

Chicano Resistance In The Southwest

Alfred Porras, Jr.

INTRODUCTION

There are two dimensions of racism, economic and cultural, as indicated by Christine E. Sleeter (1). The first dimension involves “violent conquest, accompanied by the construction of a belief system that the conquering group is culturally and intellectually superior to the group it has conquered.” The second dimension involves ongoing attempts by the colonizing society to consolidate and stabilize control over the land and people, and to incorporate the people into the labor force in subordinate positions. At the cultural level, the colonizing group proclaims the superiority of its social system. During times of rebellion or instability, the dominant society reinforces its dominance through violence, and through assault on the culture, language, religion, or moral fiber of the subordinate group. (2)

Based on this definition of racism I begin my study of Chicano resistance in the “American” Southwest, since Sleeter’s first dimension is clearly present in the United States military takeover “with forcible measures to overturn Mexican land-ownership claims and to undermine Mexican culture, the Spanish language, and the Catholic religion.”(3)

This curriculum unit concerning conflict and resolution has the purpose to dispel the myth of the sleeping giant or the idea that the Mexican American people are unaware of their political potential. This curriculum unit will address three basic questions. What is conflict and resistance? What are the roots of conflict? What are the different modes of resistance?

According to Robert J. Rosenbaum, the history of the Mexican-American War of the mid-1800's indicates that it was a quick war and no real resistance occurred during the take over of Mexican land and during the imposition of dominance by the U.S. This perspective gives a perception about the war and the people left behind that literally justifies the U.S. takeover. As he states, rapid victory implies little or no resistance. A belief in little or no resistance leads to several comfortable attitudes toward the defeated. The victors can assume that the conquered really wanted to be conquered. They can use their win as evidence that the losers are a benighted, backward people who will benefit by the change in the long run—a kind of parental “this hurts me more than it hurts you” rationalization. A third attitude takes the speed of conquest as proof that the defeated are a cowardly and inferior branch of humankind, patently unfit for self-determination and prosperity in God’s chosen land. (4)

Based on these attitudes, the existence of a curriculum unit that explains the continued presence of different forms of resistance in the American Southwest since the

end of the War of 1846 will give the students a new perspective on attitudes and sentiments that exist today in U.S. society. I intend to use several different strategies to convey my topic and goals.

Below are listed several lessons to help students learn the history and concepts of Chicano resistance in the Southwestern "United States".

LESSON 1

The Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo: The Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits, And Settlement

This is a cooperative learning exercise designed to examine and interpret the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo (TGH), a treaty that ended the Mexican-American War of 1846 which was signed on February 2, 1848. The students will examine the treaty itself, interpretations of the treaty and its consequences. This will enable them to interact on the issues related to the development of a treaty and its implications to today's society.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, English, History, Political Science

Time Allotment

2 Class Periods (1.5 Hours Each)

Grade Level

High School

Objective

The objective in having students study this treaty is so that students can have a basis for the Anglo Mexican relationship that existed in the Southwestern United States as it relates to issues concerning Mexicans and the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.1. Identify major historical events and topics in U.S. History (1877 to Present) and be able to sequence this historical data and information
- USH.6. Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources.
- USH.7. Communicate social studies information effectively using written, oral, and visual forms.

Concepts and Vocabulary

Role of Senate, Role of Military, Ratification, Diplomacy, Articles, Jurisdiction
Indigenous, Raza, Self-Determination, Monroe Doctrine, Manifest Destiny, Citizenship,
United Nations, Land Grant, Protocol of Queretaro, Xicano Human Rights Council,
Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo

Materials

- Treaty Guadalupe Hidalgo (In Internet (5) or Griswold Del Castillo (6)
- *The X in La Raza II* (7) By Roberto Rodriguez

Focus

A focus to this lesson deals with two questions. They are: (1) how long have Mexicans been citizens of the United States and (2) what rights do Mexicans have as citizens of this country.

Activities

After a short discussion on this, students will be given a copy of the treaty and divided into groups that will examine an even number of articles each from the treaty. Their purpose in examining these articles is to look at what each article does for each country. Questions to ask about each article include: (1) What is its purpose? (2) What does each country gain or give up with the article? (3) What are the political ramifications of the article? (4) How does it formulate a lasting relationship between the two countries? After examining the articles assigned to them, each group will then give a short summary of each article to the class.

Continuing this analysis of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo students will compare the treaty signed by Nicholas Trist, the American representative, and his Mexican counterparts Luis G. Cuevas, Bernardo Cuoto and Mig Atristain, to the treaty ratified by the U.S. Senate and presented to the Mexican Government. A set of interesting questions concerning this are the following: (1) How are these treaties different and what are the implications to the changes made in the final Senate version? (2) What was the Protocol of Queretaro? (3) Was it enough to uphold the spirit of the articles from the treaty that were either modified or deleted from the original treaty? (4) Was the promise made by the Protocol of Queretaro sufficient enough to guarantee the peace promised by the original treaty?

We will examine the consequences of the concessions given by the Mexican Government as related to the people remaining in the "conquered" territories. Who was affected and how were they affected? This will be done by using a chapter called "The

Missing X in the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo" from "The X in La Raza II" by Roberto Rodriguez. How were/are political, economic and cultural interactions among those remaining in the newly "conquered" territories affected by these changes at the local and national level?

LESSON 2

Robber Barons and The American Southwest

This is an interactive classroom simulation exercise illustrating the legal and extra legal tactics used by land speculators who arrived in the southwest after the “conquest”. Students will view this from a perspective that provides them with an idea of who was involved in this takeover. In order to do this, students will first be given coordinates so that they may map out their land holdings and make assessments as to what they have available to them on there land. They will then be introduced to economic situations which affect each family differently. Land Speculators are then introduced to the simulation and begin their attempts to buy they land. Family groups can either sell or deny them access to land. This process of introducing economic situations and land speculators attempts to buy land continue until land take over is complete. Students will then be introduced to historical data that demonstrate the development of these land empires and its effects on those who were dispossessed.

Related Learning Opportunities

Math, Geography, English, History

Time Allotment

Block scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week) 2 days

Grade Level

High School

Objective

My objective in having students examine this issue is so that they will be able to describe Mexican Land Loss in the region during the late 1800’s.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.14.a. Describe the major social, political, and economic issues in the United States from 1877 to 1898.
- USH.14.b. Assess the impact of the major social, political, and economic issues in the United States from 1877 to 1898 on U.S. foreign and domestic policies.
- USH.14.c. Identify the contributions of prominent economic leaders.
- USH.15.a. Explain actions taken by racial, thnic, and cultural groups to expand their economic and political rights.
- USH.15.b. Determine the impact of immigration on the United States economy during the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- USH.15.c. Analyze how various racial, ethnic, and religious groups have helped to shape the national identity.

Concepts and Vocabulary

Land Grants, Land Displacement, Development, Heirs, Barbed Wire, Land Based Economy, Money Based Economy, Cattle industry.

Materials

- Large color coated index cards that describe each land grant by longitude and latitude as well as value and money available to each family with information about neighbors' land and value. (APPENDIX #4)
- Wall map of the three county area where land grants are located
- Laminated so that teacher can write and color on map with colored erasable markers.
- Individual maps of land grants (APPENDIX #2)
- White paper on which students draw new land acquisitions
- Colored erasable markers
- Activity sheets with directions do for each group
- Cards on economic trends, environmental changes, family emergencies, tactics or land auctions are written (APPENDIX #1)

Focus

We will begin this simulation by questioning the idea of land ownership and how Mexicanos came to live in the barrios of today's cities.

Activities

After a brief discussion, students will be placed into family groups. Each family will be given a color-coated card with a description of the land grant with holdings and money available (\$2000.00) to family. Students will first draw boundaries on a map using

longitude and latitude coordinates provided to them on the card. They will then discuss with their newly formed families three basic questions, which include: (1) What they have on their land? (2) Will they be willing to give up portions of their land and for how much? (3) Do they want to acquire land holdings of neighbors and for how much?

If families desire the need for more land the Family Representatives will go around the room discussing buying portions or all neighboring haciendas (Only family Representatives may discuss with other families and nothing may be done without approval by entire family.) Each student must keep a journal explaining where he or she stands in the discussion and how they as a family are to be affected. If a deal is made, then changes must be noted on their maps (with new coordinates) to show new land divisions. A paragraph explaining changes must be written. The deals must also be recorded on the wall map.

A land speculator is then introduced into the simulation. He makes offers to buy the land. Families can either accept or reject their offers. If a deal is made then it must be noted on the maps (with new coordinates) to keep track of what changes are being made. The teacher then introduces a scenario to each family where they are forced to decide to deplete their money resources. Once the family is out of money, they then begin to give up portions of their land to pay debts. This eventually leads to land being lost to land speculators or the State due to taxes. If State takes land for taxes then land then goes up for auction where the highest bidder gains ownership of the land. If land speculator makes an offer of \$1 and no one else makes offer, then he gains ownership of the land. This occurs no matter what the size of the property. The process described above of land loss will continue until all land is transferred to the land speculators.

In doing this, students are provided with a perspective that provides them with an idea of the political, economic and cultural implications to the arrival of land speculators. In closing this simulation, students will then be debriefed by asking them to list and discuss the different tactics used by the land speculators to take "legal" control of the land. They will also be introduced to historical data that demonstrates the development of these land empires and its effects on those who were dispossessed. (8)

LESSON 3

Juan N. Cortina

The unit will continue by having student's examine Anglo attitudes towards Mexicans in the 19th Century and the Mexican response to these attitudes. This will be done by first examining statements made by Anglos, reading a short article about Anglo attitudes and a Mexican's response, a short simulation/discussion and finally an essay analyzing the Mexican response.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, English, History, Reading

Time Allotment

Block Scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week) 2 days

Grade Level

High School

Objective

The objective in having students examine this issue is so that they will be able to recognize issues related to border conflicts during the late 19th Century.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.6. Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources.
- USH.7. Communicate social studies information effectively using written, oral, and visual forms.
- USH.8. Demonstrate the ability to use problem-solving-decision-making skills in social studies context.
- USH.15.c. Analyze how various racial, ethnic, and religious groups have helped to shape the national identity.

Concepts and Vocabulary

Resistance, Survival, Political Power, Proclamation, Hero vs Bandit Brownsville, Justice, Oppressors, Traitor, Public Opinion, Race and Class, Intercolonialism, media image

Materials

- Citizens of Brownsville (Appendix #5)
- 19th Century Anglo Quotes (Appendix #6)
- Article entitle "Juan Cortina: Rogue or Hero" (Appendix #7)

Focus

Students will examine quotes by Anglos in the 19th Century.

Activities

They will begin this section by examining quotes by Anglos about Mexicans from the 19th century. This will allow students to examine attitudes held towards Mexicans. This presentation will give students the necessary background to gain an understanding of the "why's" of Chicano resistance along the Texas Mexican border after the Mexican American War of 1846. To further this analysis of Anglo attitudes towards Mexicans, they will then read an article about the ethnic atmosphere which existed throughout the 1800's and the response by some Mexicans to these attitudes. After reading and discussing the article and quotes, students will then participate in a simulation/ debate. They will be placed into groups of four where they will discuss the Anglo attitudes and Mexican response through the eyes of a female storeowner, a water carrier, a rancher and a banker. Students will examine the atmosphere in the area in relation to their position in society. Taking on the persona of these four people, students will examine political, economic and social status issues based on the following questions.

- Why continue the attitude?
- How do Mexicans feel about Anglo attitudes?
- How do Mexicanos respond to these attitudes?
- Is Juan Cortina's response justified?
- Would you have done something different?

Students will then report their group's conclusions to these questions to the class. A discussion with the whole class will follow. After the discussion students will write a persuasive essay based on the following question: *Was Juan Cortina a bandit or a hero?*

LESSON 4

George Washington Gomez

Students will be further exposed to Chicano Resistance through Chicano literature by reading and examining the first section, or the first 34 pages, of *George Washington Gomez* by Americo Paredes to understand the economic, political and cultural position of Mexicans in South Texas during the early 20th century. This novel brings to life and gives voice through its characters to those who may have been involved in the writing of a document called "*El Plan de San Diego*"(9) To do this, students will be divided into groups in order to read sections of the unit. The whole class will then come together in order to discuss aspects of resistance present in South Texas during this period.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, Politics, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics

Time Allotment

Block scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week)2 days

Grade Level

High School

Objective

The purpose in bringing this literature to the students is so that they might be able to identify issues related to conflict and resistance within the Chicano/ Mexicano community and how it manifested itself during the early 20th century.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.7. Communicate social studies information effectively using written, oral, and visual forms.
- USH.8. Demonstrate the ability to use problem-solving-decision-making skills in social studies context.
- USH.11.b. Evaluate the ways that constitutional amendments and court decisions have promoted equality of political rights in the democratic process.

Concepts And Vocabulary

Race relations, Rinches, Sediciosos, Mexican vs Chicano Mentality

Materials

George Washington Gomez (pg 1 - 34)

Focus

What is the relationship that exists between Mexican and Chicanos and their view towards Anglos?

Activities

In order to accommodate the reading of 34 pages of a novel in class, students will be placed into groups of no more than 3 students each. They will each be assigned a section of the text from pages 1-34. I will encourage the groups to subdivide sections assigned. In doing the readings students will relate the reading to the following two questions: (1)

what is conflict and Resistance and (2) what are the Roots of Conflict? After completing the reading students regroup as class in order to report to the class and discuss what they have read.

LESSON 5

El Plan De San Diego

In this lesson, students assess issues related to Anglo-Mexicano relations and the motives of authors and those who carried out El Plan de San Diego, an armed revolt in 1915 and 1916 against Anglo rule in South Texas.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, Politics, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics

Time Allotment

Block Scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week) 1 day

Grade Level

High School

Objective

The purpose in bringing this document to them is so that they may list issue related to El Plan de San Diego.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.6. Apply critical-thinking skills to organize and use information acquired from a variety of sources.
- USH.7. Communicate social studies information effectively using written, oral, and visual forms.
- USH.8. Demonstrate the ability to use problem-solving-decision-making skills in social studies context.
- USH.11.b. Evaluate the ways that constitutional amendments and court decisions have promoted equality of political rights in the democratic process.

Concepts and Vocabulary

Plan de San Diego, Provisional Directorate, February 15, 1915, Imperialism, Complot, media image, Supreme Revolutionary Congress of San Diego, Texas, public opinion

Material

Copy of El Plan de San Diego

Focus

Look for article on the breakaway nation of West Texas in 1998?

Activities

After a short discussion on this, students will be given a copy of *El Plan* and divided into groups that will examine an even number of articles each from *El Plan*. The examination will revolve around the motives that brought these people to take this form of action against the "American State". In this discussion students will examine issues which deal with the political, economic and cultural interactions among Anglos and Mexicans and how they interact and function at the local, county, state and national levels. After examining the articles assigned to them, each group will then give a short summary of each article to the class.

LESSON 6

Corridos y The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez

In this lesson, I will introduce music and film to present history, life, and culture in a dramatic and exciting way through the eyes of characters with which my students are more likely to identify. This will be done by first examining the *corrido* or oral tradition and its significance in *Chicano/Mexicano* History. In this lesson, students will examine the purpose of corridos in the Chicano/Mexicano community and themes and styles related to them. This will be done by listening to and interpreting both modern and older corridos. After this students will view a movie based on a historical corrido and compare it to a written document.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, Politics, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics

Time Allotment

Block Scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week) 3 days

Grade Level

High School

Objective

The purpose in having students examine the corrido is so that they may identify characteristics of the corrido or oral tradition, its significance to the Chicano/ Mexicano History and to list events related to cases such as Gregorio Cortez.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.3.a. Analyze the effects of physical and human geographic factors on major events including the building of the Panama Canal.
- USH.4.a. Describe the effects of changing patterns as a result of migration within the United States.
- USH.18.a. Describe the relationship between private property rights and the settlement of the Great Plains.

Concepts And Vocabulary

Corrido, race relations, Hero, en media res, media image, public opinion

Materials

chalk board paper (notes) cds, tape or internet of Gregorio Cortez and other corridos
video - Gregorio Cortez T.V. V.C.R.

Focus

Listen to "Modern Corridos" such Gabino Barrera, Caballo de San Lucero
Listen to Corridos on Texas Rangers

Activities

This examination will involve a lecture/ discussion of characteristics present in the *corrido*. What are the stories about? What are they told about? Who are they told about? Where were many of the stories written from and how were they used in the making of some movies? Both modern and historical *corridos*, such as *Gabino Barrera* and the *Corrido de Gregorio Cortez*(10), will be examined to establish their connection to the past and the present.

To conclude this lesson, I will introduce the *Corrido de Gregorio Cortez* and discuss its relationship to resistance in Texas during this period in United States History and those who were involved on both sides. As an addition to this the movie The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez will be shown so that the students may be shown a visual interpretation of words which were written almost 100 years ago. In conclusion, students

will read a document written about the case of *Gregorio Cortez*(11) and make a comparison between the corrido, the movie and the written document.

LESSON 7

Resistance and Its Connection to the Present

Finally, guest speakers will introduce topics related to Chicano Studies. This will allow them to hear about personal experiences as to the continued resistance present in today's society. With this information they will be allowed to make comparisons and to the different modes of resistance present throughout the history of Chicanos in the United States.

Related Learning Opportunities

Geography, Politics, History, Anthropology, Sociology, Economics

Time Allotment

Block Scheduling (1 ½ hours a day and 5 days a week) 1 day

Grade Level

High School

Objective

My objective in having students exposed to people who have worked and continue to work in these struggles is so that they might identify and list issues related to Chicano Studies.

TEKS and Project Clear

- USH.15.a. Explain actions taken by racial, ethnic, and cultural groups to expand their economic and political rights.
- USH.15.b. Determine the impact of immigration on the United States economy during the late 19th and 20th centuries.
- USH.15.c. Analyze how various racial, ethnic, and religious groups have helped to shape the national identity.

Concepts and Vocabulary

Chicano Studies, Organizing, Lobbying, Relevant Classes, Information

Materials

Invite a speaker who is involved in issues relevant to the Chicano community.

Focus

This will be determined by speaker.

Activities

These topics may include the struggle to create Chicano Studies at the University level; Labor Organizing in the American Southwest, the struggle to maintain our culture and land rights issues. Speakers will include people who are involved or have been involved with these struggles within the Chicano/Mexicano community. This will allow them to hear about personal experiences as to the continued resistance present in today's society. As a wise elder once said, "in order for us to take control of our own future we must understand our own past." Or put another way, "el saber es el poder." I know firsthand that unless we are given access to our past through our own educational institutions, we cannot expect to advance as a people or as a society—and I intend to make a difference.

APPENDIX 1

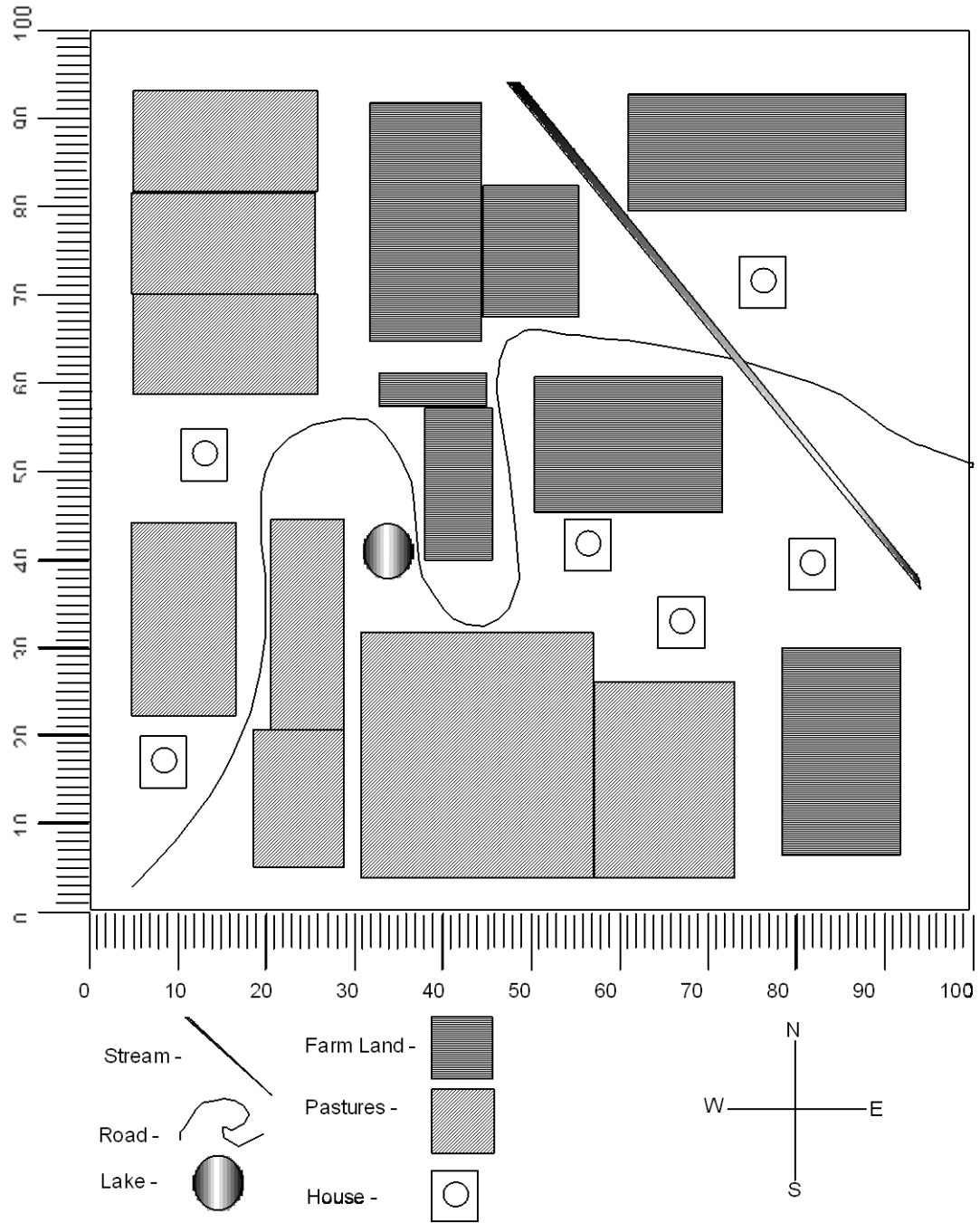
For teacher use: Duplicate as necessary and paste on tag board and laminate. Use as directed.

<p>A family settles on your land and Stakes claim. The court rules against You. Pay lawyer <u>\$200.00</u> and Lose <u>\$50.00 of land.</u></p>	<p>Your father dies and Mr. Rey Is married to his daughter therefore Receiving an <u>equal</u> portion of the land.</p>
<p>Mr. Rey gives you a document for You to sign. You hire a lawyer For <u>\$100.00</u> to explain it.</p>	<p>Your eldest son gets married. He receives <u>half</u> the land.</p>
<p>You borrowed money from Mr. Rey. <u>Pay \$200.00</u></p>	<p>There is a tick epidemic which wipes Your cattle out. You are forced to pay a bill for <u>\$200.00</u> to Mr. Rey.</p>
<p>Drought all summer, needs water From Mr. Rey. <u>Pay \$200.00</u></p>	<p><u>Freeze</u> half your herd is dead. Need to buy <u>\$100.00</u> worth of cattle in Mexico.</p>
<p>You have been ordered to pay <u>\$100.00</u> in property taxes to the county</p>	<p>You went to court to fight for taxes and property. You won your case, but you owe the lawyer <u>\$250.00</u></p>
<p>You need feed for your herd and buy <u>\$100.00</u> worth of feed from Mr. Rey</p>	<p>Your father dies and the land is divided Among the children.</p>

<p>Your daughter has married Mr. Rey. The dowry is set at <u>\$500.00</u> and Her share of the property.</p>	<p>Texas rangers invade your hacienda and kill the entire family with heirs. Mr. Rey buys the land in county auction for <u>\$1.00</u></p>
<p>You take Mr. Rey to court to graze Your cattle. You loose the case and Are forced to pay court cost of <u>\$100.00</u> and your lawyer <u>\$200.00</u></p>	<p>Mr. Rey fences his and your land. You take him to court. You loose the <u>\$300.00</u> worth of land he took. Pay your lawyer <u>\$500.00.</u></p>
<p>After the death of your father the state takes <u>All</u> of your land for lack of deed.</p>	<p>After your husband's death, you were Unable to pay the taxes. The State takes <u>all</u> of your property.</p>
<p>Cattle rustlers take your herd. You need to pay <u>\$200.00</u></p>	<p>You need to file a claim for your land. Pay <u>\$50.00</u> to file and <u>\$200.00</u> Lawyer's fee.</p>

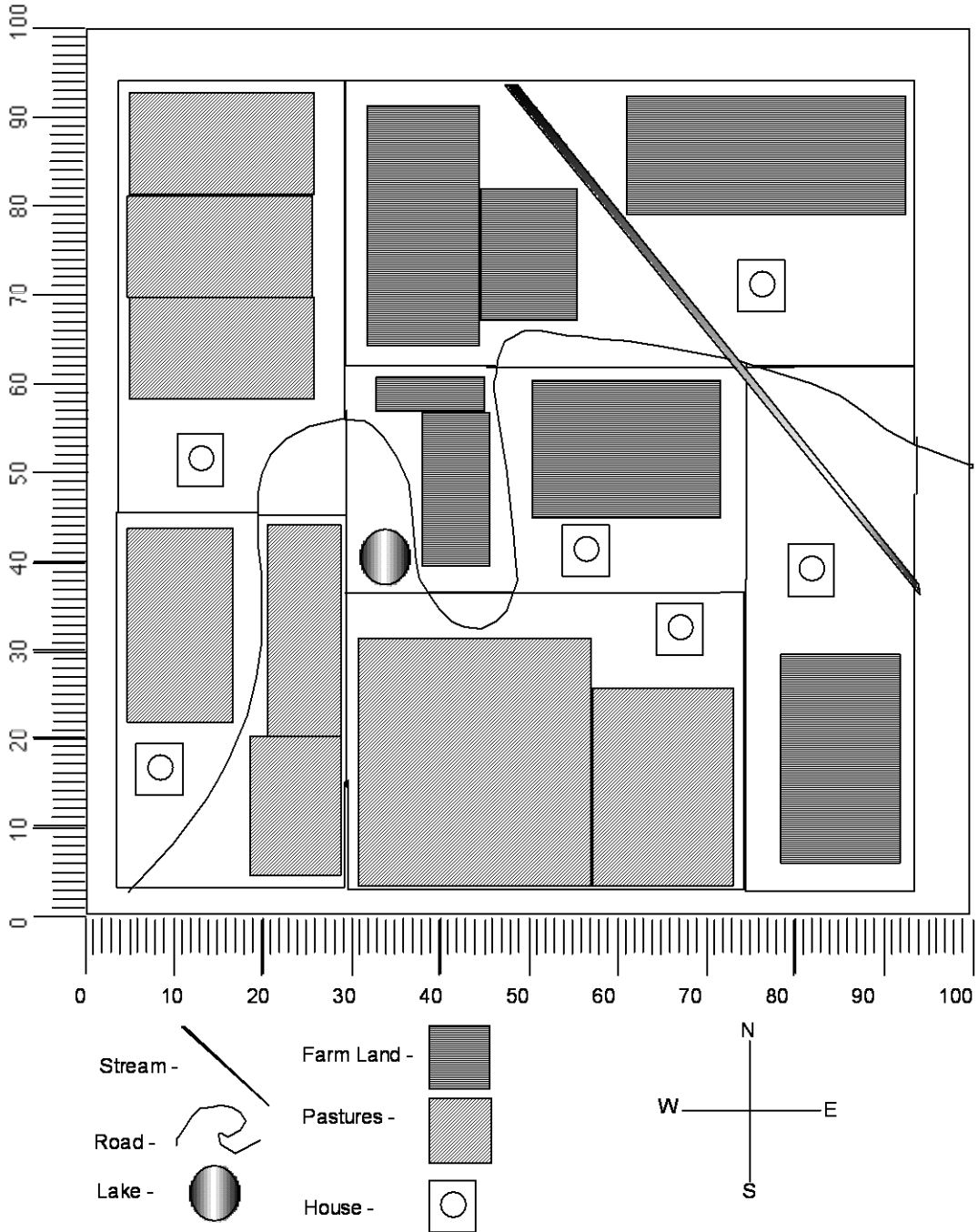
APPENDIX 2

For student use: Duplicate as necessary and laminate. Use as directed.



APPENDIX 3

For teacher reference.



APPENDIX #4

For student use: Duplicate as necessary and laminate. Use as directed.

Haciendas

Family #1	Family #2	Family #3
13 degrees S 62 degrees N 94 degrees E 75 degrees W	62 degrees S 94 degrees N 94 degrees E 30 degrees W	35 degrees S 62 degrees N 30 degrees E 75 degrees W
\$2000.00 available	\$2000.00 available	\$2000.00 available
Family #4	Family #5	Family #6
3 degrees S 35 degrees N 30 degrees E 75 degrees W	3 degrees S 45 degrees N 4 degrees E 30 degrees W	3 degrees S 45 degrees N 4 degrees E 30 degrees W
\$2000.00 available	\$2000.00 available	\$2000.00 available

APPENDIX #5

Citizens of Brownsville, Texas

For student use: duplicate as necessary and laminate. Use as directed.

Store Owner: 40years old Owns town store Family business last 30 years Patrons include newcomers and longtime customers Widow	Rancher: 55 years old Grandfather was original Spanish Grantee Land holds 1000 heads of cattle 3 sons all married - land is divided among them
Water Carrier: 33 years old Sells water to townspeople Family - Wife and four children Church goer	Banker: 30 years old Single Studied in Mexico

APPENDIX #6

For student use: Duplicate as necessary and laminate. Use as directed.

19TH Century Anglo Quotes

My object, the sole and only desire of my ambitions since I first saw Texas, was to redeem it from the wilderness--to settle it with an intelligent honorable and enterprising [sic] people. (12)

Stephen F. Austin

Referring to the best interest of the united States Stephen F. Austin in August of 1835 said, "that Texas should be effectually, and fully Americanized-that is- settled by a population that will harmonize with their neighbors on the *East*, in language, political principles, common origin, sympathy, and even interest. (13)

Citizens were a "lazy indolent poor Starved set of people as ever the Sun Shined upon."

American arriving in Nacogdoches in 1833 (14)

The people of Mexico were the most "degraded and vile; the unfortunate race of Spaniard, Indian and African, is so blended that the worst qualities of each predominate."

A Texan named H. H. in a letter to the New Orleans Bee in 1834 (15)

I yesterday saw (and the like may be seen on any Sabbath), many Mexicans leave chapel even before mass was concluded and repair to the gaming table; where they spent the remainder of the day perhaps the whole night." Labor to them was a last resort, he exclaimed.

William A McClintock, soldier participating in Mexican American War passing through San Antonio (16)

The Mexican could not be made to see that " his slow, primitive ways, his filth and lack of comfort, are not better than the frugal decency and careful home management of the Germans and Americans who surround him."

Edward King and J. Wells Champney in 1874 in San Antonio (17)

"These Greasers are not inclined to assimilate their customs and modes to those of whites," but persisted in their old ways

Harpers New Monthly Magazine correspondent in 1879 (18)

APPENDIX #7

Juan Cortina: Rogue or Hero?

From the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo until well after the turn of the century, Mexicanos resisted Anglo domination with violence. Violent efforts at self-preservation ranged from individual outbursts of social bandits to planned and coordinated uprisings by groups like Las Gorras Blancas (in New Mexico). (19)

Their actions were in reaction to Anglo attitudes and actions towards Mexicans during the period.

In Texas, the attitude of Anglo's towards Mexicans has been very well documented by Anglo newspapers and legal documents. Referring to Mexicans, examples include the following:

"They could live a week on what an American would eat in a day and do well." And how should Mexicans be treated? " You will hear many say that you must treat them like dogs," Bundy warned, "but that depends upon how you treat your dogs. There is no human so low but who will appreciate kindness and wishes you to tell him of it if he does your work well." Punctuality in meeting appointments was essential, as was consistency in employer-employee relationships. "Be as particular in little things with them as if they were of importance, for they are people of little things. Be firm, yet kind. No cursing; no swearing and charging around him, "

H Bundy of Pleasanton, TX, Sheep raiser (20)

Referring to Mexicans as

"A vagrant class, a lazy, thievish, horde of lazaron [*lazaros*, beggars] who in many instances are fugitives justice in Mexico, highway robbers, horses and cattle thieves and idle vagabond who prowl about our western country with little visible occupation or pursuit."

Anglos in Seguin 1854 and 1855 (21)

These are just two examples of the many, which exist of Anglo attitudes towards Mexicans in Texas, at least. These were compounded by the "plundering that marked the Anglo-American occupation." (22) This was made clear and expanded through the three major complaints of Juan N. Cortina's, one such "bandit", proclamations that included:

Loss of land either through legal manipulation or through intimidation; the impunity with which Anglos killed Mexicans; and the arrogance of Anglo American racism, "so ostentatious of its own qualities." (23)

His revolutionary career began with an incident that was commonplace during the period. He witnessed the pistol whipping of his ranch hand by Marshall Bob Spears in Brownsville, Texas. (24) With this incident he immediately retreated to his mother's ranch where he planned to return to Mexico. It was here that he learned of other incidents of abuse by Anglos. "On September 28, (1959) he rode into (Brownsville) and raised the Mexican flag. (25) Many claimed that he had plundered the city although his supporters "point out that he did not rob and steal when he had the city at his mercy...." (26)

This brought a statewide negative reaction by Anglos towards Mexicans and therefore brought about the "depopulation and laying to waste of the whole country from Brownsville to Rio Grande City, 120 miles. Business as far up as Laredo, 240 miles, had been interrupted and suspended for five months." (27) This is better exemplified in the following examples. First,

Reports circulated that Mexicans from both sides of the Rio Grande were advancing toward the area, intent on exterminating every white inhabitant and reconquering the country as far as the Colorado. At Goliad, a citizen's committee issued the alarm that Cortina's robbers were killing whites when apprehended, and that an excited Mexican Rabble in the streets of Brownsville was crying for death to Anglos. (28)

This was further exemplified by the defensive posture taken by Anglos in the state. For example,

Nueces County residents appealed to whites in Victoria, Goliad, Refugio, Karnes, and Live Oak counties to come to arms and ammunition to rescue them in "this deserted and unprotected frontier." (29)

The rebels were defeated in December after the U.S. army was brought in because the Texas Rangers failed to control the situation and further inflaming the local Mexican citizens by hanging Tomas Cabrera one of Cortina's lieutenants. (30) After this defeat, sporadic fighting continued for the next six months.

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