed them.”²⁰⁶ This “leasing” exemplifies how Anglos positioned Mexicans as one step above black status (as to not consider a “slave”), but always kept below white status. Relative to Anglos maintaining a racial order, much of the anxiety over the potential rupture of a color line (used in maintaining the order to a segregated society) was arguably due to Anglos mistreating Mexicans and Blacks as a conquered people. With this unique circumstance facilitating the process of Mexicans in Texas and enslaved Blacks identifying with each other as an exploited people, Anglo enslavers grew even more

²⁰⁵ De León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 20. See the author’s notes over the *Southern Intelligencer*, which explains the break down over the meaning of color where white is “emblem” of virtue and good versus the color of black as the “emblem” representative of darkness and evil.

²⁰⁶ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 182-183. According to Torget, John Quitman sent to his wife living in Natchez, Mississippi, “a Mexican,” who was to be delivered by Mr. Ross. Instructions to wife specified that the Mexican was to be “sent over to the plantation [as] a stock driver.”

restless when detecting the correlation between sightings of a Mexican interacting with an enslaved Black and reports of enslaved Blacks absconding. Consequently, reoccurring rises in white vigilantism result from fears related to Black-Brown intermingling and its connection to an increase in the number of enslaved Blacks absconding to Mexico.

Answering a question of timing, the U.S. annexation of Texas marks the event that solidified the linkage of freedom with Mexico throughout free and enslaved communities. Moreover, this association of Mexico as safe haven appears in and outside the state of Texas, thus increasing the migration of Blacks to Mexico. Partly explanatory is the role of perception when borders are set into place, as borders create division that is both *real* and (conceptually-spatially) *interpretative*. Real, in terms of there being a political line in the sand drawn or a barrier backed by federal law, and dually interpretative by how that line divides space once seen as a continuum, which in turn, leaves for imagination the question of what is on the other side. For the runaway, border formalizations not only re-directed attention to the Río Grande River as the U.S.-Mexico border, but it also entertained and enhanced the image of a crossover from a state of bondage into attaining brighter future possibilities.

While proximity is a factor inspiring a southbound exodus to Mexico (for runaways in Texas), research indicates enslaved Blacks located outside Texas also sought Mexico. In accordance to the scholarly finds of historian Cornell, runaways from U.S. states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Alabama, and Arkansas chose Mexico and managed to find their way to Mexico.²⁰⁷ Cornell's research, therefore, brings one critical question that needs asking. How did the notion of freedom with Mexico gain traction throughout

²⁰⁷ Cornell, "Citizens of Nowhere," 352.

enslaved communities beyond the state borders of Texas? Part of the answer may very well hold in the multitude of proposed colonization plans by U.S. prominent leaders as well as coverage provided by African American newspapers over slave flight.

Since the early 1830s, both African American and Anglo American abolitionists publicly endorsed the idea of Mexico for colonization to African Americans. National conventions such as the 1833 Third Annual Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color launched Mexico into U.S. national spotlight and conversation by broadcasting Mexico as “opportunity to achieve legal and social equality.”²⁰⁸ Additionally, Quaker abolitionist Benjamin Lundy fiercely advocated Mexico for African Americans who wished to emigrate in order to improve socioeconomic status.²⁰⁹ Moreover, Mexican government officials such as Gómez Farías provided practical traction to such ideas by encouraging “black immigration.”²¹⁰ The public endorsement of Mexico as a land of free labor constitutes a significant factor that widely introduced Mexico as an option to enslaved individuals seeking escape, regardless of geographical distance.

Both the enslaver and the enslaved, if not by the early 1840s already, coherently registered Mexico as a land of free labor and by default, safe harbor for runaways, as of 1848. The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had in many ways proved to be a double-edged sword for enslavers. While the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo cinched Texas's claim to the Río Grande River by eliminating the ambiguity concerning who owned the Nueces Strip,

²⁰⁸ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 358.

²⁰⁹ Cornell, 358.

²¹⁰ Cornell, 359. According to Cornell, it was upon learning how Mexican government officials were encouraging of African American immigrants that the Improvement for the Free People of Color began endorsing the idea of Mexico as “opportunity to achieve legal and social equality.”

it further entrenched polarized point of views on the issue of slavery between American enslavers and Mexican liberators. With a political line demarcating proslavery and antislavery space (determining who could step afoot where), to enslavers in Texas, what had become illuminated and stood glaring back at their face was the antislavery spirit of Mexican officials and civilians alike. Mexican officials proudly made it their aim to destabilize U.S. slavery by establishing “antislavery sanctuaries,” in addition to Mexican civilians taking it upon themselves to rise as “resistance fighters [in] battling slavery.”²¹¹ The conclusion of the U.S.-Mexico War formalized a border, which at end, and from this particular angle, came to symbolize a self-emancipatory finish line for runaways and a uniting cause for people of various different backgrounds and nationalities when it came to endeavors in abolishing slavery.

A second spike in the number of runaways to Mexico occurred after the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed in 1848. This second spike is by indications of the change in content within African American newspapers. Initially, the content matter of African American newspapers centered on stressing how Afro-Mestizos like Mexican President Vicente Guerrero, who abolished slavery in Mexico as of 1829, held powerful positions in comparison to U.S.-born Blacks, who possessed little to no rights.²¹² Beginning early 1850s, however, African American newspapers began “covering slave flights to

²¹¹ Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 48-49.

²¹² Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 359. Article titled, “Prejudice against Color,” in *Colored American*, Sept. 5, 1840, p.1.

Mexico.”²¹³ This change is indicative of the Río Grande River proving to be of magnetic attraction to runaways.

News articles and published works produced by African Americans largely served as a vehicle in transferring news information relaying Mexico as a safe haven. African American writers streamlined into public awareness how Mexico, as of 1833, maintained a position as refusing to “extradite fugitive slaves.”²¹⁴ Additionally, African American abolitionists such as Martin Robinson Delany encouraged slaves to not alone get up and run, but consider Mexico over U.S. northern states. In his 1852 work titled *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, Delany argued “same Liberty in Mexico, as in Canada.”²¹⁵ Moreover, by the mid-1850s the concept of Mexico as a land of promise translated into parts of African American education programming. As part of one school’s assignment, students at the Catholic Institution School for the free children of color in New Orleans, Louisiana, 1856, wrote letters requiring the employment of their imagination at the instruction to detail what their life was like with all the “economic possibilities in Mexico.”²¹⁶

Though this chapter admittedly to some degree sacrificed depth for breadth, given the expansive time coverage, what this chapter has sought to accomplish is to create and prime the stage historical actors will appear upon throughout the subsequent chapters to

²¹³ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 360. For further inquiry on subject of northern African American newspapers on Mexico, see also “The Fugitive Slave Law on the Mexican Frontiers” in *Frederick Douglass’ Paper*, Dec. 11, 1851; “Runaways in Mexico” in *The National Era*. (Washington, DC), Feb. 5, 1852; “A New Project” in *The National Era* (Washington [D.C.]), October 19, 1854; and “The New Constitution of Mexico” in *The National Era*. (Washington, DC), Apr. 16 1857.

²¹⁴ Cornell, 353, 359-360.

²¹⁵ Martin Robinson Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States* (1852; reprinted, New York: Arno Press and the *New York Times*, 1968), 177.

²¹⁶ Mary Niall Mitchell, *Raising Freedom’s Child: Black Children and Visions of the Future after Slavery* (New York: New York University Press 2008), 29-36.

follow. What is evidential by show of correlation between geopolitics and migratory routes is a long-standing tradition on part of enslaved persons in seeking the assistance of Spanish authorities over American authorities. In the *longue durée* of enslaved Black migration as presented in this study, historically speaking, a substantial number of enslaved men and women have equated political asylum with Spanish domains. This equation later evolves into envisage of liberty and its linkage with Mexico. Explanatory of this tradition is the comparative analysis of how slavery operated during Spanish Texas versus the peculiar institution of American slavery, which later became enshrined under the Republic of Texas (1836 constitution). Whereas a symbiotic relationship and that of mutual trust existed between the Spanish and enslaved men and women of African descent, the American institution of slavery was purely capitalistic in nature. To recap, during Mexico's colonization plans of Texas, Mexican patriots like General Manuel Mier y Terán forewarned the national government that if Anglo American immigration continued unchecked, then the loss of Texas would be of inevitable consequence. By fault of the Mexican national government with its continuation on instrumenting white appeasement policy (enabling the continuation of slaveholding practices in Texas), arose the Republic of Texas as consequence of clear government oversight. However, as this next chapter shall explore, what emerges are circumstances in the Republic of Texas by which gave birth to the creation of a unique Texas Underground Railroad. Whereas Mexico had lost Texas due to appeasement, what occurs after is the rise of unapologetic activism on part of Mexican authorities and ordinary civilians who worked to undermine American slavery in Texas.

CHAPTER III

Architects of the Texas Underground Railroad, 1836-1861

Launched from Bexar County, 1857, a sheriff-led and armed posse of men approached the small quiet town of Garza's Crossing. Years dealing with the issue of slave labor loss incurred by enslaved communities' contacts with Mexican transients had reached its boiling point. Fevering with rage, the men readied selves to storm the town in a search and find mission to round and lynch every Mexican said to be “assisting slaves” to Piedras Negras, Mexico.²¹⁷ As of 1855, just two years prior, twenty Mexican families in Seguin reportedly provided aid in assisting “runaway slaves in their escape from bondage.”²¹⁸ It was in 1855, authorities caught a Mexican attempting to steal a horse. The capture of the non-identified man created “such a razzia” amongst Anglo residents of San Antonio that in the heat of commotion, by the enabling of local authorities who turned a blind eye, Anglo residents lynched the man.²¹⁹ Furthering this incident of one man's denial of due process, San Antonio's sheriff claimed liable means to warrant a call “for an armed posse of 500 men” to expel the remaining Mexican population.²²⁰ The sheriff's call, however, failed to materialize due to the refusal of German residents to render the needed financial and manpower support. But in 1857, a posse of men did organize. The previous call to action had been undercut and skewed by German inaction on the matter.

²¹⁷ Stephanie Brady, “The Texas Underground Railroad: Slaves Find Freedom in Piedras Negras,” in *Van Ormy's Hometown Newspaper* blog, September 23, 2014.

²¹⁸ Brady, “The Texas Underground Railroad: Slaves Find Freedom in Piedras Negras,” in *Van Ormy's Hometown Newspaper* blog, September 23, 2014.

²¹⁹ Brady, “The Texas Underground Railroad: Slaves Find Freedom in Piedras Negras,” in *Van Ormy's Hometown Newspaper* blog, September 23, 2014.

²²⁰ Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas: or a Saddle-Trip on the Southwestern Frontier* (New York, London: Dix., Edwards & Co., 1857), 164.

This inaction, as German town residents would set for record to their Anglo counterparts, was not to be mistaken as passivity. As the posse approached the town entrance of Garza's Crossing, an equally readied counter group of German town residents stood in place. Led by Dr. Theodore Heerman, German volunteers took up arms and formed a barricade, which successfully prevented the anticipated group's entry. Against the sheriff's assertion of there being Mexicans assisting runaways, German town residents claimed they knew of no such persons.²²¹

The theme of this chapter centers on arguing the case for the formation of a multiethnic coalition of forces operating in Texas, a uniting of antislavery-opinionated minority groups, who together constructed their own Underground Railroad system. Shared historical experiences and solidarity is the uniting factor explanatory as to why minority groups conjoined efforts that in turn, produced successful results in the pursuit of dismantling the institution of slavery by aiding and abetting runaways. Antislavery Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans offered their services as intermediaries and field guides, ferry operators, along offering their houses for shelter, in addition to supplying horses for transport at either no to little charge in payment. Oft at times, ethnic Mexicans formed and appear to have relied and/or utilized their tight social connections with German town residents in order to evade detection or avert capture by Texas law authorities.²²² Additionally, not alone did Blacks and ethnic Mexicans become unexpected allies (in identifying with each other as exploited manual laborers), but formerly enslaved Blacks also received assistance by German immigrants and Native

²²¹ Brady, "The Texas Underground Railroad: Slaves Find Freedom in Piedras Negras," in *Van Ormy's Hometown Newspaper* blog, September 23, 2014.

²²² Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 29.

Americans. Evidence substantiating this chapter includes primary sources such as traveler reports, newspaper readings, government documents, judicial records, and oral histories sourced from interviews.

To facilitate the articulation of analysis related to the contribution of roles exhibited by multiple groups, one so involving a diverse cast of historical characters, this chapter is organized into different sections titled with a subheading. Explained per subheading is the role of Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans; the role of German immigrants and town residents; the role of Native Americans; an explanation on why an open-ended question is placed on Irish immigrants; the role of white abolitionists; and the role of free and enslaved Blacks. Each of these main sections featured within this chapter works to create an all-inclusive portrait by featuring multiple diverse histories and the shared historical experiences which united minority groups.

The Role of Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans

The role of antislavery Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans entails firstly, acts of enticement. An act of enticement is defined as an individual (Tejano, Mexicano, or Mexican) engaging in behaviors intended to encourage, tempt, or persuade an enslaved Black man or woman to abscond. These behaviors include soliciting ideas to run and/or providing tangible means (like a horse) that could conduce to the enslaved person's escape. Enslavers found acts of enticement disruptive to the operations of plantation work or slave labor due to it causing a void in the daily output of production. Should the enslaved Black man or woman choose to run, the enslaver had to essentially cut their losses by virtue of absence (or zero work output) concerning the enslaved person turned runaway. Under Texas law, from 1836 to 1861, acts of enticement are defined as

unlawful activity able to be charged as a criminal misdemeanor and subject to the penalty of death. Relative to the scale of impact, acts of enticement frequented enough in occurrence to raise alarm among enslavers as it was reported in newspapers, by travelers, and the issue eventually leading to petitions calling for more stringent measures on part of Texas authorities.

For instance, in 1854, the *Texas State Gazette* reported “evidence of tampering with our slave population on the part of the Mexicans,” following the disappearance of five enslaved Blacks “from a plantation on the Cibola.”²²³ Another report published in the *Red-Lander* describes the capture of a transient Mexican near Lavaca, who had enticed an enslaved Black girl from Texana and was running with her to Mexico. The same report also includes details of another transient Mexican, who was caught in the act of enticing enslaved laborers in San Felipe. The Mexican caught in Lavaca was lynched, while the latter received lashes to his back plus mutilation, as it was reported his ears cut off “by a planter who accused him of enticing his slaves.”²²⁴

Incidents of Mexicans conducting enslaved Black men and women to run frequented enough times as to warrant residents to petition county officials. The petition to Messers Maverick and members of Bexar delegation, filed December 20, 1851, reveals forty-nine residents from Bexar County imploring members of the Bexar delegation to implement harsher laws regarding persons enticing enslaved Blacks to abscond.

According to the petitioner identified as John T. Darwin, the punishment of death to

²²³ *Texas State Gazette*, September 2, 1854.

²²⁴ “Negro Stealing,” *The Red-Lander* (San Augustine), July 7, 1842. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; credits The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. See also Mareite, “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats,” *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* (December 14, 2018).

persons “enticing a slave from his master” applied only “to a case where [the slave] has actually been enticed out of possession.” Requested by the forty-nine residents was to make every enticement attempt, whether successful or not, an act punishable by death.²²⁵

While it remains unclear what verbal exchange may have been made per contact between an enslaved laborer and a Mexican, what is clear is the two establishing interracial relationships that were irrespective to legal status (free and enslaved people). Newspaper clippings reveal transient Mexicans and enslaved Blacks forming their own intimate social circles that were both personal and recreational. For example, in 1854, one Austin-bound traveler spotted “a Mexican camp,” and observed how during the late hours of the night “peons, Mexican women and slaves” gathered. Both the “peon” and the “slave” engaged in “playing at monte, smoking cigars and drinking liquor.” While sources indicate that relationships between free and enslaved people were mainly platonic, a small handful of sources suggest potentially romantic connections founded on reciprocal trust, respect, and dignity. According to the Austin-bound traveler, an apparent level of intimacy was seen at the Mexican camp by how one enslaved Black man tenderly held a señora in his arms. The traveler noticed another couple where a woman had “lay her shawl over a slave while he was reclining on the ground.”²²⁶ Moreover, some of these connections may have culminated to intermarriage. According to a typescript found by one historian, who searched the Paul S. Taylor Collection located at Bancroft Library, Berkeley, California, planters spotted Mexicans visiting their plantations in intent to

²²⁵Petition to Messers Maverick and members of Bexar Delegation, 20 Dec. 1851, box 100-357, Texas State Library, Austin, Texas. Petition content can also be found as Petition 11585102 in online archive *Race and Slavery Petitions Project*, managed by The University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

²²⁶ “The Peons,” *Texas State Gazette*, October 14, 1854.

select “negro girls for wives [and to] run them to Mexico.”²²⁷ Historical narratives like that found in the transcript, signify on one hand why women, like men, opted to run with Mexicans to Mexico. While women only statistically formed 10% of runaways, their stories of escape, however, do exist.²²⁸ On the other hand, stories involving male Mexicans running with female Blacks signal one potential example how Mexicans came to cultivate colorblind love interests. Whether mutual or romantic, in either case, the formation of these social circles possesses critical importance in that it represents a platform for the transfer of ideas surrounding freedom and equal equity across color lines.

Further south along the Texas coastline and in deep South Texas, in counties bordering the Río Grande River, Mexicanos and Mexican civilians actively solicited freedom by encouraging enslaved laborers to cross the Río Grande River. Plantation holders' complaints indicate the frequency in which enslaved Blacks absconded. For instance, while in Texas, New Jersey abolitionist Benjamin Lundy met Francis Berry, a slaveholder from Virginia who had moved to Brazoria. Upon his visit, Lundy expressed his observation concerning the absence of laborers. Answering Lundy's inquiry, Berry replied he “no longer had any slaves because they had all run away to Mexico.”²²⁹ Other primary sources such as the testament of Ben Kinchelow (interviewee in the Federal Writers Project under the Works Project Administration, or WPA) further validate the claim Mexicanos and Mexican civilians actively conducted enslaved laborers to escape.

²²⁷ Foley, *The White Scourge*, 25. Archival source Foley came across is as detailed: “Runaway Negroes,” typescript, 13, folder “Southern Texas, General History,” Z-R4, Paul S. Taylor Collection, Bancroft Library, Berkeley California.

²²⁸ Barr, *Black Texans*, 30.

²²⁹ Benjamin Lundy, *The Life, Travels and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy* (Philadelphia: Williams D. Parrish, 1847), 44.

As Kinchelow recalls watching enslaved drivers bringing the picked cotton to part of Brownsville, Mexicans “persuaded [enslaved Blacks] to go across the border.” It was on the other side of the river, many “got to be free.”²³⁰

In addition to acts of enticement, secondly, the role of antislavery Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans involves field intelligence, likely equestrian skills, in transporting individuals under their watchful care. Specific to central and west Texas, Mexicans, particularly those who fled to Texas to escape debt peonage in Mexico, offered their knowledge of the terrain as field guides. As evidence points, transient Mexicans supplied a horse and moreover, would lead the way to the border for a small fee in exchange. The 1851 petition to Messers Maverick and members of Bexar delegation supports the idea of transient Mexicans coupling equestrian care with the task of escorting enslaved Blacks willing to abscond. Accordingly, the 1851 petition contains a statement made by a San Antonio townsman, who reportedly overheard a Mexican’s conversation with an enslaved Black man. The townsman explained that the Mexican, by the terms of his offer in providing a horse and acting as escort, essentially placed himself “at the command of the slave for a small bribe.”²³¹

In cross-examining archival sources (such as the petition to Maverick and members of Bexar delegation) with newspaper reports, there is reason to assert that the

²³⁰ Library of Congress, *Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers’ Project, 1936 to 1938*, no. 101, LOT 13262-7, Prints and Photographs Division, Library of Congress.

²³¹ “Runaways to Mexico,” *Texas State Gazette*, September 30, 1854. See also petition to Messers Maverick (Maverick, G.A.) and members of Bexar Delegation, 20 Dec. 1851, box 100-357, Archives Division at the Texas State Library, Austin. May also refer to “Public Meeting at Seguin-Vagrant Mexicans,” in *Texas State Gazette*, September 9, 1854. University of North Texas Libraries, The Portal to Texas History; credits The Dolph Briscoe Center for American History. This newspaper quotes: “a new trade has been opened up to them, in aiding the escape of slaves. They scruple at nothing, and a few dollars from a negro, is sufficient to secure their services.”

“small bribe” was requested not as monetary incentive but rather due to the nature of a greater service entailed: supplying the horse. Relative to the question of intent, whether Mexicans escorted runaways to free or keep enslaved in Mexico, evidence points to the former. Multiple newspapers such as *Bastrop Advertiser*, *Gonzales Inquirer*, and *Texas State Gazette* reported incidents of transient Mexicans stealing horses for the purpose of escorting runaways.²³² For instance, in 1852 Matagorda County authorities intercepted a group of Mexicans “stealing horses and running three slaves to Mexico.”²³³ In nearby Gonzales County, 1854, authorities caught a transient Mexican before he could take off with the runaway. The punishment administered to the Mexican taken into custody was the letter “T” branded onto the man’s forehead, which stood for “traitor,” in addition to 150 lashes to his back.²³⁴ These newspapers indicate a significant level of risk and danger involved, wherein if caught by authorities, the Mexican assisting the runaway endured far exceedingly more excruciating pain than what any “small fee” could possibly compensate. With skillful probing, the business of escorting runaways to Mexico reveals that it was personal versus profitable, and it mandated a level of sacrifice requiring intrinsic motivation. The charge of a small fee was more than likely a request to help offset the cost of expenses related to securing a horse or any other means needed for long-distance travel. For instance, historians Nancy McGown and Todd Smith indicate ingenuity on part of Mexicans stealing horses. In 1852, a ranch located forty miles south

²³² “Important to Slave Owners,” *Bastrop (TX) Advertiser*, March 14, 1857; *Gonzales Inquirer*, August 13 and September 17, 1853, and “Runaways to Mexico,” *Texas State Gazette*, September 30, 1854. See also Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 28-29 and Olmsted, *Journey*, 163-164.

²³³ Nichols, “The Line of Liberty,” 424.

²³⁴ “Negro Insurrection,” *Texas State Times* (Austin), September 27, 1856 and “More Negro Stealing,” *Texas Monument* (La Grange), February 6, 1854.

of San Antonio was reportedly raided. Initially, the suspects were Lipan Apaches. Yet, both historians presented evidence pointing to actual suspects being Mexicans disguised as Lipan Apaches.²³⁵ Further research is needed prior to asserting this raid as related to an interconnection between horse stealing and escorting runaways, but it does, however, present a very real possibility that transient Mexicans may have employed the use of disguises as one strategy to their effect in supplying horses for runaways.

Moreover, historian Nichols clarifies that the greater majority of ethnic Mexicans assisting runaways to Mexico comprised of Mexican peons who fled to Texas in escaping debt peonage in Mexico. No different than a runaway not desiring their return to Texas as a “fugitive slave,” the Mexican fleeing debt peonage did not desire their return to Mexico as a “fugitive peon.”²³⁶ Both parties involved in the run towards the Río Grande River shared the same hope and desire as keeping clear away out of the reach and grasp of their accusers. If a “fugitive peon” in Texas was sent to Mexico by coordination of Texas authorities (who intercepted and captured), the Mexican would have to carry their sentence in Mexico. One newspaper in particular, the *Galveston Weekly News*, identified one man as Ignacio Mendola, who was caught in route to San Antonio bringing “a cavalcade of horses, which had been stolen at Parras.”²³⁷ Following his forced return to Mexico, Mendola was charged the sentence to sweep the streets in Saltillo while chained

²³⁵ Nancy McGown Minor, *Turning Adversity to Advantage: A History of the Lipan Apaches of Texas and Northern Mexico, 1700-1900* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2009), 163-164. See also Todd F. Smith, *From Dominance to Disappearance: The Indians of Texas and the Near Southwest, 1786-1859* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2005), 207.

²³⁶ Nichols, “Line of Liberty,” 413-414.

²³⁷ *Galveston Weekly News* (Galveston, Tex.) May 6, 1851.

to a weighted iron ball.²³⁸ While it remains unclear what the intent of Mendola was in bringing the horses to San Antonio, Nichols explains the migratory routes of peons were in settling into central and west Texas towns like San Antonio and Austin, where they would camp in the suburbs and meet with enslaved Blacks.²³⁹

Regardless as to how a runaway may arrive to the Río Grande River, if not receiving another's field intelligence in traversing the terrain, a runaway may still receive assistance in the form of river crossing services. In deep South Texas, transportation services geared more towards ferrying people across the river. According to researcher Bacha-Garza, as of the 1850s multiple ferries were set up for the purpose of facilitating river crossing.²⁴⁰ Bacha-Garza iterates while military forts had been established along the Río Grande with officials instructed to capture and return runaways, these forts stood as remnants of the U.S.-Mexico War, and positioned miles apart from each other. Field guides knew by experience where large gaps of unpatrolled space remained, and any runaway could certainly cross the river undetected by Texas law authorities within those unpatrolled areas.²⁴¹

Adding to ferrying services, Mexican border officials and civilians, in some case instances, worked together in providing cash, food, and clothing donations for the purpose of assisting a runaway's travels further inland away from border towns. In

²³⁸ *Galveston Weekly News* (Galveston, Tex.) May 6, 1851.

²³⁹ Nichols, "Line of Liberty," 426.

²⁴⁰ Leanos Jr., "This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico," *The World*. March 29, 2017. Article includes statements made by Roseann Bacha-Garza, who manages the Community Historical Archaeology Projects with Schools program, at the University of Texas Río Grande Valley.

²⁴¹ Leanos Jr., "This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico," *The World*. March 29, 2017.

Monclova, for example, border officials coordinated with the town in raising money for a family who did not possess any belongings other than the clothes worn. The town, according to latest findings by doctoral student María Hammack, provided the family “clothing, food, and money...so they can continue traveling south” to a place far away from the reach of American filibusters and slave hunters.²⁴² In another historical instance, source information drawn from *Clarksville Northern Standard* shows the willingness of Mexican townsfolk to “manumit” runaways such as that seen by the people in Matamoros. In 1844, townsfolk in Matamoros collected over \$80 in order for the runaway to purchase their freedom.²⁴³

Thirdly, adding to roles in enticement and providing transportation means, the role of antislavery Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans includes their creating a social safety net in helping the runaway acclimate to the culture, learn the Spanish language, and establish selves into the community. Specifically, Mexicans adopted runaways as godchildren as historical records contain acts of adoption by sign of god parentage. Formerly enslaved Black men and women turned Mexican godsons, goddaughters, brothers, sisters, and friends experienced great benefits from this turnout. Some could find employment in positions that without the support of their godparent, would have been difficult to obtain. While in Mexico to visit deputy Lombrano, Benjamin Lundy learned on October 24, 1833, that the interpreter in the office of the Secretary of State of

²⁴² Leanos Jr., “This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico,” *The World*. March 29, 2017. Article includes statements drawn from interviews with María Hammack over latest research findings. Hammack’s finding of the Mexican townsfolk of Monclova is shared to Leanos Jr., as she is writing her dissertation on the Underground Railroad to Mexico.

²⁴³ *The Northern Standard* (Clarkesville), May 22, 1844. See also Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 66.

Coahuila and Texas, who was a “coloured woman,” was Lombrano's goddaughter.²⁴⁴ In other aspects, the role of a godparent proved pivotal towards swaying the U.S. Consul in Mexico City to grant formerly enslaved Black men and women a carta de seguridad (passport). Without a godparent, most requests submitted by runaways ended in rejection due to U.S. consular officers in Mexico City tending to side with the U.S. legal jargon of enslaved laborers as “property” and not resident or citizen, which would else wise entitle one to naturalization papers.²⁴⁵ To great effect, Mexican godparents firmly advocated full entitlement to equal protection of Mexican law by terms of cultural citizenship. For example, when carta fines had been issued against a man named Scoit, godparent J. Manuel Barrio mailed a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Relations, and successfully argued for Scoit to be “considered Mexican” by virtue of his conversion to Catholicism. Consequently, all fees were thereafter waived with approval granted to issue a carta de seguridad.²⁴⁶

The historical importance surrounding the formation of adoptive family ties and community ties rests on these personal connections representing a support system able to act as a safeguard mechanism, and arguably curtail psychological trauma induced by fears of re-enslavement by American filibusters. Specifically, god parentage and the runaway’s community ties resulted in the runaway’s newfound freedom being

²⁴⁴ Lundy, *The Life, Travels and Opinions*, 63, 88. See also Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 58-59.

²⁴⁵ Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 60. See also Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 368. While most cases indicate the U.S. Consul in Mexico City denying requests for a carta de seguridad (passport) due to refusing to acknowledge the legal status of a runaway as a former citizen and/or resident in the United States of America (provided enslaved laborers were considered “property”), one exception stands. In 1839 Minister of Foreign Affairs of Mexico, Juan de Dios Cañedo, gave letters of naturalization to group of runaways, who lived free near Matamoros.

²⁴⁶ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 368.

collectively sponsored, so if an American enslaver posed a threat to the runaway, that threat concerned everyone supporting the runaway. Case in point is Mexican brothers Ramon and Camilo Gonzales, who were providing safe harbor to a runaway named Antonio. In 1850, without warning four U.S. soldiers crossed the Río Grande River towards their residence in Guerrero, where they then proceeded to beat the brothers and abduct Antonio. However, before the soldiers could drag Antonio towards the northern side of the river, local Mexican troops expeditiously responded to the calls for help and forced the soldiers into retreat.²⁴⁷

To conclude this section of the chapter, the historic discussion on the role of Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans needs also to factor how different interests create anomalies. While most did not identify with the institution of slavery, a handful did side with racist proslavery sentiments. To explain this phenomenon, this discussion refers to what is called the “middleman minority” theory.²⁴⁸ Provided how Anglos in Texas constructed a racial order based on white privilege, as addressed in previous chapters, the “middleman minority” theory explains the reasons behind why individuals associated with the very crowd marginalizing their own respective community. Specifically, certain minority individuals, to not become the bottom feeders of society, searched for ways to appeal to the ruling white majority. How this unfolds are the case incidents of individuals choosing to identify with the interests of Anglo slaveholders to distinguish and “whiten” selves from other members of their respective community. Tejano Rodrigo Hinojosa, for

²⁴⁷ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 366. The source Cornell drew from was of her findings at the Archive of the Mexican Embassy in the United States, specifically Lauzuna to Mexican Minister, Feb. 12, 1850, pp. 15-19, folder 3, bundle 32.

²⁴⁸ Edna Bonacich, “A Theory of Middleman Minorities,” *American Sociological Review* Vol. 38 (October 1973), 583-594. Term first coined by Blalock, according to Bonacich.

instance, raced after two runaways, by which he succeeded to capture in Río Grande City, 1860. The *Corpus Christi Ranchero* praised Hinojosa for his “prompt action.”²⁴⁹ Another Tejano, Santos Benavides, went so far as to crossover into Mexico to retrieve a runaway within the same year, demonstrating thereby a most blatant disregard to international border crossing laws. If to examine Mexico’s 1857 Constitution (relative to unauthorized border crossings), what is to underscore is Mexico granting legal protection solely to runaways by stipulating “the slaves, who set foot on national territory, regain...their freedom, and therefore have the right to the full protection of the laws.”²⁵⁰ Despite committing a federal offense by purposely disregarding international border crossing laws to retrieve the runaway, Benavides was glorified among Anglo Texans. Take for instance, the *Corpus Christi Ranchero*, which described Benavides's hot pursuit of the runaway into Mexico as heroic “in confronting danger.”²⁵¹ Research indicates a number of Tejanos served an interest beneficial to self to elevate their status in society.

The Role of Germans in Central Texas

German town residents located in the Bexar-Goliad region represent the second main identifiable architect of a Texas Underground Railroad system. Their role, however, is highly subtle, at times what one may find barely detectable, and for this reason their role so easily eludes historical recognition. This chapter's opening story about German town residents boldly confronting the posse as intervention to protect Mexicans assisting

²⁴⁹ *Corpus Christi Ranchero*, March 17, 1860.

²⁵⁰ Title I, Article 2, of Section I of Mexico’s 1857 Constitution, found in “Constitución Política de la República Mexicana, sobre la indestructible base de su legítima Independencia proclamada el 16 de Septiembre de 1810 y consumada el 27 de Septiembre de 1821,” Título I (Title 1), Sección I (Section I), Artículo 2 (Article 2), in *Constitucion Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos Sancionada y Jurada por el Congreso General Constituyente 5 de Febrero 1857* (Toluca: Imprenta del Instituto Literario, 1881), 14.

²⁵¹ *Corpus Christi Ranchero*, November 17, 1860.

runaways is as most fortuitously and as explicit any findings can come. In having to play detective work, it is after probing pieces of evidence, deconstructing its historical importance, and piecing it back together, one can assert there is arguably a critical role no less important than the role of antislavery Mexicans.

The role of central Texas Germans centers on the concept of civil disobedience. Bearing in mind Texas law required every resident of Texas to uphold the virtues of slavery, any German residents demonstrating intent to shield Mexicans assisting runaways, such as those who prevented a group of men entering town, automatically violates Texas law. While German town residents may not necessarily provide direct assistance to runaways, they did however, avert the capture of Mexicans by plea of silence when questioned by authorities. For this reason, their role entails having to navigate the racialized ideological terrain of slavery viewpoints and act as a buffer between antislavery Mexicans and proslavery Anglos.

Relative to the anti-Mexican recourses drawn by Anglos, the German response to these recourses point that something much bigger than what could be initially imagined is happening. Specifically, Germans in central Texas repeatedly acted in defense of Mexicans by working to delay or stem the formation of vigilance committees. Census records and a behavioral analysis is used in lieu of document sources to explain (or to fill in the gap of evidence).

In 1854, for instance, multiple vigilance committees were formed in response to the circulation of news and eyewitness accounts reporting Mexicans in the business of escorting runaways to border communities such as Piedras Negras. These vigilance committees, like those in Gonzales, Matagorda, and Uvalde Counties, as well as in towns

like San Antonio and in the Victorian area, were purposed by Anglo enslavers to “devise remedies vis-à-vis the evil of black-Mexican association.”²⁵² Resolutions made to secure “slave property” entailed calls for expulsion, which Matagorda County considered as a “mild course [than] resorting to lynch law,” and in other instances, mandating a passport for travel.²⁵³ Specific to San Antonio, while a vigilance committee of 500 to 1,000 men was formed in 1855 to “answer the call” for the capture of runaways, previous efforts had failed. Able to explain why is the 1856 census record (San Antonio). The 1856 census record reveals out of the town’s total population of 10,500, Germans comprised 3,000. With Mexicans numbering 4,000, the role of Germans can be more appreciated when understanding their critical position (and power) as a tiebreaker on the vote count over calls to create a vigilance committee. The fact that San Antonio’s 1855 vigilance committee involved multiple attempts to materialize signifies that there was a clear and present struggle on part of Anglo enslavers to win the opinion of German constituents. Indeed, had German residents supported, they would have constituted a major element that would have empowered Texas enslavers to execute violence. Yet, German residents ardently objected to the formation of vigilance committees due to its anti-Black and anti-Mexican sentimentality. To the unnerving of Anglos, who had erroneously anticipated support from Germans (being *initially* considered “white” equivalent to Anglo enslavers), Germans in central Texas turned the tide in marking proslavery Anglos as the numerical minority (ideological wise, between proslavery and antislavery).

²⁵² *Texas State Gazette*, November 4, 1854.

²⁵³ De León, *They Called Them Greasers*, 52-53. Author’s findings are based on extract of unidentified newspaper described by Frederick Law Olmsted in his journal, *A Journey Through Texas*.

The sentimentality of Germans in central Texas towards runaways is undeniably antipathetic to slavery. Consider for instance, the 1850 United States Agricultural Census for Guadalupe County, Texas, which outlines the eastern edge of the German settlement area in Texas. In 1850, Guadalupe County had a slave population of 351. Regarding the slave population count, not a single German farmer proved exception in engaging in slave ownership practices, as all 351 enslaved Blacks belonged to Anglo American farmers.²⁵⁴

One traveler's report supports the idea that Germans, like Mexicans, provided direct assistance to runaways. From his travels in Texas, Frederick Law Olmsted describes an encounter between a German immigrant and a runaway. According to Olmsted, the German immigrant attended the runaway with loving pity after finding the individual on his ranch and near starving to death. Taking the runaway to his place, the unidentified German was said to have "bound up his wounds, clothed him, gave him food and whisky," in providing the needed care to "set him rejoicing on his way again."²⁵⁵ Whether isolated or common these instances may be, evident is the disposition of Germans in central Texas as marked by the level of compassion Olmsted observed.

Sources suggest Mexicans and Germans formed inseparable ties in Texas. Instances of German intervention (on behalf of Mexicans) more than likely was in response to protect personal connections, as sources indicate there were ties established between the two over time in friendship, trust, and fidelity. To state forwardly, Germans

²⁵⁴ Hubert G.H. Wilhelm, "Organized German Settlement and its Effects on the Frontier of South-Central Texas" (Ph.D. Diss., University of Illinois, 1968), 58. Wilhelm draws his evidence from having analyzed census records located at the Texas State Archives. These census records include the Seventh U.S. Agricultural Census, (1850), Texas (Austin, Texas: Texas State Archives), Vol. I, and Slave Schedules, U.S. Population Census. 1850, Texas (Austin, Texas: Texas Census Records, Microfilm, Texas State Archives). These census records are listed as reference for conducting future research.

²⁵⁵ Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas*, 327-328.

and Mexicans in Texas were actively involved in matters concerning and impactful to the everyday life of each other.

Historians Montejano and Foley mention German and Mexican communities remained in close contact. Germans, who typically worked as mechanics and shopkeepers, developed, and maintained business connections with Mexicans. Reciprocally, Mexicans “always employed German mechanics” while German landowners “rented to Mexicans and blacks.”²⁵⁶

Additionally, historians such as Walter Buenger iterate that shared historical experiences of mistreatment effectuate the rise of political alliances among those being marginalized, scapegoated, or subjected to forms of racialized violence. While Germans in central Texas angled the rationale (behind their refusal to support vigilance committees) as stemming from opinion of such committees not representing “the right and republican way,” their refusal roots from viewing slavery as abhorrence.²⁵⁷ This viewpoint of slavery is evidenced by census records (no German enslavers in central Texas) and in the attempts to curtail the formation of vigilance committees via the purposeful withholding of vote and participation. Consequently, Germans, like Mexicans, were labeled as “culturally un-American” radicals by virtue of their Catholic faith, their association with Mexican communities, and in maintaining antislavery positions. These two groups stood as the target of nativist parties, particularly the Know-Nothings Party, in addition to facing hostilities directed by resentful Anglo enslavers.²⁵⁸ Consider for

²⁵⁶ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 29. See also Foley, *The White Scourge*, 8.

²⁵⁷ Montejano, *Anglos and Mexicans*, 29.

²⁵⁸ Calvert, De León, and Cantrell, *The History of Texas*, 128.

instance, the emigration of Adolf Doucai, (German) editor of San Antonio *Zeitung*. After Doucai published an anti-slavery opinion, he started to receive death threats by Anglo enslavers. Feeling his life to be in imminent danger, Doucai left Texas.²⁵⁹ These precarious situations highlight the unique circumstances in Texas that to effect, united Germans and Mexicans by their finding of safety with each other and in becoming allies to each other during the 1850s.²⁶⁰

Though details surrounding their political alliance remain unclear, needing investigation, what is known is how the vast majority of Mexicans and Germans demonstrated ardent devotion to liberty, believing no laborer should be kept bounded against their will.²⁶¹ In addition to communicating antipathy to slavery, also made clear is how Mexicans fleeing debt peonage tended to reside in the towns of Bastrop, San Antonio, Austin, Refugio, and Goliad, which are sites situated in “German settlement territory.”²⁶² Furthermore, when in the 1850s vigilance committees culminated to the wholesale injustice of Mexicans lynched and shot in cold murder, German town residents vowed imminent “war...will come” should “the driving out of Mexican laborers” not stop, according to one news article from the *Southern Intelligencer*.²⁶³ The role of central Texas Germans, though more extensive research is needed, nonetheless merits recognition by their role in protecting antislavery Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans.

²⁵⁹ Barr, *Black Texans*, 35.

²⁶⁰ Foley, *The White Scourge*, 219.

²⁶¹ Wilhelm, “Organized German Settlement and its Effects on the Frontier of South-Central Texas,” 50. See also Nichols, “Line of Liberty,” 413.

²⁶² Wilhelm, “Organized German Settlement,” 33-50. See also James David Nichols, “The Limits of Liberty: African Americans, Indians, and Peons in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1820-1860” (Ph.D. diss., State University of New York at Stony Brook, 2012), 95-100.

²⁶³ *Southern Intelligencer*, September 23, 1857.

The Role of Native Americans

In addition to Mexicans and Germans, Native Americans play a role in facilitating the escape of enslaved Black men and women. A handful of tribe nations like the Caddoes extended friendly relations towards runaways. For instance, Chief Coyote permitted a runaway to accompany tribe members as part of the runaway's search for "a country where he could acquire liberty."²⁶⁴ Even Comanche tribesmen, who typically killed or sold enslaved laborers taken from raids, made exceptions in accepting runaways. Historian Barr explains some Comanches found the runaway's "knowledge of white society" beneficial. Accordingly, two runaways identified as John and Rye acquired prominent positions as translators and raid coordinators. In 1850, furthermore, runaways turned Comanche members John and Rye enabled the escape of an enslaved pregnant woman identified as Rachel, along with her five children, from Smith County. According to historian Barr, the two led the family to Indian Territory where all six family members (mother and children) were welcomed among the Comanche tribe members.²⁶⁵ More to these isolated cases exhibiting friendly relations, however, history contains records illustrative of mass migrations to Mexico. The mass migrations of (formerly) enslaved Blacks are accredited to the role of Native Americans coordinating with Mexican officials.

The 1849-1850 migration of the Seminoles from Florida to Mexico is perhaps the greatest Native American-Black mass migration known on record. According to one article published by *The Washington Post*, which had its content sourced in interviews

²⁶⁴ Nichols, "Line of Liberty," 417.

²⁶⁵ Barr, *Black Texans*, 28-29.

with the Mascogos (descendants from the formerly enslaved Blacks who Seminoles accepted into their tribe), a total of 60 Black families migrated to Mexico alongside Seminole tribe members.²⁶⁶ As Black Seminole oral history recounts, this migratory event, provided the great number of persons comprising the party, entailed tribesmen being separated into two groups: Black Seminole and indigenous Seminole tribesmen. An exception was made concerning two Black Seminoles deemed essential in service to Chief Wild Cat. These two are identified as Kitty Johnson, who was the designated nurse for Chief Wild Cat's son, and John Wood, his orderly. While Chief Wild Cat led the indigenous Seminoles, John Horse led the Black Seminoles. Both the Black and indigenous Seminoles were to rejoin in Texas prior to crossing the Río Grande River, in which they did by fashioning "together logs to build crude rafts."²⁶⁷

According to historian Kenneth Porter, the official date marking this historical event of the Seminoles arriving into Mexico is July 12, 1850. The Mascogos who spoke to *Washington Post* interviewer Kevin Sieff, (for Sieff's article titled: "Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico. Now they're looking north again"), recollected 309 Black Seminoles had presented selves to the Mexican commandment at Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico.²⁶⁸ On July 24, 1850, Seminole Chief Wild Cat ("Gato del Monte"), Black Seminole John Horse, and leader of the Kickapoos "Papicuan," who joined the Seminoles, met sub-inspector general of the military colonies Colonel Juan Manuel Maldonado, at San Fernando de Rosas (which is now Zaragoza). Temporarily, the Black

²⁶⁶ Kevin Sieff, "Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico. Now they're looking north again," *Washington Post*. March 15, 2019

²⁶⁷ Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 131.

²⁶⁸ Sieff, "Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico," *Washington Post*. March 15, 2019.

Seminole arranged to live at El Moral, just north of Piedras Negras, while Seminole tribesmen remained at San Fernando de Rosas. Eventually, both the indigenous Seminole and the Black Seminole (Mascogos) established their communities in El Nacimiento, which is a two-hour drive south of Eagle Pass.²⁶⁹ On one side of the Alameda Canyon is the tribesmen settlement and on the other side is the Mascogos, whose community may also be referred as El Nacimiento de los Negros.²⁷⁰

The Seminole's aid towards formerly enslaved Black men and women did not extend solely to Black Seminole tribe members who shared the journey with tribesmen from Florida to Coahuila. Historian Porter explains Black Seminole oral history consists of there being another group forming the community in El Nacimiento. The first group is those who followed Chief Wild Cat and John Horse, remembered as the “Black Seminole proper.”²⁷¹ Another group subsequently followed. Specifically, this second group consisted of runaways from border towns such as Piedras Negras, Ciudad Acuña, and Nuevo Laredo. These runaways sought El Nacimiento de los Negros, which sat further inland, to increase chances of dodging recapture by American enslavers. Here, the Mascogos welcomed them into their community.

Like the historic discussion on Tejanos, Mexicanos, and Mexicans, while tribe nations like the Seminole allied with Spanish authorities in being anti-enslavement, other Native American tribes did not. The Cherokee Nation, for instance, being one of the so called “Five Civilized Tribes,” half indigenous and half Anglo, contained members who

²⁶⁹ Sieff, “Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico,” *Washington Post*. March 15, 2019. See also Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 128-132.

²⁷⁰ Stephanie Brady, “The Texas Underground Railroad: Slaves Find Freedom in Piedras Negras,” in *Van Ormy’s Hometown Newspaper* blog, September 23, 2014.

²⁷¹ Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 150.

adopted chattel slavery that was encouraged by southern Anglo enslavers. As of 1809, the Cherokee enslaved an estimable number of 609 Black men and women. By 1835, the number of Blacks enslaved soared to 1,600.²⁷² In addition to Cherokee enslavers, other tribes like the Creeks, another one of the “Five Civilized Tribes,” became employed in the service of tracking and re-capturing runaways for Anglos.

This schism in Native American worldviews, specifically, between those adopting the Euro-centric concept of ownership and others maintaining the indigenous concept of stewardship, in some cases, pitted one tribe against another tribe. For instance, in 1854 a handful of Seminoles had gone to Arkansas to assist 75 runaways to Mexico. Only some 20 runaways, however, made the journey to Mexico due to attacks launched by the Creeks.²⁷³

Because Native Americans were employed in the service of Anglo enslavers, runaways needed to exercise precaution when it came to their encounters with Native Americans. A report by the *Civilian and Galveston Gazette* perhaps best highlights the said, as one article dated January 11, 1843, read:

It is stated by the Little Rock Gazette that the 52 negroes, who robbed the store of Bigelow and Wames, at Webber's Falls and fled for Mexico across the upper and unsettled part of Texas, were pursued by a party of Creek and another of Cherokee Indians and overtaken in the Cross Timbers, about 200 miles from Fort Gibson. The negroes resisted; two of them were killed, one wounded, and twelve taken. The remainder effected their escape.²⁷⁴

From this report, observed is the loss of 14 runaways due to recapture by Native American trackers, with 2 of the 14 runaways killed. The significance of this report rests

²⁷² Arica L. Coleman, “How a Court Answered a Forgotten Question of Slavery's Legacy,” TIME Newsletter. September 11, 2017.

²⁷³ Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 133.

²⁷⁴ “Untitled,” *Civilian and Galveston Gazette*, January 11, 1843.

in its exemplification of the reason why runaways had to issue caution over encounters with *any* persons, regardless of color. Relative to Native American encounters, runaways to Mexico needed to especially maintain a level of skepticism towards the professed good faith by persons identified as one of the Five Civilized Tribes, lest risking re-enslavement.

The Plausibility of Irish Immigrants in Texas

European ethnic groups such as the French, Swiss, Scottish, Polish, Czech, and Irish immigrated to Texas during the 1840s and 1850s, and of these groups, the Irish, and their colony in San Patricio de Hibernia County (Saint Patrick of Ireland), invoke serious historical attention and pondering of critical thought for several reasons. Irish empresario John McMullen and his business partner James McGloin, who McMullen met during the 1820s when moving to Matamoros, Mexico, maintained acquaintanceship with white abolitionist Benjamin Lundy. The Probate Records of Bexar County contains letters written by McMullen indicating connections with Lundy, who he describes as an abolitionist “from the East” who sought to secure a land grant from Mexico “to settle free negroes from the United States.”²⁷⁵ While in Matamoros, McMullen married the widowed Eliza Cummings Watson, and with his business partner now son-in-law McGloin, applied for an application to settle 200 families (on the Nueces River) in what is present-day San Patricio County in Texas. The Government of Coahuila y Tejas approved his application, which went into effect on August 14, 1828.²⁷⁶ According to San

²⁷⁵ Rachel Bluntzer Herbert, “John (Juan) McMullen Irish Empresario & Co-founder of the McMullen & McGloin Colony” from *San Patricio de Hibernia* (Eakin Press, 1981). Article reprinted by permission in memory of Rachel Herbert. Part of The Irish-Colonies-Index at Texas A&M University.

²⁷⁶ Herbert, “John (Juan) McMullen Irish Empresario.”

Patricio County's "Statistical Report of 1834," 600 residents settled in the colony, thus signifying a rate of success to McMullen's colonization efforts.²⁷⁷

In addition to McMullen's letters signaling acquaintanceship with Lundy, indications also appear evident of McMullen and Irish immigrants identifying by and large more with Mexicans. While the county permitted Anglo American settlers, "there was bad feeling in some quarters toward the Anglo-Americans." According to McMullen, the only commonality shared was simply the "language" spoken.²⁷⁸

Overseas, calls for the establishment of a colony in northern Mexico for free Blacks had been also introduced by an Irish member in the British Parliament. Daniel O'Connell submitted propositions calling action to coordinate with Mexico in establishing free Black communities as matter of course to "destabilize and destroy 'the piratical society called the state of Texas.'"²⁷⁹ No motion had been directed on the idea but it does, nonetheless, underline the existence of Irish-Mexican cordial relations united in the collaborative spirit on tackling inhumane treatments.

Lastly, if to assess the historical experiences of Irish indentures and their treatment in Texas, it is then not at all farfetched to believe there was a rising sense of solidarity felt between Irish indentures and enslaved Blacks. Between the years 1810 and 1850 anywhere from 500,00 to over one million Irish immigrants arrived in the U.S. within the span of four decades. As of 1841, census figures revealed an Irish population of 8.2 million, with Irish immigrants comprising near half of arrivals to the United States

²⁷⁷ Herbert, "John (Juan) McMullen Irish Empresario."

²⁷⁸ Herbert, "John (Juan) McMullen Irish Empresario."

²⁷⁹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 236.

of America during the 1840s.²⁸⁰ Typically, the Irish arrived as poor indentured servants, who Anglo Americans commonly referred as “white niggers.”²⁸¹ According to research findings by professor of United States History, Mexican History, and Texas History, Raúl Reyes, co-mingling between Irish indentures and enslaved Blacks scaled on a magnitude as to proving to alarm the planter class. In states like Virginia and Massachusetts, the inscribing of a “race-based caste system criminalizing interracial marriage and affairs” was devised as a scheme by the planter class to regulate black-white relations.²⁸² Specifically, in Massachusetts there was a fine to pay should an Irish indenture servant and enslaved laborer be charged with cultivating a romantic interest, and the said fine doubled if both slept in bed. Additionally, even if an enslaved Black gained manumission becoming free, their monthly wage earnings capped at \$91 whereas an Irish man earned \$131.²⁸³ While the planter class in states along the Atlantic coastline devised means to elevate the Irish indenture over the enslaved Black, while simultaneously maintaining discriminatory rule keeping both groups disadvantaged, in Texas, Irish indenture servants were treated in exact likeness as enslaved Blacks. Irishmen and women believing in good faith to arrive at the harbor of New York City instead found a nightmarish turn of event when the captain of the ship detoured to Galveston, Texas, and were auctioned as

²⁸⁰ “Irish-Catholic Immigration to America,” Library of Congress (presentation on Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History), accessed January 31, 2021, <https://www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/irish/irish-catholic-immigration-to-america/>.

²⁸¹ David Roediger, “‘Slaving like a Nigger’: Irish Jobs and Irish Whiteness,” from chapter 7 in *The Wages of Whiteness: Race and the Making of the American Working Class* (New York: version, 1991).

²⁸² Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, TX, October 12, 2016).

²⁸³ Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, TX, October 12, 2016).

“slaves.”²⁸⁴ For all these reasons above, points taken in whole, it is plausible Irish immigrants sympathized with enslaved Blacks and made contributions on effecting escape from bondage.

The Role of White Abolitionists

The role of white abolitionists consists of persons advocating the idea of Mexico as safe harbor, persons spreading the idea of equality, and direct involvement in transferring runaways to Mexico. The national origins of these described persons are just as diverse as the type of roles exhibited. This subchapter highlights the nature of their business.

As briefly addressed in the second chapter, the idea of Mexico as safe harbor amongst enslaved communities, in Texas and across the American South, was in part due to the role of white abolitionists. Benjamin Lundy, for instance, vehemently argued Mexico safer and better than other considerable destinations like Haiti or Canada.²⁸⁵ After touring parts of Mexico during the early 1830s, his agenda based on what he had informed the Philadelphia Convention of Colored People as striving to elevate “the American man of color to perfect equality of privilege with the whites.”²⁸⁶ Lundy's argument for Mexico rested along the lines that Blacks who relocated to Mexico would

²⁸⁴ Reyes, “Untitled,” (lecture, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, TX, October 12, 2016).

²⁸⁵ “Moral Improvement in the West Indies,” *Freedom's Journal*, Vol. 2, no. 44 (Jan 31, 1829), p. 341 in Freedom's Journal, the First U.S. African American Owned Newspaper Online Archive, Wisconsin Historical Society. See also Benjamin Lundy to Philadelphia Convention of Colored People, May 28, 1833, reprinted in *The Genius of Universal Emancipation: A Monthly Periodical Work, containing Original Essays, Documents and Facts, Relative to the Subject of African Slavery*, Vol. 13: Nov. 1832, ed. Benjamin Lundy (New York Public Library: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1916), p. 118-120. See also Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 358.

²⁸⁶ Benjamin Lundy to Philadelphia Convention of Colored People, May 28, 1833, reprinted in *The Genius of Universal Emancipation: A Monthly Periodical Work, containing Original Essays, Documents and Facts, Relative to the Subject of African Slavery*, Vol. 13: Nov. 1832, ed. Benjamin Lundy (New York Public Library: Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations, 1916), p. 118-120.

reveal selves as fit for self-government. In addition to, Lundy maintained hopes Blacks would prove free labor superior than forced by successfully growing crops seen in the American South in Mexico. Other white abolitionists such as Abraham Lincoln may also be accredited for spring boarding the image of Mexico into public conception. However, unlike Lundy, approach to advocating colonization plans spurred from racist thinking, as Lincoln entertaining the idea to remove African Americans to Mexico centered on belief the presence of Blacks degraded the white population.²⁸⁷ However altruistic the motivation behind thinking stood is irrelevant, as it is not meant to debatably measure the nature of intent but rather to underscore how these prominent figures spun the idea of Mexico as an alternative site.

As revealed by documentary records, events of white abolitionists traveling to Texas in intent to spread the idea of equality across color lines occurred. In March, 1843, Massachusetts-born lawyer Stephen Pearl Andrews boldly demonstrated his belief in equality to the extent of facing gunpoint. Never minding his overhearing two men aboard a Galveston island-bound ship, who impassionedly denounced abolition as causing to make “bitter opponents” of other passengers, Andrews went door-to-door on the island promoting British-sponsored emancipation.²⁸⁸ The timing of Andrews's visit came just after England's foreign secretary Lord Aberdeen initiating collaborations with antislavery groups, 1842, by “funneling money and weapons to the Mexican Army” as pledge to

²⁸⁷ “Abraham Lincoln and the Politics of Black Colonization,” in “For a Vast Future Also!: Essays from the Journal of the Abraham Lincoln Association, ed. Thomas F. Schwartz (New York, 1999) 35-36. See also Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 358. See also George M. Fredrickson, “A Man but not a Brother,” 49-58.

²⁸⁸ Madeleine B. Stern, “Stephen Pearl Andrews, Abolitionist, and the Annexation of Texas,” *The Southwestern Historical Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (April 1964), 491-508.

endorse Mexico's stance on granting refuge for runaways.²⁸⁹ Imaginably, news of a person spreading ideas of British-sponsored emancipation sparked outrage amongst enslavers. Indeed, a group of armed men confronted and forced Andrews off the island. Excitement stirred by Andrews, however, did not merely stop at Galveston. Shortly thereafter settling into his Houston home, an angry mob surrounded his house, where Andrews received death threats as the crowd cheered to lynch him by showing “a rope...as an earnest of their purpose.”²⁹⁰ Consequently, Andrews, along with his wife and infant son, narrowly escaped in the middle of the night, and sought refuge by running north to New York (keeping in mind Texas in 1843 was its own Republic).²⁹¹

Lastly, evidence in the form of archaeological, documentary, and oral histories reveal unique cases of white abolitionists actively participating in a Texas Underground Railroad system. The Jackson Ranch and the Eli Cemetery, located in San Juan, Texas, nearby the Río Grande River, represents a dynamic game changer that undeniably substantiates the assertion of Underground Railroad network sites in Texas. According to documentary records, Nathaniel Jackson was part of the planter class as the son of a plantation owner in Alabama. While it remains unexplained as to what caused a change in ideology, Jackson, unlike his family, chose to emancipate his enslaved laborers. Later wedding Matilda Hicks, a formerly enslaved Black woman, this former enslaver turned emancipator, along with his wife, children, and reportedly five other families, moved to San Juan, Texas, 1857, where the biracial couple raised cattle, grew and marketed

²⁸⁹ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 235-237.

²⁹⁰ Stern, “Stephen Pearl Andrews,” 505.

²⁹¹ Stern, “Stephen Pearl Andrews,” 505.

sugarcane at Río Grande City, and could escape racial oppression relative to miscegenation laws.²⁹² Furthermore, the Jacksons established a multicultural ranch community that included Mexicans, Carrizo/Comecrudo tribe members, and formerly enslaved Blacks.²⁹³ According to the oral history shared by surviving family members of Nathaniel Jackson, siblings Sylvia Ramírez and Ramiro Ramírez, Jackson actively offered shelter to runaways in the ranch community, along extending welcome to stay. If a runaway preferred the option to travel further south into Mexico, Jackson also owned a ferry in which he operated for runaways seeking freedom on the other side.²⁹⁴ The legacy of the Jackson family is evident by the remaining gravestones, (some inscribed in English and some in Spanish), which mark the resting places of Jackson family members as well community members historian Roseann Bacha-Garza believes to include freed Blacks.

The Role of Free and Enslaved Blacks

Free and enslaved Black men and women exhibit no less important roles in the aiding and abetting of runaways to Mexico. Like their white counterparts, free African American abolitionists promoted emigration to Mexico. The 1833 Third Annual Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color, held in the Benezett Hall, City of Philadelphia, included prominent African American abolitionists like David Ruggles, one of the five members of the New York Committee of Vigilance. Though

²⁹² Leanos Jr., “This underground railroad took slaves to freedom in Mexico,” *The World*. March 29, 2017. For a biography of Nathaniel Jackson, see also Jose Box, “Nathaniel Matthew Jackson (abt. 1798- abt. 1865),” *Wikitree*. June 6, 2020.

²⁹³ Flynn, “A Potential Underground Railroad Site Rests Along the Border. A lawsuit seeks to protect it from Trump’s wall,” *The Washington Post*. March 15, 2019.

²⁹⁴ Melissa del Bosque, “Border Wall Construction Set to Begin Near Historic Cemeteries in South Texas,” *The Intercept*. August 23, 2020. See also Flynn, “A Potential Underground Railroad Site Rests Along the Border.” *The Washington Post*, March 15, 2019.

after much deliberation, the attending assembly came to the eventual endorsement of Mexico over Africa.²⁹⁵ Since 1833, the idea of Mexico continued to grow and increasingly gained traction amongst African American abolitionists. Delaney, for instance, published in 1852 *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny of the Colored People of the United States*, which clearly argues “same Liberty in Mexico, as in Canada.”²⁹⁶

Adding to endorsement, free African Americans from the northern states attempted also to transport fellow enslaved Blacks from captivity in Texas. According to one historian's findings, four Black sailors from Boston attempted to hide a runaway at Galveston, Texas, 1852. While their efforts failed, as Galveston authorities flagged the men and sold as “slaves,” several points of importance do remain. Firstly, African American abolitionists managed to purchase the freedom of the four Boston sailors.²⁹⁷ Secondly, James W.C. Pennington, a formerly enslaved man who escaped to New York, secured funds in Great Britain for the New York Committee of Vigilance.²⁹⁸ While appearing as unrelated probes, these very points indicate on one hand, African American abolitionists collaborated with Great Britain, simultaneously as Great Britain collaborated with Mexican officials. The fact that all four Boston sailors were able to have their freedom purchased, alone, signifies committees of vigilance in the northern states had

²⁹⁵ Minutes and proceedings of the Third annual Convention, for the Improvement of the Free People of Colour in these United States, held by adjournments in the city of Philadelphia, from the 3d to the 13th of June inclusive, 1833, in Convention for the Improvement of the Free People of Color, Third Annual (1833 : Philadelphia, PA). Access to documents provided by courtesy of the University of Delaware. See also Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 63.

²⁹⁶ Delany, *The Condition, Elevation, Emigration, and Destiny*, 177.

²⁹⁷ Barr, *Black Texans*, 11.

²⁹⁸ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 20.

secured financial sponsors to their emancipation cause. On the other hand, the presence of Bostonians at Galveston, who attempted to liberate an enslaved Black man, furthermore, indicates committees of vigilance from the north so also took with concern the condition of enslaved Blacks in Texas.

With or without assistance by free Blacks, traveler reports highlight a success of enslaved Blacks utilizing their surrounding terrain to great effect in running to Mexico. Specifically, several runaways utilized river systems and gulf ports as alternative to traversing the semi-arid and sparsely populated southwestern frontier. Observed by Lundy, enslaved Blacks strategically utilized the swamp land and uninhabited marshes through regions bordering the Ashepoo and PonPon rivers, or other tributaries of the Mississippi and Red Rivers that were “seldom used by white people.”²⁹⁹ When at times a runaway encountered a deserted bend along a river, free Black boatmen assisted runaways by use of signals to communicate when to run or remain hiding.³⁰⁰ In either case instance of receiving assistance or not, exemplified is how runaways, no matter their locality, used to their advantage whatever resources each had to work with to achieve escape from bondage.

Furthermore, judicial records point to runaways alternatively resorting to boatmen in purpose to escape from bondage as stowaways. Filed November 14, 1842, Petition 20884243 in the University of North Carolina’s online archive *Race and Slavery Petitions Project*, reveals Steamboat *Chieftain*, the captain and owners of, facing a lawsuit from Pleasant H. Harbour, who sues the captain and owners “for the loss of his

²⁹⁹ Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 67.

³⁰⁰ Blaine Hudson, *Fugitive Slaves and the Underground Railroad in the Kentucky Borderland* (London: McFarland and Company, Inc., 2002), 5.

slave named George.” According to Harbour, in his petition to Honorable A.M. Buchanan, Judge of the District Court, in and for the First Judicial District of the State of Louisiana, George had been concealed and transported without his consent on the steamboat, which traveled from Louisiana to Illinois. While Harbour “recovered” George, Harbour filed claim to \$1,100 as compensation for his “great trouble and loss.”³⁰¹ Similarly, from Lafayette, Missouri, the steamboat *El Paso* also faced impending lawsuits filed by enslavers, who sought compensation for their enslaved laborers gone missing as stowaways. Petition 21185406 in *Race and Slavery Petitions Project*, filed by plaintiff Marquis W. Withers, April 4, 1854, reports an enslaved Black woman identified as Ann, who also goes by Adeline, Angeline, and the surname Tilford, having absconded November 8, 1853. Depositions in the case file conclude Ann having boarded the St. Louis-bound *El Paso* steamboat, and made liable the steamboat *El Paso* to pay a \$900 charge fee for the illicit transport of Ann. To this, steamboat captain Henry Thornburg[h] lastly remarked “where there is a negro crew on board a boat...a negro might be concealed without the knowledge of the officers.”³⁰² Though these petitions do not concern Texas as destination site sought by the two runaways identified as George and Ann, these petitions, nonetheless, provide credence to Lundy describing sailors

³⁰¹ Petition 20884243 in *Race and Slavery Petitions Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Petition to the Honorable A.M. Buchanan, Judge of the District Court, in and for the First Judicial District of the State of Louisiana, filed November 14, 1842. Harbour’s request to be compensated the grand sum of \$1,100 went through a court process having been granted, appealed for continuation, and then granted.

³⁰² Petition 21185406 in *Race and Slavery Petitions Project*, The University of North Carolina at Greensboro. Petition was filed April 4, 1854 and concluded April 15, 1857.

transporting a number of runaways from New Orleans, Louisiana, to Aransas Bay, Texas.³⁰³

Including as agents assisting runaways is to acknowledge the runaways who each discovered safety in banding together. Documented by newspapers such as the *Telegraph and Texas Register*, *The Texas Monument*, and *Galveston Weekly News* are cases demonstrative of group flight. In Bastrop, for instance, the *Telegraph and Texas Register* posted news of twenty-five enslaved Blacks “mounted on some of the best horses that could be found” and were said to have started flight towards the Río Grande River. Reportedly, seventeen were captured but the remaining eight were presumed to have reached Mexico as authorities could not break the entire band.³⁰⁴

In rare instances, cases of family flight to Mexico appear in historical records. According to researcher Thomas Mareite, enslaved family relatives “were frequent accomplices of runaways.”³⁰⁵ Mareite points to the Texas case of the three Gordon siblings, identified as brothers Albert, Isaac, and Henry, who absconded together sometime during the early 1850s. The eldest of the three, Albert, initially fled alone and was captured in San Antonio. While in the county jail, however, Albert and the other prisoners managed to escape by carving a hole in the wall and using blankets to scale down the wall. From there, Albert proceeded to make it to Mexico, where he joined the Mascogos in El Nacimiento de los Negros. Pleased with his newfound setting, Albert took it upon himself to return to his brothers and escort younger Isaac and Henry back to

³⁰³ Lundy, *The Life, Travels and Opinions*, 104.

³⁰⁴ *Telegraph and Texas Register* (Houston, Tex.), Jan. 15, 1845. See also Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 2-3.

³⁰⁵ Mareite, “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats,” *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain* (December 14, 2018).

El Nacimiento de los Negros. Though Albert again had been arrested, he also managed to escape once more, where he enticed his brothers to leave and all three made it to Coahuila.³⁰⁶ While rare, the case of the Gordon brothers is not the only known record historians have discovered about family flight. In 1849, Mexican border officials documented their encounter of three generations in a family fleeing together. David Thomas, accompanied by his daughter and three grandchildren, made it to Mexico. According to Hammack and Karl Jacoby, Mexican border officials stated the family “did not stop until he had arrived at the town of Allende” further inland, due to fears of retrieval by enslavers.³⁰⁷

To reiterate in geographical terms, the vast majority of ethnic Mexicans tended to reside in the Bexar-Goliad region and in South Texas. Historian Nichols further clarifies that during the 1840s, Mexicans fleeing debt peonage in Mexico traveled from south of the Río Grande to San Antonio and west Texas towns, inclusive of Bastrop, Austin, Refugio, and Goliad.³⁰⁸ It is within this region, Texas traveler Frederick Law Olmsted noted in his journal how transient Mexicans challenged the Anglo idea of racial order by consorting “freely...making no distinction from pride of race” with enslaved Black men and women.³⁰⁹ The historical importance of the described geography rests on how transient Mexicans migrated to areas predominantly German in populace. Accordingly,

³⁰⁶ Mareite, “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats,” *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain*.

³⁰⁷ Hammack, “The Other Underground Railroad,” 70. See also Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis*, 12.

³⁰⁸ Nichols, “Line of Liberty,” 423.

³⁰⁹ Olmsted, *A Journey through Texas*, 163.

central Texas and the routes used by Mexican escorts to lead runaways to the Río Grande River, remains the focal point in spatial terms.

From what research indicates, two key spikes occurred in the number of runaways escaping to Mexico. As highlighted in the second chapter, the first spike in the number of runaways fleeing to Mexico occurred in 1836, following Texas independence. As the Mexican army retreated south, reports of enslaved Black men and women absconding began to emerge with greater frequency Anglo enslavers had not seen before. Some runaways were received by Mexican generals such as José de Urrea, who reportedly secured means for fourteen runaways to live in Ciudad Victoria in the Mexican state of Tamaulipas.³¹⁰ For runaways not receiving assistance in the immediate aftermath of the Texas Revolution, the ideological linkage of freedom to Mexico certainly compelled enslaved Blacks to flee south, provided how Mexican border towns experienced an influx of African-descent persons seeking refuge in their communities. As highlighted in this chapter, another, and greater spike in the number of runaways to Mexico occurred during the late 1840s, following the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that established the Río Grande River as the U.S.-Mexico international border. This greater spike was in much part to the conjoined efforts of multiple minority groups viewing slavery as abhorrence, and who united in part by solidarity, as well to combat vigilance committees who minority groups saw as perpetrators.

The two main architects of the Texas Underground Railroad to Mexico are identified as ethnic Mexicans and Germans in central Texas. Mexicans, particularly transient Mexicans, sympathized with enslaved Black laborers as both represented a task force Anglos heavily exploited without remorse. Germans in central Texas identified with

³¹⁰ Torget, *Seeds of Empire*, 172. See also Nichols, “The Line of Liberty,” 417.

ethnic Mexicans as both believed antislavery to be inhumane and were treated with contempt by enslavers. The relevancy of their role to one another holds in the two groups working in conjunction to tackle anti-Mexican and anti-Black sentimentalities webbed into the paternalistic framework of slavery. German town residents shielded ethnic Mexicans to the best of their abilities by remaining silent under question, averting capture by Texas law authorities, or protesting the various recourses drawn by enslavers. Meanwhile, ethnic Mexicans directly assisted enslaved Black men and women via encouragement to run, supplying horses, in acting as escorts and ferry operators until seeing to it the runaway made it to the Río Grande River. Upon crossover to Mexico, as evidence reveals, runaways were received by Mexican civilians, who either provided further assistance, intermarried, or adopted by sign of god parenting.

Each section of this chapter, to conclude, marks an attempt to capture multiple variables and components explaining the very complexities surrounding the Texas Underground Railroad. Circumstances in Texas uniquely united minorities into forming an antislavery coalition of forces, and this chapter highlights the selfless and courageous contribution of every individual choosing to intervene in a runaway's plight. Stakes to assist a runaway or knowingly defend anyone aiding stood high, ranging from near irrecoverable charge fees to incarceration and potentially becoming lynched. Yet, the story of the Texas Underground Railroad and runaways escaping to Mexico cannot be left without addressing anomalies within the listed minority groups being examined. As a portrait itself all-displaying of humanity, there are individuals who prove exception in terms of believing equal equity across color lines, such as that seen by the actions of Stephen Pearl Andrews. While Andrews is white, he did not endorse Anglo proslavery

ideals but rather condemned slavery to the extent of becoming near lynched for it. In other aspects, not every Mexican-descent person in Texas embodied the same anti-slavery sentiment. A handful of Tejanos like Rodrigo Hinojosa sided with enslavers by chasing after and capturing runaways. Adding yet another dimension is the role of Native Americans. The Seminoles facilitated perhaps the greatest mass migration of American formerly enslaved Black men and women to Mexico, meanwhile tribe nations like the Cherokee adopted slaveholding practices. Lastly, when examining the role of enslaved Blacks, what must not go unheard is how the onus was always first and did foremost remain on enslaved Blacks concerning the personal decision to run. All these different aspects, when fitted together, calls attention to listen between the lines a runaway speaks, which in turn, unravels a story and testament entailing numerous dynamics.

CHAPTER IV

Border Communities and the Río Grande as a Line of Resistance to Slavery

This chapter explains in what ways the status of formerly enslaved Black men and women in Mexico, referred as “fugitive slaves” in Texas, mark a point of contention between Texas and Mexico, as well as the U.S. and Mexico (by default of Texas receiving U.S. statehood in 1845). As previous chapters shown, vigilance committees (on the protection of slave property) represent a manifestation of unresolved complaints and concerns expressed by enslavers in Texas. Proslavery civilians in Texas formed vigilance committees by which Texas government officials sanctioned. When and where Texas law failed to secure slave property (in that it was insufficient or incapable), as exhibited by the accounts found in newspapers (containing over 1,100 runaway ads) and in judicial records, proslavery civilians and enslavers turned international relations contentious by conducting unauthorized incursions into Mexico.³¹¹ The retrieval of runaways having been met and undercut by interventions made by antislavery protagonists, therefore, is indicative of border conflict over the issue of slavery.

Indicative of the theme of this chapter, border communities remained a focal point between enslavers and liberators, in essentially representing sites illustrative of a contest of will on determining the rights of African-descent persons. This fourth chapter focuses on what kinds of impacts were felt by border communities such as Piedras Negras. Relative to unauthorized border crossings launched by Texas Rangers, enslavers, and American filibusters, this chapter, additionally, outlines in what ways Anglo frustrations over the issue of runaways culminated in acts of violence (specifically, Anglos targeting Mexican border community members). This approach towards discussing border conflict

³¹¹ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 1.

is made to illuminate slavery as the root causing conflict, and to keep the runaway at the very heart of this chapter's focus when assessing the playout of encounters between enslavers giving chase and Mexicans resolving to uphold the Río Grande River as a line of resistance to slavery. To explain in what ways the issue of runaways represented a point of contention, historical attention is made in examining two crucial aspects behind variables factoring a rise in Anglo frustrations during the 1850s.

The issue of runaways to Mexico, firstly, was perceived by Anglo enslavers in Texas as a financial loss. As the third chapter briefly highlighted, enslavers like Francis Berry, who moved to Texas in hopes to amass a great fortune, instead had to cut their losses due to all enslaved laborers running to Mexico. Importantly, even if to attempt to capture a runaway, enslavers incurred debts from costs associated with travel expenses, offering reward money, and/or publishing advertisements. The *Joseph and Job Bass Papers*, for instance, contains receipts revealing the total cost of \$23.62, including the \$5.10 paid towards newspaper ads, for the capture of one runaway.³¹²

Accordingly, the first aspect of contention pertains to the difference in viewpoint between a runaway visualized as “property” in Texas versus a citizen in Mexico. Newspapers, undoubtedly, sparked further outrage amongst enslavers in Texas by magnifying the issue of financial loss. In 1854, the *Austin State Times* stated “upwards of two hundred thousand” runaways fled to Mexico.³¹³ In 1855, one year later, the *Texas State Times* projected an estimation of Mexico housing so many runaways that their

³¹² Joseph and Job Bass Papers, 1828-1831, located in Box 2E549 at the Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas at Austin. Part of the Natchez Trace Collection.

³¹³ Wendell G. Addington, “Slave Insurrections in Texas,” *The Journal of Negro History* 35, no. 4 (October 1950), 432.

number would amount to the net worth of \$3,200,000.³¹⁴ Texas enslavers grieved over the propagated estimate loss of \$3,200,000, whereas Mexico appraised runaways as invaluable community members who brought with them employable skills and knowledge.

Secondly, the issue of runaways to Mexico is evident by the numerous attempted extradition treaties between the state of Texas and Mexico, as well as the U.S. and Mexico. In hopes to resolve the issue of financial losses incurred by enslaved Black men and women absconding to Mexico, Washington D. Miller, secretary to Sam Houston, called on U.S. President James Polk to “initiate action” pertinent to the “extradition of runaway slaves.”³¹⁵ While the U.S. demanded Mexico to return runaways to Texas, Mexican Minister to Washington, Luis de la Rosa, undeterred by the mounting U.S. pressure, replied: “no foreign government would be allowed to touch” a runaway in Mexico.³¹⁶ Following failed negotiations between the U.S. and Mexico, such as that again in 1857, Tejanos like Juan N. Seguín, former mayor of San Antonio, Texas, attempted to negotiate an extradition treaty. Signed on January 8, 1859, and addressed to Texas Governor H.R. Runnels, Seguín requested the return of Mexican peons located in San Antonio in exchange for the return of “fugitive slaves” located in Mexico.³¹⁷

³¹⁴ *Texas State Times*, June 2, 1855.

³¹⁵ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 3.

³¹⁶ Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 4.

³¹⁷ Juan N. Seguín to Hardin Richard Runnels, January 8, 1859, translation, located in Box 301-28, Folder 14: January 1859, in Texas Governor Hardin Richard Runnels: An Inventory of Records, 1857-1859 at the Texas State Archives, Austin, Texas. Extradition treaty signed by Juan Seguín, which is addressed as “From the Special Commission by the State of New Leon and Coahuila to His Excellency H.R. Runnels Governor of the State of Texas.”

Importantly, no extradition treaty between the U.S. and Mexico was successfully ratified until 1862 and even still, Mexico, under Article 6, secured the protection of runaways.³¹⁸

This second aspect of contention, therefore, centers on the impasse in negotiations due to differences in perspective on the morality of slavery. With negotiations proving to no avail between political figures, Texas civilians like H. M'Bride Pridgen from Victoria, Texas, demanded the state of Texas to act on behalf of the interests of enslavers. Expressive of outrage, Pridgen vowed to "wage war to the cannon's mouth" until Mexico returned runaways.³¹⁹ The reason this is important is because Anglo enslavers in Texas, without peaceful terms negotiated between state, national, and international political leaders, resorted to the use of violence and in devising schemes, inclusive of commissioning expeditions as punitive action, to retrieve runaways. Due to runaways typically settling in border communities such as Piedras Negras, Ciudad Acuña, Mier, and Nuevo Laredo, border communities became heavily targeted by enslavers.

The 1855 invasion of Piedras Negras is one event that contains a paper trail detailing the specifics of what events transpired. Accordingly, for the purpose of this research, Piedras Negras represents the case file used to describe the scale of impact felt among border community members when placed under duress. Information gathered is drawn from and accredited to the 1879-1880 United States Congressional Serial Set, which was also (later) compiled as *Index to The Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the Second Session Forty-Sixth Congress, 1879- '80* for the Library of

³¹⁸ Tyler, "Fugitive Slaves in Mexico," 11. The only extradition treaty successfully ratified between the U.S. and Mexico was that on June 20, 1862. This treaty, however, did not include the return of runaways who had gone to Mexico in seeking refuge.

³¹⁹ H. M'Bride Pridgen, *Address to the People of Texas, on the Protection of Slave Property* (Austin, Texas, 1859), 10-13. Part of the Americana Collection at Harvard University. Book reference number is U.S. 5270.45. Refer also to Jacoby, *Strange Career of William Ellis*, 18.

the University of California in 1889. The case hearing of *Pedro Tauns (No. 679) and Others vs. The United States*, which appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting Report of Lieutenant Thomas H. Bradley, examiner of State claims, on the claims of States against the United States, in response to an inquiry from the Committee on Claims, United States Senate,” entailed a class action lawsuit filed by the residents of Piedras Negras against the United States.³²⁰ The significance of Pedro Taun’s testimony rests on it explaining the infliction of pain caused by invaders had entailed monetary loss as well as psychological trauma. Additionally, his recorded testimony raises the question of motive driving U.S./Texas-launched incursions into Mexico. As described within one congressional document, some 193 “Texians” led by James Hugh Callahan, captain of the Texas Rangers, placed the community of Piedras Negras under siege for three days.³²¹

While the purpose of Callahan’s expedition has been a controversial subject matter, between whether Callahan invaded Mexico in pursuit of Lipan Apaches or runaways, sources indicates the latter. According to historian Ronnie C. Tyler, who acquired access to and has analyzed the Burleson Papers, one letter stands apart from the collection. In a letter addressed to quartermaster Edward Burleson, Jr., Callahan

³²⁰ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Compiled as *Index to The Executive Documents of the Senate of the United States for the Second Session Forty-Sixth Congress, 1879-'80* by Horace David, who gifted it to the Library of the University of California, 1889. Towns/Tauns appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting Report of Lieutenant Thomas H. Bradley, examiner of State claims, on the claims of States against the United States, in response to an inquiry from the Committee on Claims, United States Senate,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 160-163.

³²¹ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. J. Hubley Ashton appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting Report of Lieutenant Thomas H. Bradley, examiner of State claims, on the claims of States against the United States, in response to an inquiry from the Committee on Claims, United States Senate,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 162. The assessment made by Ashton, acting Counsel of the United States, is found in “The Transaction at Piedras Negras” in the sub-section “Statement and Argument for the United States.” Ashton’s opinion was that claims against the United States were fraudulent and of gross exaggerations.

instructed Burleson to “keep the matter as much of a secret” regarding preparations to head towards the Río Grande River.³²² Provided this verbiage, indications are made that Callahan purposely delayed action until their chase necessitated crossing the Río Grande River into Mexico.

Furthermore, in the *Pedro Tauns (No. 679) and Others vs. The United States* case trial, the testimony of a formerly enslaved man identified as Pedro Tauns (also known as Peter Towns), a resident of Piedras Negras, suggests there were ulterior motives on part of Callahan. Tauns explains “the pillage and burning” of Piedras Negras was firstly, a three-day siege event. Beginning on October 3 and ending on October 5, both Callahan and his armed force of Texas volunteers “disarmed” and forced the evacuation of residents. Following this forced evacuation of residents, Texas volunteers proceeded to search every house and in taking for selves “all their most valuable and easily transported contents.” When the men were said to have collected enough “booty,” costing in damages a full sum of \$65,550 for Tauns and his family, Callahan and the Texas volunteers set fire to every house before taking their spoils across the river by use of a “public ferry.”³²³ The nature of said depredations led one to comment opinion that Callahan’s “inroad into Mexican territory” was in relation to the issue of “fugitive slaves.” Specifically, the use of violence to plunder was to some or greater degree intended to punish Mexican border

³²² Tyler, “Fugitive Slaves in Mexico,” 9. Tyler cites Callahan to Burleson, Aug. 31, 1855, in Burleson Papers, which is listed here for reference use regarding future research.

³²³ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Towns/Tauns appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 160-163. Cost of damages are broken down and categorized as \$3,000 for the loss of one house and one kitchen, \$1,000 for groceries, \$750 for household furniture and kitchen utensils, \$500 for clothes, \$300 for head of cattle, \$8,000 for “injury caused by the loss of the use of his said property,” and \$52,000 for injury to self and family.

community members on behalf of Texas enslavers, who have grown weary of failed extradition treaties.³²⁴

Consequently, border communities along the Río Grande River represent sites unraveling a contest of will over slavery, the focal point between two competing ideologies of proslavery and antislavery advocacy that pivoted Mexico's rule of law against Texas's. Sources like the 1851 “Manuel Flores to el secretario de gobierno” letter, located in Mexico’s national archives at Mexico City, documents the violent encounter between a “Texian” and the mayor of Guerrero over a runaway. According to one historian’s analysis of the letter, orders by the mayor of Guerrero to release the runaway triggered a shootout by which led to the “Texian’s” death.³²⁵ Within the same year of 1851, in Mier, Mexico, a formerly enslaved man identified as Melchor Valenzuela came under attack by a Texas man identified as Captain Jack. While “playing the fiddle at a fandango,” Captain Jack and an accomplice attempted to abduct Melchor for re-enslavement.³²⁶ As highlighted ago by the testimony of Pedro Tauns, violent encounters include also (Texas) state-sponsored incursions into Mexico.

Concerning impacts felt by border communities, research indicates that in Mexico, resistance to slavery in Texas was a source of pride felt by Mexican nationals. This is important to highlight as this source of pride united Mexican civilians and government officials alike, as well as having inspired resiliency. To explain this

³²⁴ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. J. Hubley Ashton, acting Counsel of the United States, appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 163.

³²⁵ Jacoby, *The Strange Career of William Ellis*, 17.

³²⁶ Nichols, “The Line of Liberty,” 428.

argument, historical attention is placed on events in Mexico before and after the writing of the 1857 Mexican Constitution.

Historian James David Nichols places historical attention on Mexico's position on the protection of runaways prior to 1857. According to Nichols, the arrival of runaways had "continued to test the resolve of Mexican officials" in maintaining the Río Grande River as the line of liberty.³²⁷ This is evident by the international border conflict pertaining to when and where Texas enslavers, Texas Rangers like Callahan, and paid filibusters such as (Tejano) Santos Benavides would cross the Río Grande River and incite violence over the issue of runaways. Another aspect focuses on the mental fortitude of Mexican nationals against pressures placed by the U.S. and Texas. Enslavers' incessant demands to return runaways appear to have exacted a toll on Mexican correspondent officials. Colonel Emilio Langberg, for instance, lamented "never a day goes by" without a complaint made by an "American" whose "negroes" absconded from Bexar and West Texas.³²⁸ Yet, in spite of the conflict, resistance to slavery is described as a source of pride by virtue of the fact no enslavers were granted at any point of time clearance by Mexican authorities to retrieve runaways in Mexico.

Other sources sustaining the argument of equating resistance to slavery as a source of pride are drawn from examining action and reaction at the local, state, national, and international level. Whereas the U.S. Fugitive Slave Act of 1850 resulted in the return of over 300 runaways to enslavers, regarding those who travelled north of the

³²⁷ Nichols, "Line of Liberty," 427.

³²⁸ Nichols, 455. The comments were expressed in 1855, according to Nichols, who points to a greater amount of movement back and forth across the Río Grande River between runaways escaping to Mexico and Mexicans escaping to Texas from debt peonage.

Mason-Dixon Line, Mexican authorities vehemently abstained from negotiating extradition treaties.³²⁹ The U.S. Department of State, aware of the consular protection U.S.-born Blacks received in Mexico, as of 1854, attempted to disenfranchise U.S.-born Blacks in Mexico. Secretary of State James Gadsden purposely denied “Africans who are flocking in numbers from the United States to Mexico” the rights of U.S. citizens abroad. This was done in intent to disqualify their applications for a *carta de seguridad* (passport) needed for Mexican citizenship.³³⁰

Responsively, Mexican officials and civilians created loopholes to circumvent the U.S.-launched maneuver to make U.S.-born Africans virtually a citizen of nowhere. As explained by the previous chapter, Mexican officials issued cartas by rule of cultural citizenship, in which a Mexican godparent would argue on behalf of the runaway. Other tactics include border authorities either simply not reporting the arrival of runaways or skirting altogether the issue by having deputized self as the official in charge of issuing a carta. For instance, historian Nichols expounds upon the carta de seguridad belonging to Alejandro Ardí, who arrived in San Buenaventura, Coahuila, 1854. According to Nichols, the town official gave the name “Alejandro Ardí,” with a carta de seguridad that listed Ardí as a “natural of Africa.” This carta de seguridad is of special importance provided how no U.S. consul existed in San Buenaventura, and greater still, no consul for the

³²⁹ Foner, *Gateway to Freedom*, 134.

³³⁰ James David Nichols, “The Limits of Liberty: African Americans, Indians, and Peons in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1820-1860 (PhD. Diss., Stonybrook University, 2012), 123. Nichols cites as his source: Circular to consuls of the United States acting under Exequaturs of the Republic of Mexico, Mexico City, June 25, 1854, Roll 2, Microcopy 281, NAW. This is stated as reference for future research and archive inquiry.

“country” of Africa existed anywhere in Mexico.³³¹ Yet, Ardi's carta was recognized without question, indicating runaways received government-backed voucher in Mexico.

The key event marking a change in tone and a change in dynamics behind Mexico's hostility to slavery is the writing of the 1857 Mexican Constitution. The 1857 Mexican Constitution united the people of Mexico by explicitly framing resistance to slavery as a source of national pride. Whereas the 1857 *Dred Scott vs. Sanford* U.S. Supreme Court decision ruled the condition of slavery as “for [the negro's] benefit,” the 1857 Mexican Constitution marks a firm rebuttal by asserting “the rights of man” as the “basis and the object of social institutions.”³³² Bearing in mind years of international border conflict and the incessant demands of Texas enslavers to extradite runaways, the clause stating an immediate recovery of “freedom” to persons stepping afoot on Mexican soil was an addendum made purposely to strike a direct blow towards U.S.-sanctioned slavery, especially that in Texas.³³³

Whereas Mexico's hostility to U.S.-sanctioned slavery could be characterized as passive aggressive in terms of refusing cooperation, after 1857, it became unconstrained

³³¹ Nichols, “The Limits of Liberty,” 124.

³³² Mills, *The Racial Contract*, 17-18. Decision made by Chief Justice Roger Taney. See also Title I, Article I, of Section I of Mexico's 1857 Constitution, found in “Constitución Política de la República Mexicana, sobre la indestructible base de su legítima Independencia proclamada el 16 de Septiembre de 1810 y consumada el 27 de Septiembre de 1821,” Título I (Title 1), Sección I (Section I), Artículo I (Article 1), in *Constitucion Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos Sancionada y Jurada por el Congreso General Constituyente 5 de Febrero 1857* (Toluca: Imprenta del Instituto Literario, 1881), 14. See also H.N. Branch and L.S. Rowe, “The Mexican Constitution of 1917 Compared with the Constitution of 1857,” *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 71 (May 1917), 7. Title I, Section I, of the 1857 Mexican Constitution, explains the “rights of man.” A change in verbiage is evident in the 1917 Constitution, where “of the rights of man” is phrased as “of personal guarantees.” The message of liberty applying to all who enter Mexico remains a continuity.

³³³ Title I, Article 2, of Section I of Mexico's 1857 Constitution, found in “Constitución Política de la República Mexicana, sobre la indestructible base de su legítima Independencia proclamada el 16 de Septiembre de 1810 y consumada el 27 de Septiembre de 1821,” Título I (Title 1), Sección I (Section I), Artículo 2 (Article 2), in *Constitucion Federal de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos Sancionada y Jurada por el Congreso General Constituyente 5 de Febrero 1857* (Toluca: Imprenta del Instituto Literario, 1881), 14.

resistance hell-bent on the eradication of American slavery. Towards the Gulf Coast in 1858, for instance, one incident demonstrates Mexican authorities assertively enforcing rule of law concerning the status of African-descent persons in Mexico. Following a U.S. ship coming into port at Cabo Rojo (near Veracruz) due to needed ship repairs, Mexican officials hurriedly arrived on scene to proclaim all enslaved Black sailors onboard “free” by virtue of their presence upon Mexican soil, inclusive of waters.³³⁴ This enforcement of rule abruptly exposed the situational citizenry scheme at play behind the U.S. government providing U.S.-born Africans a “special, protected class of U.S. residents.”³³⁵ When in Mexico, the U.S. government purposely categorized Black sailors as a protected class of Americans so that in the event of imprisonment abroad their return to the U.S. would be guaranteed by rights as a “citizen.” This “protection” strictly applied when and where Black sailors were off board in a foreign land, not onboard the ship and not back in the U.S. where laws required their imprisonment while off ship.³³⁶ Evident by 1858 is how Mexican officials communicated zero tolerance upon their discovery of U.S.-born Africans held against will within any and every domain of Mexican territory.

Conclusively, Mexico, again and again, resolved to maintain the Río Grande River as the line of liberty for runaways. The history of the Texas-Mexico border conflict over the issue of slavery, from Texas declaring independence in 1836 to Mexicans welcoming the unfettered passage of runaways and protecting U.S.-born Africans in Mexico, between 1845 and 1861, can be interpreted as events foreshadowing the

³³⁴ Raymond A. Hall, *An Ethnographic Study of Afro-Mexicanos in Mexico's Gulf Coast: Fishing, Festivals, and Foodways* (Lewiston, New York: Edwin Mellon Press, 2008), 28.

³³⁵ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 364.

³³⁶ Cornell, “Citizens of Nowhere,” 364.

American Civil War. If Texas enslavers proved willing to wage war with Mexico to secure slavery, it becomes unsurprising Texas enslavers willing to wage war against fellow Americans who threatened the stability of the institution of slavery. Critically pointed out by historian Sarah E. Cornell, the absence of slavery in Mexico cannot be necessarily interpreted as wholesale freedom for the runaway. Prior to the 1857 Mexican Constitution, U.S. consulates in Mexico attempted to disenfranchise runaways in Mexico by denying U.S. citizen rights abroad. Without a *carta de seguridad*, mainly for male runaways (as females were assumed to be the daughter, mother, or wife of a Mexican citizen), there were limits on liberty. Yet, as previous chapters shown, and as this final chapter reveals, the scarcity of archival evidence, while daunting in task to piece together this research, is as equally foretelling of a runaway's successful assimilation into Mexican society. This successful assimilation indicates while yes, there was a legal conundrum that runaways encountered prior to 1857, it was still to the runaway a situation resulting in freedom.

CHAPTER V

Conclusion: A Synthesis of Research over the Legacy of Runaways in Mexico

The legacy of runaways in Mexico remains a subject requiring greater exploration. What became of runaways? Did runaways learn the Spanish language and intermarry? Did runaways establish and own their own businesses? In what ways did runaways serve their respective community? Were they employed by the Mexican government? What job occupations did they have? Did runaways venture back into Texas to rescue family members and/or friends? What was their historical experience in Mexico? These are some of many historical thinking questions needing to be asked.

This chapter concludes this thesis by addressing the historical experience of runaways in Mexico. As the closing piece to this thesis, this chapter's presentation of content is framed more as pointers for dissertation reading and writing. Accordingly, it is an abbreviated presentation of evidence by bringing into synthesis what collection of research has been found in addressing the question of what became of runaways in Mexico, as well as signaling the direction further research can go. This final chapter of the thesis articulates source-based information found thus far.

Linguistic studies reveal runaways learned Spanish words and over time in Mexico, became fluent in the Spanish language. In *The Strange Career of William Ellis: The Texas Slave who became a Mexican Millionaire*, historian Karl Jacoby conducted a linguistic study that focused on the intimacy of interactions between enslaved Black men and women and free Mexican-descent persons in Texas. Jacoby's analysis specifically focuses on examining runaway ad descriptions. According to Jacoby, a great number of runaway ads described "slaves" as able to speak Spanish or possessing knowledge of a

few words.³³⁷ In Kevin Sieff's "Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico. Now they're looking north again," which sources its information based on interviews between *The Washington Post* reporter and the Mascogos, formerly enslaved Blacks became fluent Spanish speakers. Within the time span of six generations, perhaps by the third, a runaway's English vocabulary had been completely replaced by Spanish.³³⁸

Congressional records indicate runaways managed to establish and secure their new livelihood in Mexico. In the "Letter from the Secretary of War, transmitting Report of Lieutenant Thomas H. Bradley, examiner of State claims, on the claims of States against the United States, in response to an inquiry from the Committee on Claims, United States Senate," 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, evident is a runaway adopting a new name, establishing a family, owning property, and working several jobs. Peter Towns, born in Nacogdoches, Texas, 1811, described as a "mulatto, and...the servant of the late General Sam Houston," changed his name to Pedro Tauns when settling in the border town community of Piedras Negras.³³⁹ According to the source document, Tauns owned two houses "constructed of lumber," a kitchen, in addition to owning personal property valuing \$2,500 (includes head of cattle, groceries, wearing apparel, household furniture, and kitchen appliances).³⁴⁰ Tauns, acting on behalf of five other family members, filed claims against the U.S. government regarding

³³⁷ Jacoby, *The Strange Career of William Ellis*, 21.

³³⁸ Sieff, "Their ancestors fled U.S. slavery for Mexico. Now they're looking north again," *The Washington Post*. March 15, 2019.

³³⁹ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Towns/Tauns appears in "Letter from the Secretary of War," 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 160, 162.

³⁴⁰ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Towns/Tauns appears in "Letter from the Secretary of War," 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 160-163.

Callahan's 1855 “pillage and burning” of Piedras Negras, which he reportedly claimed as having amounted to the sum of \$65,550 in damages.³⁴¹ The record further identifies the job occupation of Tauns at the timing of Callahan's destruction. Accordingly, Tauns earned pay as a fiddler, who performed at fandangos and requested parties. His work history also includes field experience as a “mason in the employ of the government at Fort Clark.”³⁴²

Primary sources capture and specify a wide vary of job positions runaways occupied in Mexico, and even contain detailed instances exemplifying cross-cultural exchanges. Historian James David Nichols locates one source document from the archives in Mexico City, Mexico, particularly an 1830 survey of the black community in Matamoros, Mexico. This survey can be found in the Archivo General de la Nación, specifically within the document copy of “Manuel Saucedo to Ministro de Relaciones Exteriores [Ciudad Victoria]” from the Archivo Cartas de Seguridad. According to Nichols, the 1830 survey listed twenty men and their occupation of work. Job professions described are as follows: “five manual laborers, two carpenters...two merchants...three cooks...three tailors...a scavenger, a brick mason and three barbers.”³⁴³ These men described in the survey list consist mainly of runaways from Texas, but also includes two from Haiti and two “Irish” Blacks, with the identification of Thomas and Esau as runaways. Additionally, Benjamin Lundy's traveler report contains descriptions relevant to how various runaways made a living in Mexico. While attending an open market in the

³⁴¹ United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Towns/Tauns appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 160.

³⁴² United States Congressional Serial Set, U.S. Government Printing Office, 1884. Towns/Tauns appears in “Letter from the Secretary of War,” 46th Congress, 2nd Session, Senate Ex. Doc. No. 74, 162.

³⁴³ Nichols, “The Limits of Liberty,”126-127.

streets of Monclova on November 11, 1833, Lundy inquisitively turned his attention to a female merchant selling a food commodity uncommon to the area: butter. Purchasing a sample of butter, Lundy records his encounter with a “coloured woman from Mississippi,” who had journeyed to Monclova, Mexico, and earned wages by making and selling butter.³⁴⁴

Moreover, both primary and secondary sources highlight a level of empowerment runaways received by having a Mexican godparent. Benjamin Lundy's *The Life, Travels and Opinions of Benjamin Lundy* documents a woman of African-descent working in a government-related job position. Lundy's encounter with an interpreter serving in the office of the Secretary of State of Coahuila and Texas, described as a “coloured woman,” was the goddaughter of Deputy Lombrano.³⁴⁵ Cornell's “Citizens of Nowhere: Fugitive Slaves and Free African Americans in Mexico, 1833-1857,” touches on the subject relating how Mexican godparents enabled runaways to become Mexican citizens. By having a Mexican godparent like J. Manuel Barrio, runaways such as Scoit were able to successfully attain a carta de seguridad.

Sources like census records further indicate intermarriage. The 1853 census report of Matamoros, according to historians Scott Cook and Nichols, counted a number of 201 “negros.” Critically pointed by Nichols, the census also reads another 250 mulattos.³⁴⁶ Intermarriage appears evident by how a significant number of the city's population

³⁴⁴ Lundy, *The Life, Travels and Opinions*, 63.

³⁴⁵ Lundy, 63, 88.

³⁴⁶ Nichols, “The Limits of Liberty,” 128-129. Refer also to Scott Cook, *Brick Culture in the Building of Texas, 1800s-1900s* (College Station: Texas A & M UP, 1998), 30.

consisted of those possessing African ancestry mixed with indigenous or Spanish ancestry.

On the question of historical experience in Mexico, some research suggests runaways having potentially encountered Mexicans, particularly Federalists, who were more commercially interested than adhering to antislavery “principals pronounced by the central government.”³⁴⁷ According to the research by Nichols that had been conducted for his dissertation writing, Tampico, Tamaulipas, maintained throughout the 1840s close economic ties to New Orleans, Louisiana, which like Galveston, Texas, was a slave market hub. Interestingly, Nichols remarks the Centralist presence in Tampico was unwelcomed by the *vecinos* (“residents”) of Tampico, who expressed discontent with the legal protection Centralist officials provided to Blacks. Accordingly, *vecinos* “alleged that the generals in charge could easily bribe” Blacks for commercial gain related to their networking with “New Orleans trading houses.”³⁴⁸ In this respect, the status of formerly enslaved Blacks in Mexico not only represents a point of contention regarding the border region, but also between commercially minded Federalists and Centralist officials.

Perhaps, for this reason, formerly enslaved Blacks in Mexico stood eager to work in the employ of Centralist officials. When the port city of Tampico came under threat by U.S. invasion in 1847, historian Nichols explains that it was “black immigrants” who stood ready to serve and defend as exchange for their newfound liberty in Mexico.³⁴⁹ Specific to the border region, another example is provided by historian Kenneth Porter

³⁴⁷ Nichols, 125.

³⁴⁸ Nichols, 125.

³⁴⁹ Nichols, 126.

regarding military services provided by the Mascogos. Porter highlights that in 1851, Mascogos and Seminoles voluntarily enlisted selves for service regarding an expedition against *los indios bárbaros* (“the hostile Indians”), as recorded by military commander Colonel Emilio Langberg.³⁵⁰

Newspapers, interviews, and Veterans Administration records represent the sources unraveling a story of at least one runaway in Mexico venturing back to Texas in intent to facilitate the escape of family members. The source material giving light to Albert Gordon, who returned to his two younger brothers Henry and Isaac, can be traced to the findings made by Thomas Mareite and historian Kenneth Porter. Mareite's sources heavily draws upon newspapers published in 1852 and in 1858, such as *The Western Texan* (San Antonio), *The Texas Monument* (La Grange), and *The Matagorda Gazette* (Matagorda).³⁵¹ Porter draws his information from an interview with Priscilla Dixey, 1943, the General Affidavit by August Bruner, 8 January, 1913, and Records of the Veterans Administration, RG15, located in the National Archives Pension Files collection. The purpose of noting said source material is for reference use intended for cultivating further research pertaining to the question of whether more stories resembling such nature exist.

Lastly, archival sources contain details exhibitiv of acculturation on part of runaways in Mexico. Because of Covid-19 pandemic forcing the suspension of reproduction and digitization services by the National Archives and Records

³⁵⁰ Porter, *The Black Seminoles*, 143.

³⁵¹ Mareite, “Abolitionists, Smugglers and Scapegoats,” *Mémoire(s), identité(s), marginalité(s) dans le monde occidental contemporain*. May refer to *The Western Texan* (San Antonio), April 15, 1852; *The Texas Monument* (LaGrange), April 21, 1852; *The Independent Press* (Abbeville, C.H., S.C.), October 13, 1854; *The Matagorda Gazette* (Matagorda), July 31, 1858.

Administration, sources located at the National Archives were not able to be accessed throughout the timing of this study. Therefore, it is left as a reference note for future research the following archival sources of interest: David Bowlegs, Pension File, Application 1138416, Certificate XC946437; Jerry Daniels, Pension File, Application 1411757; and Robert Kibbitts, Widow's Pension File, Application 856152, Certificate XC2681380, located in the Records of the Veterans Administration, RG15, at the National Archives. According to Porter's analysis of the aforesaid pension files, these files exemplify various forms of marriage that became part of tradition among the Mascogos in Mexico. If a couple desired to wed "Indian fashion," tradition stipulated the man to chase and capture the woman before witnesses. Commonly observed from the antebellum South (U.S.), another ceremonial option was for the man and woman to jump over a broomstick. Lastly, a third option involved the use of a Bible, where "the bride and groom clasped hands before witnesses and a master of ceremonies."³⁵² The master of ceremonies did not have to be literate in reading any passage but simply hold and present the Bible, which was used as a visual to sanctify the marriage.

Regarding approach towards writing this segment of history, it is necessary, as part of the process behind collecting and interpreting sources, to consider any identifiable gaps in archival evidence as equally important as the discovery of evidence. Specifically, one must grasp and contextualize the setting in which events occurred as related to explaining the scarcity of archival evidence. Individuals who rendered assistance to a runaway in Texas, who united in designing a Texas Underground Railroad, could not afford to leave evidence as such activity was deemed criminal behavior by Texas. The entire point of operations was to hide under the radar of Texas authorities, which means

³⁵² Porter, *Black Seminoles*, 147, 241.

most of evidence discovered points to a failed or flagged operation. Regarding the scarcity of archival evidence concerning runaways in Mexico, the main point for runaways was to stay hidden by deeply embedding selves into their respective community. What evidence is found typically pertains to the need of a Mexican godparent to act on behalf in arguing cultural citizenship, or through documented acts of violence perpetrated by Texas enslavers and American filibusters.

As final analysis and conclusion in arguing Mexico a safer haven for runaways, never has the Mexican government stipulated a reciprocity clause in catering to the demands of enslavers to return runaways in exchange for Mexican peons. While the arrival of runaways to Mexico caused international conflict with Texas and the U.S., Mexican civilians, border authorities, and government officials forged a legal pathway in enabling the attainment of citizenship and inclusion into society. Essentially, the Texas Underground Railroad to Mexico is an unapologetic story consisting of a multitude of historical actors who weighed personal belief in colorblind liberty over obedience to Texas law.

Of the estimated 4,000 runaways, possibly more towards 10,000, their legacy, while remaining at large a mystery, nevertheless, “leaves a culturally rich imprint within Mexico.”³⁵³ As research shows, runaways in Mexico became Mexican citizens who, if to lend voice to archival evidence, are remembered as godchildren, husbands, wives, fathers, and mothers, both a friend and a neighbor, as well as merchants, workers, and military servicemen. This is their story and the story of every facilitator and Mexican

³⁵³ Reference made to quote I stated and wrote in a paper titled, “Race Relations, Runaway Slaves, and the Reaching Beyond the Borderlands: Texas Underground Railroad, 1790-1861.” Paper published in the *Journal of South Texas* 31, no. 1 (Fall 2017):166.

benefactor who assisted the runaway in championing betterment in the quality of life, as research permitted in piecing together.

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- Talbot, Ann. *"The Great Ocean of Knowledge": The Influence of Travel Literature on the Work of John Locke*. Leiden: Brill, 2010.
- Thompson, Jerry D. *Vaqueros in Blue and Gray*. Austin: State House Press, 2000.
- Torget, Andrew J. *Seeds of Empire: Cotton, Slavery, and the Transformation of the Texas Borderlands, 1800-1850*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2015.
- Weber, David J. *The Mexican Frontier, 1821-1846 The American Southwest Under Mexico*. Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1982.

SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS AND LECTURES

- Hyams, Aaron. "Untitled," Lecture. Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX. October 6, 2016.

Reyes, Raúl. "Beyond the Tragic: The Untold Story of the Triumphant Afro Legacy and the Americas," Paper presented in Celebration of Black History Month, at Lone Star College-Cy-Fair, February, 2019.

Reyes, Raúl. "Untitled," Lecture. Lone Star College, Kingwood, TX. October 12, October 27, November 10, 2016.

THESES AND DISSERTATIONS

Crisp, James Ernest. "Anglo-Texan Attitudes Toward the Mexican, 1821-1845." Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1976.

Hammack, María. "The Other Underground Railroad: Hidden Histories of Slavery and Freedom across the Porous Frontiers of Nineteenth-Century United States, Mexico, and the Caribbean." M.A. thesis, East Carolina University, 2015.

Nichols, James David. "The Limits of Liberty: African Americans, Indians, and Peons in the Texas-Mexico Borderlands, 1820-1860." Ph.D. dissertation, Stonybrook University, 2012.

Reyes, Raúl. "'Gringos' and 'Greasers' and the Rio Grande Border: Race Resentment in the Mexican Revolutionary Era in El Paso, 1914-1916." M.A. thesis, University of Texas at El Paso, 1997.

Wilhelm, Hubert G.H. "Organized German Settlement and its Effects on the Frontier of South-Central Texas." Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, 1968.

VITA

Michelle Nichole Balliet

EDUCATION

Master of Arts student in History at Sam Houston State University, January 2019 – present. Thesis title: “Runaways and the Río Grande River: The Texas Underground Railroad to Mexico and Mexico’s Resolve to Uphold the Río Grande River as a Line of Resistance to Slavery, 1836-1861.”

Bachelor of Arts (May 2018) in History, with a minor in Secondary Education and Texas State teaching certification for Grades 7-12, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, Texas.

Associate of Arts (May 2015) in Liberal Arts, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, Texas.

PUBLICATIONS

Balliet, Michelle Nichole, (in review). “Xochicalco's Temple of Quetzalcoatl: The Enigma of its Exhibited Symbolism, Glyphs, and Architecture, with Indicators Marking Xochicalco a Tollan.” www.historicalmx.org

Balliet, Michelle Nichole. 2017. “Race Relations, Runaway Slaves, and the Reaching Beyond the Borderlands: Texas Underground Railroad, 1790-1861.” *Journal of South Texas* 31, No. 1:152-172.

Balliet, Michelle Nichole. 2016. “Tulum’s Majestic Castle: El Castillo.” www.historicalmx.org

Balliet, Michelle Nichole. 2016. “San Cristóbal de las Casas.” www.historicalmx.org

Balliet, Michelle Nichole. 2016. “Temple of the Feathered Serpent: The Sacred and the Cosmos.” www.historicalmx.org

CONFERENCES AND SPEAKER PRESENTATIONS

Balliet, Michelle Nichole and Littlejohn, Jeffrey. “The Centennial of 1919: Racial Violence and Historical Memory in Central Texas,” Central Texas Historical Association (CTHA) Annual Conference, Temple, Texas, April 2019.

Balliet, Michelle Nichole, Eckhoff, Andrew, Gorman, Jatwan, Meyer, Alexis, Robertson, Michele, and Hyams, Aaron (chair). “In Motion: The Migration Theme in Africana Slavery,” National Council for Black Studies 41st Annual Conference, University of Houston, Houston, Texas, March 2017.

Balliet, Michelle Nichole, Hackett, Sonia, Renderos, Eileen, and Reyes, Raúl R. (moderator). “Non-violent Demonstration for Purpose of Securing Political

Ends”?: ¡Basta! Raza and the Phenomenon Behind the “Don” Trump Piñata, NACCS Conference (National Association for Chicano Chicana Studies), Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, Texas, 2016.

Balliet, Michelle Nichole, Cardeñas, Krystal, and Drake, LaShonda. Student Experiences of the El Paso Alternative Spring Break Program, Bridging Cultures to Form a Nation Conference, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, Texas, 2013.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

President’s Honor Roll, Sam Houston State University, Spring 2016 – Spring 2018.

Recipient of the Lee Olm and Elizabeth Schofer Olm Scholarship, Department of History, Sam Houston State University, 2017.

Nominated by Sam Houston State University for inclusion in the *Who’s Who Among Students at American Universities and Colleges*, 2017.

Nominated by Sin Fronteras (Without Borders) Student Club Organization for “Student of the Year” Cody Award, Lone Star College-Kingwood, Kingwood, Texas, April 2015.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Study Abroad México, Sam Houston State University, 2016.

El Paso Alternative Spring Break, Lone Star College-Kingwood, 2013-2015.

STUDENT LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Treasurer, Sin Fronteras (Without Borders), Lone Star College-Kingwood, 2014 – 2015.

Vice President of Service, Phi Theta Kappa *Alpha Lambda Xi* Chapter, Lone Star College-Kingwood, 2014 – 2015.

MEDIA PROJECTS AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Hispanic Recruitment 99 2, Lone Star College Systems Office Media Team. Promotion video for purpose of diversifying talent pool. Woodlands, Texas, 2016.

History Study Abroad Video, Sam Houston State University Media Team. Promotion video of Study Abroad Mexico Program. Huntsville, Texas, 2016.

“Students take an Alternative Spring Break.” Interview by *Tribune* Correspondent Susan McFarland, *The Tribune Newspapers*, (July 2013):4B.

LSC-Kingwoods/Alternative Spring Break (El Paso) 2013, Lone Star College-Kingwood Media Team. Promotion video of program. Kingwood, Texas, 2013.