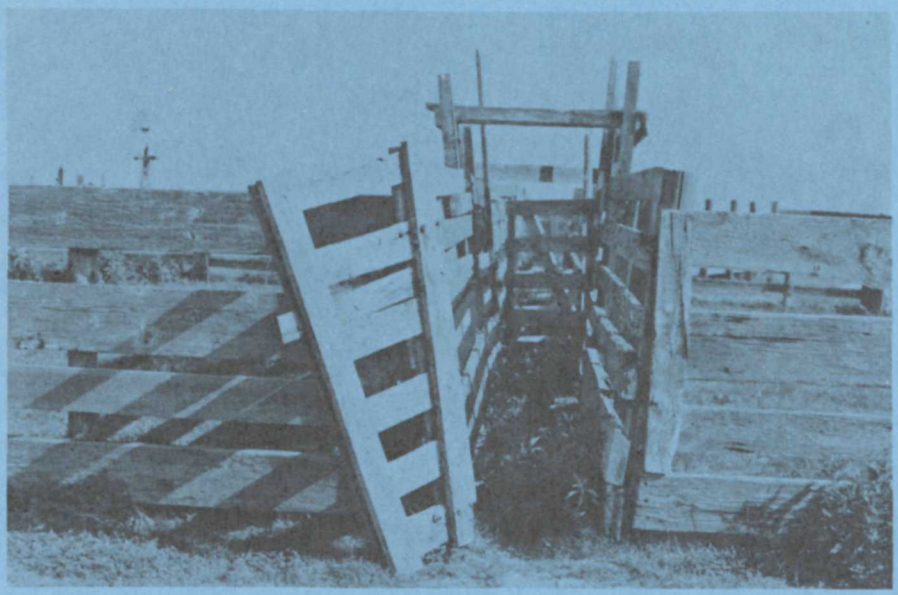
PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

HISTORIC RESOURCE STUDY



AUGUST 1971

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by

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Abstract

This Historic Resource Study of Padre Island contains a brief survey of the island's history from its discovery in 1519 to the creation of Padre Island National Seashore in 1962.

The study focuses on the three cultures which experienced the island, Indian, Spanish, and American. Each culture defined its relatedness to Padre differently. For the Indian, Padre was a source of food and an island to which he could retreat when seeking refuge from attacking enemies. For the Spanish, Padre was another coastal feature in a barren and forbidding wilderness. Until the beginning of the 19th century the Spanish viewed the Isla Blanca, as Padre was called for almost 300 years, primarily as a place where ships wrecked among hostile Indians or enemy European powers planned intrigue. In 1805 a Spanish priest named Padre Nicolas Balli obtained a land grant to the island for the purpose of raising cattle. The transformation of Padre from wilderness barrier island to peaceful natural resource began at this time.

The American replaced Spanish or Mexican influence on Padre at the time of the Mexican War in 1846. Until the 1920s he defined his relationship to the island in a manner similar to Padre Balli. Between 1846 and 1879 various men raised cattle on the island. In 1879 a man named Pat Dunn came to Padre from the mainland and it was not long before he owned the entire island. The Dunn ranching activities continued until 1971. Beginning in the 1920s Americans began to view Padre as a place where one could enjoy the outdoor pleasures of swimming, boating, fishing, and hunting. This relationship to the island has continued to the present day. In the middle of the 1950s Padre assumed still another value when it was recognized that the island was one of the few barrier islands in the United States that retained the natural characteristics of such an island. The perception that Padre combined an unspoiled or unchanged natural environment with outdoor recreation values led some Americans to suggest that Padre would make an ideal national park. In 1962 the movement to establish a national recreation area achieved success with the passage of the legislation creating Padre Island National Seashore.

Emerging from the study of Padre's history is an identification of the island's major historic resources. This study surveys those resources and makes recommendations for the preservation and interpretation.

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Introduction

In 1962 Sigurd Olson, the noted American wilderness ideologue, spoke to an international audience of park supporters gathered in Seattle to attend the first world conference on national parks. Addressing himself to modern man's relationship to nature, Olson outlined a philosophical concept for better understanding of the meaning and significance of national parks. Preserving nature in natural and recreational areas is necessary, Olson explained, because they provide islands of removal and solitude in the midst of modern society's noise, confusion, and speed. Such areas are "islands from which we may glimpse not only the mystery of the universe, but ourselves in the new role we must now play."[1]

Olson used the term island in a metaphorical sense to express an image of the national park as a place separate and removed. At the time he spoke, a committee of the United States Congress was weighing a bill that called for the transformation of a real island into an area that would provide solitude from civilization's noise, confusion, and speed. Located just off the Texas coast and extending from Corpus Christi Bay south to the mouth of the Rio Grande is a long narrow stretch of beach, sand dunes, and grass. The bill proposed that a section of the island become a national recreation area and that it be called Padre Island National Seashore. The national seashore would be an island in nature where the modern American could glimpse the mystery of the universe and the new role he must now play. Olson's idea of preserving nature as an island for modern man would become a reality on Padre Island.

The intention of this Historic Resource Study of Padre Island is to narrate briefly the island's background and historical significance from the time of the Indian to the creation of the Padre Island National Seashore. Methodologically the study approaches the island from the perspective of environmental history, i.e., the study focuses on the historical interaction of man and the natural environment of Padre Island. The object is to view Padre as a document which reveals thought and action; to read, in a sense, the island's environment as one would a primary source.

A second intention of this study is to evaluate the area's historic resources. Recommendations for historic resource preservation are contained in Appendix Two. An historical base map accompanies the report. In addition, Appendix Three contains a recommended List of Classified Structures. The recommendations, historical base map, and List of Classified Structures are intended for National Park Service planning and management purposes.

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1. Sigurd Olson, "A Philosophical Concept," First World Conference of National Parks (Washington, 1962), p. 50.

Historically three identifiable cultures, Indian, Spanish, and American, encountered Padre Island. The study is therefore divided into three major chapters: Indians and an island, Spaniards and an island, and Americans and an island. Each culture related to the island's environment on a number of levels. The study will examine these levels.

At the outset a word of caution is in order. Padre is in no sense a historic island. It of course has a human history as does every square mile of the North American land mass. However, with the exception of a 1553 Spanish galleon shipwreck, no historic event of transcendent importance took place on Padre Island. For 443 years from its "discovery" in 1519 by European explorers to the 1962 authorization of the Padre Island National Seashore, the island was another feature in the total environment of the Texas gulf coast. Coahuiltecan and Karankawa Indians lived on Padre. However, in terms of the anthropology of the historic Texas Indian tribes no distinction can be made between Padre and similar barrier islands from Galveston Bay to Brazos Island. Indians lived on them all. At the beginning of the nineteenth century Spain granted the island to a member of her colonial elite, Padre Nicolas Balli, who turned the island into a cattle ranch. At the same time, however, similar grants were made of all the land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces rivers. After United States acquisition of Mexican territory to the Rio Grande at the end of the Mexican War, Americans moved to Padre to raise cattle. Simultaneously the Texas mainland from the coast of San Antonio became a huge open cattle range covering literally thousands of square miles. In relation to the famous King and Kenedy ranches, which bordered Padre, cattle raising on the island was a similar form of land utilization, but on a much, much smaller scale. It was only with the beginning of sophisticated industrial and agricultural land utilization during this century that Padre Island became qualitatively distinguishable from its surroundings. While modern society transformed the environment of the mainland, and Corpus Christi beceme one of the country's fastest growing cities, Padre retained its nineteenth century environmental characteristics. Indeed the Island became one of the very few barrier islands in the United States that had not been altered in one way or another by man. Padre's untouched or unaltered natural environment led some to suggest that such an area should be preserved for its scientific, scenic, and recreational values. The most important single fact in the island's past is that it has a limited human history. The American did not lay his indeed productive but often heavy and disfiguring hand on Padre Island.

Chapter 1

Indians and An Island

In 1840, Francis Moore, Jr., an enterprising citizen of the Republic of Texas, published a map and description of the new country. Similar to promotional literature published throughout the West, the book was directed to all potential immigrants. It praised Texas as possessing a healthful climate, abundant resources, and opportunities unlimited. Texas did have a few frontier disadvantages, such as a minor Indian problem, but they were not serious. Those thinking of making Texas their new home should not be deterred by exaggerated tales of Indian depredations. "The Indian tribes of Texas," he wrote, "with the single exception of the Commanches, are all small and but the mere remnants of tribes who have been driven from their original hunting grounds."[2] Moore's observations were especially accurate in relation to the tribes of the Texas gulf coast. Americans, who had been entering Texas in ever increasing numbers since empresario Stephen Austin's 1821 settlement, had by 1840 in fact reduced the coastal tribes to mere remnants of their former numbers. As a result very little is known about the tribes that inhabited the region from Galveston Bay south into Mexico. Their uprooting was so total and complete that American ethnologists never had an occasion in later years to visit reservations to study their cultures. Although more Indian tribes lived in Texas than in any other state, it contains no major reservations.

The study of the archeology of the Texas gulf coast is still a young field of investigation. This is especially true of the central and southern sections. From what data has been gathered, archeologists have grouped the Texas Indian cultures in four stages: Paleo-American, Archaic, New-American, and Historic. On the Texas gulf coast next to nothing is known about Paleo-American culture. Archeologists have defined only one Archaic culture, the Aransas focus. It is confined to the area around Aransas and Corpus Christi bays. Although archaic groups from the mainland visited Padre Island, nothing is known about them. For the New-American stage, archeologists have again defined only one culture, the Rockport focus. It is found along the coast from Matagorda Bay to Baffin Bay. This area includes Padre Island. The Karankawa and Coahuiltecan tribes of southern Texas are linked to this focus. These two tribes can be considered Padre Island's principal Indian visitors.

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2. Francis Moore, Jr., Map and Description of Texas. (Philadelphia, 1840), p. 29.

a. The Coahuiltecans

As is the case with the other tribes of the Texas Gulf Coast very little is known about the Coahuiltecans. They belonged to the Western Gulf culture area, which also included the Karankawa. Ethnologically the term Coahuiltecan is unusual. Most North American Indians are identified with a linguistic family. This is not the case with the designation Coahuiltecan. The name does not stand for a tribe or group of tribes that shared a common basic language. Rather it is a geographical designation. Coahuiltecan gathers together and identifies more than 200 small tribes and bands which inhabited a territory running from Corpus Christi Bay south across the Rio Grande. To the west Coahuiltecan territory extended to the Nueces and crossed the Rio Grande in the vicinity of the mouth of the Pecos. The problem of identifying, locating, and estimating the populations of the over 200 Coahuiltecan tribes and bands which inhabited this territory plagues historians and ethnologists. It is perhaps an impossible task. A number of groupings have been identified, such as the Aranamas between the San Antonio and Guadalupe rivers, the Orefons on the lower Nueces, and the Barrado and Malaquite between the Rio Grande and Corpus Christi Bay. The Barrado and Malquite probably often visited Padre Island.

The Spanish knew the Coahuiltecans and established missions such as San Antonio de Bexar among them. Spanish missionaries labored long and hard among the Coahuiltecans and apparently had some success. However, by the time the Americans first arrived in Texas after the 1821 Mexican Revolution, the Coahuiltecans had all but disappeared. They had been driven out of southwest Texas by the Lipan Apache, who themselves had been driven south by northern tribes.

The Coahuiltecans were in terms of their subsistence type and material culture among the most primitive of the Texas Indians. Having a very limited natural resource base, their subsistence combined hunting, gathering-collecting, and fishing. They very literally ate anything they could kill. This included bison and deer, which they hunted communally. They fished with the bow and arrow in the streams and lagoons. Their vegetables consisted of, among others, the bulbs of agaves and lechuguilla and prickly pear fruit or "tuna." A favorite food was the bean of the mesquite. The Coahuiltecans dried the beans, pounded them into a flour, mixed the flour with other seeds or berries, and then ate the concoction together with such gourmet delights as pulverized bones.

Their tools were few and uncomplicated, including knives, scrapers, flint hammers, and curved wooden sticks used in grubbing and digging. The bow and arrow was their principal weapon. Coahuiltecan huts or wickiups consisted of sharpened willow poles, which were implanted in the ground in the form of a circle. A ring of these poles constituted a lodge frame, which was covered with skins. There was no arrangement for a fire hole. Smoke from the fire within the lodge escaped through any side left open.

Coahuiltecan social organization was also simple. Each band or tribe had a chief, but there is no record of tribal societies. The nature of elite groups, if any, is unknown. Shamans occupied an important position. The family was the basic social and economic unit and kinship paterns were patrilineal. Within the band there were no full-time occupational specialization and apparently no class distinctions. Natural resources were free for all to exploit.

The supernatural beliefs or superstitions of the Coahuiltecans are also unknown. Their religious ceremonies and festivals involved dancing and feasting. Unfortunately, nothing is known about tribal ritual and none of the Coahuiltecan myths have been preserved. A shaman apparently functioned among the Coahuiltecan in a manner similar to his role among other tribes. He knew the ritual for religious ceremonies and was also the tribal doctor. Cabeza de Vaca, who spent time among the Coahuiltecans during his sixteenth century odyssey on the Texas gulf coast, became a noted shaman. The Indians felt he had supernatural healing powers. Passage from childhood to adulthood was marked by appropriate ceremonies. After a young man had proven his ability as a warrior, he was ready for tattooing. During all their festivals of thanksgiving for success in the hunt or good fortune in inter-tribal warfare, the Coahuiltecans consumed peyote. Eaten green or dried and drunk as tea, this hallucinogen provided stimulus for frenzied dancing which often lasted for days.

Like all other Indians, the Coahuiltecans participated in inter-tribal warfare. Little is known about which tribes were their historic or bitterest enemies, but it is probable that they fought with most of their neighbors. The bow and arrow was their major weapon. They apparently took scalps and were also cannibalistic, as were most of the coastal tribes. Inter-tribal warfare was constant, and thus security was as important to the tribe as the food quest.

Lacking firm historical evidence of Coahuiltecan culture, one can only infer their relationship to Padre Island. It is probable that visits to the Island were a part of the seasonal food quest. In search of food the Coahuiltecans wandered from food source to food source and often returned to the same places. At certain times of the year, probably during summer, they crossed over from the mainland to Padre via a ford or in canoes. On the island they fished with the bow and arrow, gathered oysters, and collected a variety of shell fish. In addition they might have fled to Padre seeking security from an attacking enemy. Unlike the Karankawa, who always remained on the coastal plain and islands, the Coahuiltecans also inhabited large areas of the mainland, where they hunted bison and deer. It is probable that their visits to Padre were of short duration. The island was not one of their major habitats, but they visited it on a seasonal basis.

b. The Karankawas

"They were the Ishmaelites of Texas," wrote a chronicler of Indian depredations in Texas, "for their hands were against every-man and everyman's hand was against them."[3] The writer was referring to the Karankawas, the tribe most often identified with the Texas gulf coast. The Kronks, as Texans also called them, were indeed the scourge of the first American settlers in Texas. In defense of the land they inhabited long before Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda first sailed along the gulf coast in 1519, the Karankawa raided and killed. Texans returned Karankawa depredations in kind, often decimating an entire band to repay the death of an unfortunate rancher. Unlike the other North American tribes who had resisted American westward expansion, the Karankawa were not granted a reservation by a guilt-plagued government. They disappeared.

The history of the Karankawa Indians is largely unknown. What little knowledge we have of them is derived from from Spanish sources to the 1820s and American sources thereafter. Ethnologically they are classified as a member of the Gulf culture area. They were probably related to the Coahuiltecan tribes to the west and south and more directly to the Pakawa group. The extent of Karankawa historic territory was first described by Alvar Nuñez Cabeza de Vaca, the now famous Spaniard who was shipwrecked on Galveston Island in 1528 and spent the next eight years as a slave and shaman among the coast tribes. According to de Vaca, the Karankawas inhabited a territory extending from Galveston Bay to Aransas Bay. They lived on a narrow strip of coastal prairie and frequently visited all the coastal islands. Rarely did the Karankawas venture away from the tidal plain into the territory of their enemies, the Tonkawas, and after the second half of the eighteenth century, the Lipan Apaches and the Comanches.

Five bands or groups made up the tribe. Between Galveston Bay and the Brazos River lived the Capoques and the Hans. South along the coast around the mouth of the Colorado were the Kohanis (also spelled Cohanis). The Karankawas proper resided around Matagorda Peninsula. Dwelling along Copana Bay and St. Joseph Island were the Kopanos (also spelled Copane or Cobanes).[4] Each of these five bands was autonomous and independent, but all shared the same language and culture. In historic times they apparently were not confederated for war or defensive purposes and may have often fought among themselves.

Spanish contact with the Karankawas until well into the eighteenth century was limited almost exclusively to unfortunates who shipwrecked

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3. J. W. Wilbarger, Indian Depredations in Texas (Austin, 1935), p. 198.

4. William W. Newcomb, Jr., The Indians of Texas (Austin, 1961), p. 60.

on the coast or an occasional exploration entrada. When in 1553 a gulf hurricane broke up a Spanish treasure and supply fleet of some 20 ships off Cuba, one or more of the stricken galleons ran ashore on Padre Island. Three hundred Spaniards, no longer thinking of once again seeing the motherland, faced a long march back to the settlements of New Spain and safety. They had not straggled far down Padre's scenic beach when Indians began a series of hit-and-run attacks which lasted all the way down the coast into Mexico and which left a single survivor, Father Marcos de Mena. The Karankawas receive the dubious distinction of being the perpetrators of these deeds, but the true identity of the Indian attackers is unknown. They could just as well have been Coahuiltecans. The trials and tribulations of de Vaca and de Mena among the Karankawas gained the tribe a reputation of being heathen savages.

When in 1685 Robert Cavelier Sieur de la Salle sailed past the mouth of the Mississippi and into Matagorda Bay in hopes of conquering Spanish territory for Louis XIV, he found himself among the Karankawas. After establishing Fort Louis for his colony on Garcitas Creek up from the bay, La Salle set out to explore the territory to the west. He hoped to win the Indians to his flag. He had little success and four years later, after a series of disasters, La Salle was forced to head for Canada seeking a relief expedition. The Karankawas promptly overwhelmed the few remaining members of the ill-fated colony, killing the majority and taking a few youngsters captive. When shortly thereafter the Spaniards, who had heard rumors of the French threat to their Texas empire, finally found the remains of Fort Louis, they were naturally horrified at what had happened to their fellow Europeans. Some suggested the only way to deal with the Karankawas was to exterminate them. Better counsels, primarily a Roman Catholic Church anxious to save the Karankawas' heathen souls for God, prevailed. The scheme was temporarily forgotten.

At the end of the seventeenth century Spain, alarmed by both British and French activity on the eastern boundaries of her North American kingdom, decided to establish a presence in her exposed eastern territories. To accomplish the objective it was decided to apply a colonial policy which had proven successful among the natives throughout Latin America. At locations chosen for their strategic importance, Spanish authorities established a presidio and a mission. The presidio handled secular affairs of colonial administration and military security. The mission was responsible for religious matters, i.e., Indian conversion to the Roman Catholic faith and their training in civilized occupations such as blacksmithing, tailoring, weaving, and brick making. As Carlos E. Castañeda, a leading authority of the Spanish period in Texas, points out, "The mission was primarily a frontier institution, designed to supplement the military outpost or presidio in holding and extending the Spanish dominion."[5]

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5. Carlos E. Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, edited by Paul J. Foik (7 vols,, Austin, 1936), 3, 27.

For the purpose of pacifying the coastal tribes, and especially the wild and savage Karankawas, Spanish authorities established a presidio, La Bahia, and a mission, Nuestra Señora Espíritu Santo de Zuñiga, near La Salle's old Fort Louis. Between 1722 and the end of the Spanish period in Texas in 1836, Spanish civil and religious authorities labored long and hard to bring the benefits of Christianity and civilization to the Karankawas. Other missions were established for this purpose, e.g., Refugio in 1792. The efforts went unrewarded. Although the Karankawas came to the missions at various times in order to obtain security, food, and gifts, they never gave up their traditional habits and customs. The Karankawas refused to be acculturated, preferring instead to roam their historic territory of coastal prairie and islands between Galveston and Baffin bays. One of the islands they often visited was Padre.

When in 1821 Stephen Austin assumed responsibility for his dead father's dream of colonizing Texas, he found his settlement plans blocked by the Karankawas. Between 1821 and 1836 Texans and Karankawas carried on an unrelenting war of raid and reprisal, raid and reprisal. In 1824 and again in 1827 Austin attempted to sign peace treaties with the Karankawas. The treaties were modeled on those signed by American authorities with other tribes. Neither party honored the treaties terms and the civil war continued. The Texans, assisted by the Comanches, Lipan Apaches, and disease, continued to decimate the Karankawas. At the same time the Spanish colonial administration slowly disintegrated. Refugio, the last mission among the Karankawas, was finally secularized in 1828 and then abandoned. As William Oberste, S.J., comments on the tribe's relationship to the church, "Their concept of the new religion was one to feed a gnawing stomach. The care of their souls was a necessity they could not comprehend."[6] By the time of the Texas rebellion, or War of Independence, in 1836, the Karankawas consisted of several small bands scattered among the bays and islands along the coast.

Between 1836 and 1846 the Republic of Texas established no Bureau of Indian Affairs. A Texas journalist who has written a history of the Karankawas describes their fate during the first years of American settlement in Texas. "The next two decades were to witness the progress of the bloody reducing process."[7] When the Mexican War broke out in 1846, the Karankawas had all but disappeared. Nobody apparently knows what happened to the last bands. Some claim they moved into Mexico, where they were killed either by other Indians or Mexicans. Smauel Reid, Jr., who was a member of group of Texas Rangers who rode down Padre Island

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6. William Oberste, History of Refugio Mission (Refugio, 1942), p. 68.

7. Edward W. Kilman, Cannibal Coast (San Antonio, 1959), p. 201.

in 1846 on their way to the war, contended that the Karankawas committed collective suicide on Padre Island. "Murdering their women and children," he wrote, "the warriors sought for some uninhabited island, where they could wait patiently for that death which was forever to destroy all traces of their tribe."[8] Alice W. Oliver, who as a child living on Matagorda Bay knew the Karankawas, was probably more accurate when she stated, "When they realized that their traditions were the only inheritance of their children and that the deeds of their generation could never add any luster to the record, that in a few years they would be utterly extinguished as a nation, the spirit seemed to die within them and their degradation was complete."[9] Death at the hands of Texas settlers, their fellow Indians, the Lipan Apaches and the Comanches, and the ravages of disease ended Karankawa existence. A tribe which Spanish missionaries at the beginning of the eighteenth century estimated to number in the thousands disappeared. There was nothing heroic in the deeds of the perpetrators, as a popular folklore of brave and hardy settlers versus savage and brutal Indians has long held. Karankawa culture was indeed primitive and some of their tribal behavioral characteristics repugnant and savage. There is, however, no rationalization for genocide.

The Karankawas' physical appearance impressed all those who saw them. Tall, often over six feet, and well proportioned, they projected an image of graceful strength. Upon drawing closer, however, one discovered that they were not beautiful children of nature. Both sexes were ugly. With the exception of splendid white teeth, they were very filthy. Indeed they gave off a most unpleasant odor which many thought resulted from poor hygienic practices. In reality the odor came from the shark or alligator oil with which they smeared their bodies as protection against mosquitoes and other insects. The oil may have been offensive, but it worked. When on Padre Island the Karankawas were never driven to the beach to escape the mosquitoes.

Karankawa dress and ornamental attire were not as elaborate as other Indian tribes, but they were nevertheless functional and distinctive. The men wore a simple breech cloth and the women a skirt to the knees. Children went naked. In colder weather men and women also wore blankets. However, because the shark and alligator oils ruined clothes, they preferred to go as naked as possible. Males often braided their hair in three strands into which they inserted bright

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8. Samuel C. Reid, Jr., The Scouting Expeditions of McCulloch's Texas Rangers (New York, 1970), p. 70.

9. Alice W. Oliver, "Notes on the Carancahua Indians," The Karankawa Indians, Archeological and Ethnological Papers of the Peabody Museum, 1, No. 2 (1891), 16.

objects. Females wore their hair long and straight. According to Jean Louis Berlandier, who visited the Karankawas in 1830, the men at times wore cock feathers behind their ears and a wreath of grass on their heads. Berlandier, a Frenchman who had been employed by the Spanish authorities to act as naturalist and ethnologist to General Manuel Mier y Teran's 1828 Texas survey, also reported that the Karankawas wore vermillion around their eyes and smeared their bodies with white, black, or red paints.[10] Others recorded that males also wore strings of shells, glass beads, or pistachio nuts at their throats in addition to little disks of tin, brass, or another metal.[11] The most striking element of Karankawa body decoration was their practice of tattooing their faces with blue lines and perhaps even figures. Every Euroamerican who encountered them noted the tattoos which, when combined with body paints, gave the tall, half-naked Karankawas a truly startling appearance.

As was the case with all Indian tribes, Karankawa subsistence and material culture demonstrated an adaptation to their environment. No one animal species was sufficiently prevalent on the Texas coastal prairie to become the basis of Indian subsistence, as happened on the Great Plains with its vast bison herds. The tidewater section of the Texas gulf coast from Galveston to the Rio Grande contained a large variety of flora and fauna, which constituted the food supply of Karankawa economy. Big-game animals which the Karankawa hunted included deer, buffalo stragglers, antelope, mountain lion, and bears. Hides from these animals were employed for a wide variety of purposes such as clothing, covers for the lodges, and bedding. In the lagoons and bays the Karankawas took sea trout, red fish, flounder, sheep's head, Spanish mackerel, and jew fish. Although in later years they may have used cane weirs and lines to catch these fish, the bow and arrow was their historic method of securing fish. They amazed the whites who had the opportunity to watch them with their exceptional accuracy with this weapon. In addition they collected shell fish such as mussels and oysters and killed turtles. They hunted the wide variety of ducks and geese found along the coast and also killed wild turkeys. Gathering also constituted an important source of food. They ate many plants such as bulbous nuts, berries, persimmons, the prickly pear tuna, and cactus figs. Tea made from the leaves of the yaupon shrub was a favorite drink. As in most Indian tribes the men procured the food and the women prepared it. Meat and fish were cooked in pots or roasted on a fire. Oysters were also cracked in the fire. The women crushed fruits and seeds on stones. Yaupon tea was prepared by boiling the leaves

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10. Jean Louis Berlandier, The Indians of Texas in 1830, edited by John C. Ewers (Smithsonian Institution Press, 1969), p. 148.

11. Albert S. Gatschet, The Karankawa Indians, p. 61.

and then drinking the hot foam. According to some observers, this brew had an intoxicating effect.

Karankawa tools, utensils, and weapons were simple and primitive. They consisted of knives, scrapers, and some pottery. The oval pots were decorated with black lines and figures. The most prominent Karankawa implement was the bow and arrow, which was truly amazing. In length the bow extended from a warrior's foot to his chin; it was at times as long as six feet. Made of red cedar, the bow was about two inches wide in the center and one and one-half inches thick. The string was made of twisted deer sinew and was about one-quarter inch in diameter. Being the Karankawas' single most important implement, a bow was always well oiled and polished. Strings were kept in perfect condition. An arrow was a yard long, and a half inch in diameter. It carried a head about three inches long which was set in the cleft of the shaft and wound with sinew. Three feathers completed the arrow.[12] The Karankawas knew no equal in the power and accuracy of their shots with the bow and arrow.

Karankawa settlement pattern was nomadic. They roamed the coastal prairie, following the seasons and the food supply. They probably stayed three to four weeks in each location before moving on. They returned to the same camp sites year after year. Although the Karankawas moved away from the coastal islands during the winter, the availability of food was a greater determinant of their wanderings than the climate.

The Karankawas derived their mobility from the use of an unusual canoe or pirogue. They apparently did not have many horses and may have been poor horsemen. About twenty feet long, the pirogue was constructed by hollowing out a log. Leaving the bark on the outside, the builder blunted the ends. The boat was then ready to move the family across a lagoon to the next camp site or make a quick getaway to escape an enemy attack.

A lodge called a ba-ak was the Karankawa dwelling. It was built of willow poles about eighteen feet long and an inch and a half in diameter. The poles were sharpened on one or both ends. The ends were then stuck in the ground in the shape of a circle with each pole being about a yard apart. Undressed deer skins were placed over the frame. Smoke from a fire within the lodge drifted out a side left uncovered. Measuring from ten to twelve feet in diameter such a lodge could house two families or from seven to eight people. It provided adequate shelter and, equally important, was easily transportable.

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12. Richard P. Schaedel, "The Karankawa of Texas," Southwestern Journal of Anthropology, 5 (1949), 123.

Very little is known about Karankawa social organization. The band was the largest social and political group. Each band had both a civil and a war chief, but the decision-making powers of each are unknown. The family was the primary social and economic unit within the band. Kinship was reckoned patrilineally. Marriage, which often took place among members of different bands, was arranged by the parents. Although the Karankawas were monogamous, divorce was easy, especially when there were no children. The nature of elite groups or classes, if any, is unknown. Young men went through a period of training and testing before reaching warrior status, at which time they were tattooed.

Those who knew the tribe noted a number of unusual habits and customs. The Karankawas were weepers, i.e., they cried out of both happiness and sadness at the slightest occasion. A number of taboos characterized personal relationships. According to many Texans the Karankawas would not look one in the eye when engaged in conversation nor would they reveal their Indian names. As one can imagine, such manners made a very bad impression on people who found virtue in "looking a man straight in the eye." In addition the Karankawas gave the appearance of ennui. As a result they quickly gained a reputation as being slovenly, worthless, and lazy. Another taboo involved intra-tribal family relationships. Once a man married, he could not enter his bride's former home nor could his parents-in-law visit his lodge or that of his children. In addition, they never spoke to each other and would go out of their way to avoid an encounter. The Karankawas felt silence was the best way to avoid family fighting, especially disputes over inheritance. The family of the bride was expected to lose all contact with their daughter and with their grandchildren. Still another taboo involved speaking the name of a dead person. The Karankawas never did, fearing that if the dead man's spirit heard his name, he would awaken, be displeased, and cause harm to the person who had disturbed him.

Of all the Karankawa behavioral traits which the Euroamerican found strange or repugnant, one stood out above all others. Like other gulf coast tribes, the Karankawa practiced cannibalism. Many Spaniards and Texans were convinced human flesh was a standard part of Karankawa diet and were understandably horrified. A Texas journalist, who included the word cannibal in his book about the tribe, claimed that the Karankawas considered human flesh a "choice gastronomical treat."[13] This is untrue. Like members of other primitive cultures who practiced cannibalism, the Karankawas ate human flesh out of superstition. They did not have any special attachment to such consumption. The Karankawas felt that by consuming the flesh of an enemy they at the same time transferred his strength and other virtues to themselves.

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13. Kilman, Cannibal Coast, p. 264.

Another popular idea of Karankawa customs maintains that they were indifferent to children and purposely killed female offspring in order to assure that the girls would not marry into an enemy tribe and thus increase its strength. The first is untrue and the second questionable. According to Cabeza de Vaca, who lived among the Karankawas as a slave and shaman for several years in the sixteenth century, they loved children.[14] Alice Oliver, who knew the tribe during their last years in the 1830s, noted no young girls and few children.[15] Although it is possible the Karankawas practiced female infanticide, there is too little documentation of the subject to prove it conclusively.

Some accounts of the tribe maintain that the Karankawas were morose and dour and that they played no games. This is also untrue. Among their games were wrestling, hachet throwing, bow and arrow shooting, and ball games. Like many North American Indians, the Karankawas were animated and cheering spectators at sporting events. It is, however, unknown whether or not they gambled.

Karankawa artistic and intellectual attainments were primitive. In addition to decorating their bodies, they painted black lines and figures on their crude oval pottery. They also carved wood figures and made dolls for the children by painting faces on carved pieces of wood. They apparently had a system of counting, but little is known about it other than they used their fingers. Perhaps their greatest skill lay in long distance communication, which they carried out by means of smoke signals. According to some observers, the Karankawas knew twenty different ways of communicating messages through the use of smoke. They could literally make smoke rise sideways.

There is also very little information about Karankawa supernatural beliefs. They apparently honored and/or worshipped two major deities called Pichini and Mel. Ceremonies or festivals for thanking these deities or imploring their assistance were called mitotes. Shaman called comas knew the required ritual and presided. The Karankawas had several different types of mitotes depending on the occasion, e.g., a festival of thanksgiving for a good hunt, for success in battle, or for good fishing. Others involved a burial and still other supplications for a bountiful gathering season, for successful results of an inter-tribal raid, and for liberty, victory, and prosperity in general. The Karankawas implored the assistance of anthropomorphized gods. When it was granted, they expressed their appreciation. Unfortunately, there are very few descriptions of Karankawa mitotes and those we do have are

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14. Newcomb, The Indians of Texas, p. 72.

15. Oliver, "Notes on the Carancahua Indians," p. 18.

vague. At one type of festival the participants gathered in a lodge where they drank yaupon tea, which supposedly had an intoxicating effect on the dancers. Accompanied by music from gourds filled with stones and a flute, the participants ecstatically danced around a fire. A mitote often lasted three days and, it is interesting to note, women apparently took no part.

The Karankawas' relationship to the natural environment was to the gulf coast as a whole. There is no evidence that they had any special relationship to Padre Island other than or different from their relationship to all the coastal islands from Padre north to Galveston Bay. Indeed, the islands north of Padre were probably more important to them, with Galveston being the most important of all.

Although ethnological maps of the territory inhabited by the Texas tribes show Karankawa territory ending at Corpus Christi Bay, there is sufficient archeological and historical evidence to indicate that the tribe often visited Padre Island. In 1821 a vessel wrecked at Brazos Santiago Pass throwing the American and Spanish survivors onto Padre. They made their way up the island. Arriving at the north end of Padre, they encountered a Karankawa band which had a short time before left the Refugio mission and established a camp on the Ysla del Vallin (another of Padre's many names). The Indians apparently accompanied the men back to the wreck for the purpose of salvaging what cargo could be saved. Treacherously turning on the Euroamericans, the Karankawas killed them.[16]

When in 1828 Don Domingo de Feunte surveyed the island in connection with reaffirming Padre Nicolas Balli's land grant, he reported no Karankawas, "who in the past caused injury and damage," were on the island at the time. However, he went on to say, they often came over the Laguna Madre to Padre.[17]

The most interesting account of the Karankawas and Padre Island centers on the tribe's last days. As we have already noted, Samuel Reid contended that a Karankawa band committed tribal suicide on the island. Although this tale is probably untrue, there is evidence that Padre became more important to the Karankawas during the years of their final reduction between 1830 and 1846. There is one report, for example, that a Spanish missionary in 1842 or 1843 attempted to establish the Karankawas on Padre, where they would be educated and at the same time separated and protected from the Texas colonists.[18] Like the other long attempts to civilize the Karankawas at the Refugio mission, this

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16. Oberste, History of Refugio Mission, p. 294.

17. Case No. 20707-B, "State of Texas vs. Balli, et. al," District Court Records, Nueces County, Corpus Christi, Texas (hereafter cited as "State of Texas vs. Balli").

18. Gatschet, The Karankawa Indians, p. 49.

effort also failed. There is also another report that the Karankawa lived on the south end of Padre in the late 1850s before the last small bands crossed over into Mexico and disappeared.[19] There is, then, little doubt that Padre Island was a Karankawa habitat. In their unknown passing they left behind on Padre a host of artifacts and an atmosphere of mystery. In later years a romanticised Karankawa would become a standard part of a substantial local folklore. Stories of wild cannibals living on desolate islands included Padre.

Like other North American Indians the Karankawas were indeed children of nature. Their interaction with the natural environment influenced to a greater or lesser degree all forms of their existence. At Padre Island this interaction took place on a number of levels.

First and foremost was the impact of Padre's island environment on Karankawa economy. Dependent entirely on a natural food supply, Karankawa cultural traits reveal an adjustment or adaptation to the material conditions of the life zones in which their food supply was found. In that the Karankawas came to Padre to fish, to gather oysters and other shell fish, and perhaps to hunt deer and birds, they adapted to the island's conditions. First was the problem of getting to the island. This the Karankawas accomplished by means of the canoe. Each pirogue, which was easily poled through shallow water, such as the Laguna Madre, was large enough to carry the family and their possessions. Second was the question of the type of dwelling best suited to the island. Here a lodge constructed of willow poles, which the Karankawas could either bring with them or find on Padre, covered by undressed skins provided adequate shelter. Moreover, in that the Karankawas remained only three to four weeks in any one camp, such a lodge, which was easily put up and taken down, was a perfect adaptation to their nomadic settlement pattern. Third were the concerns of securing fish, gathering oysters, killing animals and birds. The Karankawas adapted the bow and arrow to fishing and hunting. In addition the tools they devised for preparing the food came from nature and consisted of knives and stone and shell scrapers. The only implement which they made themselves seems to have been a crude type of pottery. A fourth consideration in their adaptation to the conditions of Padre centered on clothing. Karankawa adults found a simple deer skin breech cloth or skirt adequate to the island's climate. Children went naked. Shark or alligator oil provided protection against Padre's ever-present mosquitoes. In short, almost every element of Karankawa economic life revealed an adaptation to the conditions of the environment within which they secured their subsistence. Their food supply was a part of the web of life. In their economy they adjusted and related to it.

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19. Oberste, History of Refugio Mission, p. 332.

Disciplined archeological investigations on Padre Island have revealed approximately 20 different Karankawa camp sites within the first twenty miles of the north end of the island.[20] Amateur archeologists, and especially Mr. Louis Rawalt of Corpus Christi, have collected artifacts from one end of the island to the other. These findings indicate that at one time or another the Karankawas camped all over Padre Island. Their visits were seasonal and probably took place during the summer months when the cool gulf breezes bring relief from the hot and humid conditions prevailing on the mainland. The Karankawas remained about three to four weeks at each camp, when they either moved to a new camp on the island or crossed over to the mainland. It is doubtful that they visited Padre at all during the short winter months when a famous Texas "norther" can drop the temperature on Padre into the 40s and 50s.

In addition to being a source of food, Padre, like the other barrier islands, provided the Karankawas with another major benefit, security. Inter-tribal warfare among the Texas Indians was constant. The Karankawas apparently waged primarily defensive war, limiting their offensive actions to raids against enemy bands. In the historic period they did not attempt to extend their territory by driving out other Indians. Instead they were encroached upon by tribes which intruded into Texas, primarily the Lippan Apaches and the Comanches. These two tribes, which had been driven southwest by plains tribes, became the Karankawas' bitterest and most feared enemies. One of the major reasons for the failure of Refugio mission, besides the Karankawa refusal to give up their traditional life patterns and acculturate, was the inability of the mission to provide security against the Comanches. They did find security along the coast where, if attacked, they could quickly south the alarm by means of smoke signals and flee in their canoes across a bay or lagoon to the protection of an island. Padre was such an island.

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20. T. N. Campbell, Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Padre Island, Texas (Austin, 1964), pp. 41-43.

Chapter 2

Spaniards and An Island

In 1519, twenty-seven years after an Italian in the service of their Catholic majesties made a famous discovery, one Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda, also in the service of Spain, sailed around the interior edge of the Gulf of Mexico looking for the mythical Strait of Anian. At the mouth of what he called the Rio de las Palmas, better known as the Rio Grande, Piñeda disembarked and for the next forty days explored the surrounding countryside. It is possible, but by no means certain, that Piñeda's reconnaissances included a short excursion up the coast from the river's mouth. If he went about six to eight miles by boat or by foot, he came to the beginning of a curve of sand and grass which stretches 115 miles to the north-northeast. And if, by chance, Piñeda actually set foot on this narrow strip of sand, he became the conquistador of a barrier island on the Texas gulf coast. But this is conjecture. It is certain that the map which resulted from Piñeda's Gulf of Mexico voyage showed a small spot at this location designated Isla Blanca, White Island. It would be another 281 years before any Spaniard would settle on Isla Blanca, but as of 1519 it had been discovered.

The history of the Isla Blanca between its discovery in 1519 and its being granted to a Roman Catholic priest named Padre Nicolas Balli around 1800 is very brief. Spaniards did leave their footprints on its white sands, and indeed in 1553 three hundred unfortunate shipwreck survivors found themselves stranded on its beach, but Spanish visits were few and far between. In relation to the Spanish empire in North America, Isla Blanca was insignificant. The entire present-day state of Texas had little economic value to the Spanish and was as great a drain on the royal treasury as a producer of wealth. An island along the coast which consisted of nothing more than sand and grass, and which at times was inhabited by hostile natives with a reputation for being cannibals, was of even less value.

Being an island, Padre guarded the Texas coast. It was in a sense a strategic island. Nevertheless, Padre had no strategic value for the Spanish. Although at the middle of the eighteenth century a rumor that the English had established a military presence along the Texas coast alarmed the Spanish authorities in Mexico and led a party to explore Padre Island looking for the site, Spain never fortified the island's passes (nor did she fortify any other part of the Texas coast). Spain viewed the entire province of Texas as a buffer between her valuable possessions to the west and south and French and later English colonies

to the east. Although a popular Texas folklore which has developed around Padre Island claims that nearly every famous explorer from Cabeza de Vaca to de Soto, La Salle, and Sir Francis Drake stopped on Padre Island and found it of great importance, these tales are unfortunately romantic and entertaining adventure. The discovery and exploration of Padre Island is a story of a few very brief visits to an unimportant island and a major tragedy. Section one outlines this story in greater detail.

By the end of the eighteenth century Spanish settlements dotted the Rio Grande Valley and presidios and missions had long been established in Texas itself. Settlement of Padre Island began about 1800 when Padre Nicolas Balli, a member of a prominent Rio Grande family, received a land grant to the island. Balli and his nephew Juan José brought civilization to the wilderness of Padre Island in the form of a cattle ranch. Until the end of the Spanish-Mexican period in 1846, the Ballis and their successors were the settlers of Padre Island. Section two discusses their activities.

1. Discovery and Exploration, 1519-1800

As we have already noted, Alonso Alvarez de Piñeda, a lieutenant of Francisco Garay, the Governor of Jamaica, was the first man to visit the Texas coast. After reaching Mexico, where he had a brief conference with the conqueror of the Aztec, Hernando Cortes, Piñeda sailed back along the coast following the Gulf Stream He stopped at the mouth of the Rio de las Palmas, where he explored the surrounding countryside. Although it is not known with certainty whether he visited the coastal barrier islands in the vicinity, his maps did show an Isla Blanca which is today Padre Island. Piñeda sailed for his home port and, although a spot on a map, Isla Blanca returned to its wilderness anonymity.

With Cortes' conquest of Mexico and the start of a flow of treasure back to Spain, interest in the New World quickened. In 1527 Panfilo de Narváez sailed for Florida looking for gold and glory and finding only disaster. Losing his ships on the West Florida coast, he was forced to build makeshifts which were little more than rafts. With them Narváez hoped to reach Mexico. After making it past the mouth of the Mississippi, his "fleet" wrecked on the coast of Texas. The only survivors were the now famous Cabeza de Vaca, two other Spaniards, and a black. The Karankawas promptly captured and enslaved them. When eight years later, after incredible hardships and adventures among the Indians, de Vaca make it to Mexico, he told a story of a fantastic Indian city built of gold and emeralds called the Seven Cities of Cibolá. Cabeza himself never set foot on Padre during his Texas wanderings, but those searching for his imagined treasure city did.

In 1540 Hernando de Soto landed on the Florida coast and began his wandering odyssey into the North American interior. In 1541 he reached

the Mississippi, crossed over, and wintered near present-day Fort Smith, Arkansas. Returning to the Mississippi in the spring of 1542, de Soto hoped to build boats, float down the river, and sail back to civilization. Unfortunately, the illustrious explorer died in May. Captain Luis de Moscoso took over command of the bedraggled party, constructed the boat-rafts, and set out. The Spaniards descended the Mississippi and, upon reaching the Gulf of Mexico, decided to head for Mexico. Sailing along the coast they periodically stopped to fish, repair the boats, and take on fresh water. The exact locations of their stops are unknown, but it is probable that they stopped for a longer period at Aransas Pass to repair the boats. Continuing south they came to Isla Blanca. It is almost certain that they put ashore one or more times on the island to search for food and water. The survivors of de Soto's expedition finally reached Tampico. They did not discover the Seven Cities of Cibolá, but they did find fame in American history books. A very minor moment in their travels was a probable visit to Padre Island.

By 1550 Spain had firmly established her presence in Mexico and throughout Latin America. Exploitation of the empire's natural resources was an established economic activity which swelled Spanish coffers and made Spain the envy of Europe. Each year in April a fleet escorted by stately men of war left Spain carrying supplies and passengers to North and South America. One section of the fleet headed for Cartagena and Porto Bello and another for Vera Cruz. After discharging their cargoes and passengers, the galleons filled their holds with gold and silver from New Spain's mines. Also going on board were colonial officials, priests, and settlers returning to Spain permanently or for a vacation at home. In September 1553 such a fleet left Vera Cruz and, following the Gulf Stream, arrived in Havana, where the main fleet usually made up to be escorted across the Atlantic. Deciding not to spend the winter in Cuba, some 15 to 20 merchant ships accompanied by two or more men of war left port and headed for the open Atlantic and disaster. The hurricane which hit the fleet had no name, but its effect was as deadly at its modern counterparts. Screaming winds drove the stricken fleet back into and across the Gulf of Mexico. Of the more than 20 ships ensnared in the hurricane's frenzied lashings, only three or four of the lighter survived. The rest either sank at sea or crashed against the coast. One or more of the ships and 300 passengers smashed onto the beaches of Padre Island.

The wreck of the 300 on Padre Island is the most noteworthy single event in the island's history. It is also the most tragic. Finding themselves on the beach without a sign of civilization in any direction, the survivors salvaged supplies from the hulk and huddled together in a council to decide what they should do. Indians, either Coahuiltecan or Karankawa, came upon the group. Their at first friendly disposition masked evil intentions and they soon attacked. Defending themselves with arquebuses, the Spaniards repulsed the Indians, who retreated out of range and waited. Taking some provisions salvaged from the wreck, the three hundred turned

south, hoping quickly to reach the Mexican settlements and safety. Carlos Castañeda, a historian of the Spanish period in Texas, graphically describes their plight and their flight down Padre Island. "All were afoot, most of them without shoes, and with but scanty clothes. The women and children suffered the most, but necessity forced all to travel as fast as possible. They soon experienced the pangs of hunger and the pain of exhaustion. The heat of the sand tired them severely and it seemed as if there was fire both over their heads and under their feet. The children cried. The mothers were filled with sorrow at their inability to help them, and all hurried on, spurred by the hope of finding relief in the land of the Christians."[21] It was pitiful spectacle. Constantly pursued by the hostile natives, whose deadly arrows sought out the tired and weak, and quickly plagued by famine and thirst, the line of survivors soon stretched out with the stragglers left behind to die. The stronger pushed ahead in the hope of finding help. It was nowhere to be found. Of the three hundred who started the trek on Padre Island, two survived. One, a man named Francisco Vásquez, had left the main body and returned to the wreck site. For a year he lived on Padre where he subsisted on the remaining supplies. A ship sent out to search for survivors and to recover, if possible, any salvageable treasure, found him a year after the disaster. Vásquez showed Capt. Angel de Villafana where a ship had gone down. Divers salvaged the treasure and it was once again safe in a Spanish hold. To this day, however, there are those convinced that a large treasure lies just off Padre Island or is buried under the sand.

The other man who lived to relate the tragedy of the three hundred was a Dominican named Fray Marcos de Mena. He survived a more horrifying experience than Vásquez. Finding himself no longer able to keep up with the main body of survivors, de Mena decided to make his peace with life and go quietly to his maker. With the help of a fellow Dominican he dug a shallow grave and lay down to die. Falling asleep he awoke to discover he was not in his heavenly reward, but rather still in this vale of tears. He got up, pushed on, and eventually stumbled half alive into a Mexican settlement. As a witness to the flight of the three hundred, as this tragic event is often called, Padre Island briefly entered history.

The failure of the Coronado, Narváez and de Soto expeditions in addition to the tales of barbaric Indians told by de Vaca and de Mena all but extinguished Spanish desire to push into present-day Texas for the purposes of settlement and development. Spanish energies were occupied in other places such as New Mexico. At this point events fall silent around Padre Island for more than a hundred years. It is possible, and indeed probable, that Spaniards set foot on Padre between 1553 and the second half of the seventeenth century, but there is little

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21. Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1, 145.

documentary proof of such. Padre's beach collected debris from wrecked vessels and Spanish settlements far to the south, but as a part of the hostile and uninviting Texas coast the island was shunned.

In the second half of the seventeenth century, in 1685 to be exact, an event occurred which was to result in Spaniards once again coming into the neighborhood of Padre Island. In 1682 Robert Cavalier Sieur de la Salle, the greatest of French explorers in North America, boated down the Mississippi to its mouth and claimed the territory for France. Returning to France he persuaded Louis XIV that it would be possible to establish a new French colony in North America and encroach on the Spanish empire. The Sun King gave his grudging consent to such a venture and in 1685 La Salle returned to the gulf, By mistake or design, he sailed past the mouth of the Mississippi to Matagorda Bay on the Texas coast and up into Lavaca Bay, where he established a French outpost called Fort Louis. From Fort Louis La Salle explored to the west. In the meantime the Spanish had gotten word that the French were coveting the northeastern flank of their empire and that La Salle had established a colony on which he could base territorial claims. The viceroy of Mexico on instructions from Madrid resolved to find the French settlement and eliminate it. The search for La Salle went forward by sea and by land. In 1686, a full year after La Salle had founded Fort Louis, Captains Antonio de Iriarte and Martín de Rivas spent six months at sea searching the coastline for the French settlement. Although they entered Matagorda Bay and were actually within miles of Fort Louis, they failed to find it. It is probable that they also closely examined the passes at both ends of Padre Island and might have sailed into Corpus Christi Bay. Upon returning they reported that the coast was unfit for settlement. In 1687 and 1688 Spanish ships again sailed along the coast looking for La Salle. Again they had no success, but they probably came close to Padre Island. The sailors did report, however, that the coast was too swampy and forbidding for settlement.

While the search for La Salle from the gulf went forward, expeditions called entradas entered Texas by land. Led by Alonso de Leon, entradas took place from 1686 to 1689. The last was successful in finding Fort Louis, only to discover that it had been abandoned and its occupants either had fled, been killed by the Karankawas, or were captured. The first two of these entradas came near Padre Island and the first might have actually visited the island. In 1686 de Leon advanced to the mouth of the Rio Grande and explored the coast for a distance of eight leagues.[22] He reported that he found all kinds of debris, boards, shipmasts, broken rudders, barrel bands, and four wheels from broken artillery carriages. Although it is uncertain whether de Leon was on Padre, his reports of a litter-strewn beach could apply to the island.

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22. Ibid., p. 317.

In 1687 he explored up the mainland as far as Baffin Bay. Finding nothing, he turned around. On this trip he undoubtedly saw Padre Island and probably inquired among the natives about it. Once again Padre had been briefly touched by Spanish exploration. In 1689 another party finally found Fort Louis.

Although Louis XIV quickly lost any interest he ever had in wresting territory west of the Mississippi from Spain, La Salle's incursion alarmed the Spanish and led them to begin the settlement of Texas. The first Spanish settlements in Texas and the road connecting them passed far to the north of Padre Island. Uninterested in occupying the coast, which had been reported to be unfit for settlement, Spanish officials were obviously less interested in such barren barrier islands as Padre.

By the middle of the eighteenth century, Spain had established her colonial system of presidios and missions in Texas at such places as San Antonio de Bexar and La Bahía. The coast and mainland, however, for a distance of 100 to 150 miles inland remained a vast territory as yet unoccupied. In order to pacify the Indians, exploit the valuable salt deposits reported to be found along the coast, and establish a direct and safe communications route to La Bahía on the Guadalupe, Spanish officials decided the time had come to move into the area of the lower Rio Grande Valley. In 1746 Jose de Escandon, a man of energy and ability, was appointed to settle the Rio Grande Valley. Entradas associated with Escandon's settlement plans once again brought Spanish explorers to the neighborhood of Padre Island.

In planning the settlement of Seno Mexicano, as the area was called, Escandon decided to first explore the region in order to determine the best locations for establishing settlements. Exploration parties made up of soldiers would accomplish two goals. They would show the flag to the natives and thus demonstrate the strength of Spain. Seeing well-armed soldiers would, it was hoped, cause the Indians to think again before starting hostilities with the coming settlers. Second, the soldiers would bring back valuable information about the character of the land and its potential for economic exploitation. Escandon decided to divide his forces and send separate columns through the countryside. One of them would originate at the presidio of La Bahía del Espíritu Santo on the Guadalupe. This party would march south, staying as close to the coast as possible. Upon reaching the mouth of the Rio Grande, it would meet up with the column from Coahuila and together they would proceed to Escandon's camp 15 miles up the river.

On January 29, 1747, in compliance with Escandon's orders a force of fifty well armed men under the command of Captain Orogio y Basterra left La Bahía and headed for the coast. Hitting the Nueces somewhere between San Patricio and Calallen, Basterra proceeded down river. After an uneventful march he soon reached Corpus Christi Bay, which he called San Miguel Arcangel. Here he spent several days enjoying the landscapes and

mild climate. On February 27 he continued south and, following his instructions, remained as close to the coast as possible. By the time Basterra reached Baffin Bay, he discovered he was having difficulty finding sweet water. This forced him to leave the coast and head inland. Reaching the Rio Grande, he rendezvoused with Escandon and made his report.

Basterra told Escandon of his explorations, saying that the country he had just covered was for the most part well suited for cattle raising. He described Corpus Christi Bay in ideal terms, contending it could easily be reached by sea and would thus make a good place to establish a colony. He reported that he and his men had seen many wild horses and asses and that deer were plentiful. Although there is no evidence that he visited the Isla Blanca, he undoubtedly saw the island and probably inquired about it. Basterra's 1747 reconnaissance of the south Texas coast is important not only because his was the first description of Corpus Christi Bay. Basterra's entrada marked the first time that Spanish explorers visited the region in order to determine its potential for economic exploitation. The agricultural frontier had come to the south Texas coast.

Escandon listened carefully to Basterra's description of the region and integrated the information into his report to Mexico City on the lower Rio Grande Valley and Texas. Calling the area to the Nueces and along the coast to the mouth of the San Antonio River "Nuevo Santander," Escandon recommended that three new settlements of 50 families each be made in Texas. One of them was to be at San Miguel Arcangel.

Demonstrating unlimited energy and great administrative ability, Escandon immediately proceeded with the settlement of the lower Rio Grande Valley. Beginning with Camargo in 1749, settlements sprang up along the river. Reynosa in 1750, Dolores in 1750, Revilla in 1750, Mier in 1753, and Laredo in 1755 were the principal communities. By 1761 Escandon was able to report that the settlers at Carmarge "have already settled all the opposite bank of the Rio Grande del Norte within the limits of the land granted them, and the country as far as the Nueces has became so desirable, that most of the settlers aspire to it."[23] Escandon was speaking of the mainland. It is doubtful that anybody at this time aspired to Padre Island. He further reported cattle were to be found all the way to the Nueces. They were owned by men who had already moved into the area such as Blás María de la Garza Falcon. Falcon was a name that would be prominent in south Texas for the next century.

Spanish settlement of the lower Rio Grande Valley is related to Padre Island in the sense of pushing back the frontier. By the middle of the

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23. Castañeda, Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 3, 162.

eighteenth century, Spanish settlers had arrived in the neighborhood of Padre Island and had begun to graze cattle north to the Nueces. The region was no longer wilderness. In 1800 a member of a prominent Rio Grande family that had come to the valley with Escandon would be granted title to Isla Blanca.

As the Spanish settlers went about their daily business of raising cattle, extracting salt from the saline deposits along the coast, and civilizing the Indians, international political events were taking place which led to the next visit to Padre Island. In 1763 at the end of the Seven Years War, England gained possession of all the French and Spanish territories east of the Mississippi. Three years later rumors reached Spain that England intended to expand her North American Empire westward and that she had already established forts along the Gulf of Mexico. One of these forts, so the rumors went, had been built on Isla Blanca in 1765. Orders went out immediately from Madrid to Mexico City to check out the accuracy of these alarming reports. The authorities in Mexico City quickly notified Escandon and instructed him to send out searching parties. Escandon replied that he had sent a long report about Nuevo Santander in 1764 which covered the coastal islands. At that time people seeking ranch sites around the Neuces had reported that the coastal islands were too barren to sustain a settlement or a fort. There had been no mention of any English fort on Isla Blanca. This did not satisfy the viceroy and Escandon was ordered to send a party to the island and make sure the English were not there. Escandon turned to the Falcon family, which had established the Santa Petronila ranch about 15 miles southwest of the Nueces not far from the coast, carry out the assignment. In June 1766, José de la Garza Falcon, 25 men, and Indian guides went to Isla Blanca and traveled its entire length. Falcon reported that the island was barren and deserted. There were no signs of any Englishmen. Escandon thought the matter had been laid to rest, when reports reached him that Indians had seen foreign ships in the area. In September he decided to reconnoiter the island once again in order to make sure the English had not sneaked onto the Isla Blanca sometime after Falcon had been there in June. He assigned the task to Don Diego Ortíz Parrilla.

On September 13, 1766, a detachment of three officers, 25 men, and nine Indian guides from the missions of the Rio Grande set out from San Juan Bautista (Eagle Pass) and headed overland to the Nueces. Following the Nueces to its mouth, they named the beautiful bay previously known as the San Arcangel, Corpus Christi. The Indians showed the party where they could ford the lagoon which separated the Isla Blanca or Isla de los Malquittas, as they called Padre Island, from the mainland. One hundred and fifty years later cattle would regularly use this ford on their way to market. Arriving on the island, they spent the next five or six days marching to the southern end, carefully examining the terrain as they went. By September 22 they had completed their mission and Parrilla made his report.

Although Spaniards had been on Padre Island a number of times before September 1766, Parrilla's report is one of the first descriptions of the island that we have, if not the first. The men who visited Padre reported that no Englishmen were there nor was there any evidence that their ships had anchored in the vicinity. Turning to a general description of the island, they pointed out that it was unsuited for any kind of military installation. Fresh water was a problem and could only be obtained by digging shallow wells in the sand. There was no rock which could be used for building a fort and there was only a limited amount of grass. In their opinion the island was not fit for raising cattle. Noting that objects thrown up by the sea cluttered the beach, they reported on finding several rotten canoes and small boats as well as the hulk of a 15- to 20-gun sea-going vessel, which they burned. Upon reaching the southern end the party came across the abandoned huts of an Indian rancheria. The guides pointed out that Indians regularly visited the island during certain seasons; however, at this time of year they were not there. Once again fording the lagoon, they returned to the mainland, satisfied that England had not established a presence on the Isla Blanca. (A translation of the full report is found in Appendix One.)

As of 1766 Padre Island was no longer a mysterious sweep of shimmering white sand stretching along the coast from Corpus Christi Bay to the mouth of the Rio Grande. The island had been visited many times and the general nature of its environment had been recorded in official documents. No efforts had been made to settle the island, and, indeed, it had acquired a reputation of being unfit for cattle raising, which was the major agricultural activity in the region. For the next 36 years the sea continued to wash the Isla Blanca and throw drift upon its beach. The island watched the Indians make their seasonal visits and patiently waited for someone who would recognize its potential value as a cattle ranch. At the turn of the nineteenth century that person arrived.

2. Settlement, 1800-1836

Of the settlements made by Jose de Escandon in the 1740s and 1750s, Reynosa, located about 70 miles from the mouth of the Rio Grande, was one of the more important. The official in charge of military and secular affairs at Reynosa was a man named Juan José Hinojosa. In addition to being captain and chief justice of Reynosa, Hinojosa had also received large land grants in the region between the town and the mouth of the Rio Grande. Hinojosa had a lovely daughter named Rosa, who married a young man named Jose María de Balli (or, as the name was sometimes spelled, Vallín). Together with his son-in-law, Hinojosa acquired more land around the present day towns of Pharr, San Juan, and Alamo.

Rose and Jose Maria had two sons; they named the older Juan José and the younger Nicolás. When Juan Jose Hinojosa died, his grandson,

Juan José Balli, succeeded him as captain and chief justice of Reynosa. Although he had inherited considerable land from both his grandfather and father, Juan José desired to increase his holdings. He applied for and received a grant to another 315,941 acres in present-day Hidalgo County.

Nicolás, the second son of Rosa and José María, joined the third branch of the Spanish elite in Mexico. He studied for the priesthood. As a priest, Nicolás administered to the spiritual needs of the community. His position did not, however, demand that he take a vow of poverty. As a member of a wealthy and influential family, Nicolás, like his brother, was a large landowner. Sometime between 1800 and 1805 he decided to increase the size of his land holdings and applied to the Spanish crown for a grant to the Isla de Corpus Christi, the name Isla Blanca or Isla de los Malaquittas had acquired after the naming of Corpus Christi Bay in 1766. He of course received it.

It is unknown when Padre Nicolás Balli took the first cattle and horses to the island, but it probably was around 1805. It is interesting to note that at the time Lewis and Clark made their great journey of discovery up the Missouri across the Rockies to the Pacific and back to St. Louis, Padre Island was already a developed, producing cattle ranch. Joining Padre Balli in the ranching venture on the Isla de Corpus Christi was his nephew Juan José, who had one-half interest in the original grant. Neither Padre Balli nor Juan José actually lived on the island. Large Spanish landowners, who practiced a system of absentee ownership, lived in the settled communities. They hired men to look after their cattle on the open ranges. On the Isla de Corpus Christi Padre Balli set up a ranch about 24 miles from the south end of the island. He called it Santa Cruz de Buena Vista. Two hired men, who were probably peons, lived at the ranch and watched over the cattle. The ranch structures were little more than huts or jacales constructed of willow laths and thatched with reeds.

Unfortunately, little is known about Padre Balli's activities on the island. The cattle and horses apparently grazed freely throughout the island. It is probable that they were very seldom worked and were collected only once a year. It is possible that no stock were taken from Padre for a number of years in order to build up the size of the herd. Wandering freely throughout the island and seldom worked, Balli's cattle and horses soon became wild.

The years between 1805 and 1821 appear to have been uneventful. In 1811 Padre Balli filed a will in which he stated, "I maintain 1,000 head of cattle on Padre Island."[24] This was probably the maximum size of Balli's

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24. The Texas Reports (State of Texas, 1946), 144, 200.

herd. Compared with the thousands of cattle that roamed between the Rio Grande and the Nueces during these years, Padre Balli's ranch was not a large operation.

There is a report that, at the time of the Mexican revolution in 1821, Padre Balli, being a member of the Spanish elite, was forced to leave the Rio Grande Valley and flee to his island. With the return of stability he returned to his San Juan de los Estóres ranch on the south side of the Rio Grande about twenty miles from the mouth of the river.[25] It is possible that cattle from Padre Island were first taken to this ranch before being delivered to market.

In 1827, as a result of the Mexican revolution, it became necessary for the Ballis to reaffirm their original grant to the Isla de Santiago, as Padre was also called during these years. The legal procedure for confirming Spanish land grants called for a court-appointed survey of the property for the purpose of assessing its value. The court made the required appointments and in February 1828 a survey party set out for the island. Landing at the south end, they headed north until they reached Balli's ranch headquarters. "We reached the Ranch of Santa Cruz de Buena Vista," the surveyor Don Domingo de la Fuente recorded, "and in all this distance nothing was found but sand dunes and salty bays with very little pasture grass (with the exception of an opening situated at or near the entrance to said ranch which contains a certain amount of grass), a large amount of cattle and horses belonging to the interested parties."[26] Proceeding north, the party noted more cattle and sand. Arriving at a point they called Carnes Tolendas (see illustrations), they reported seeing some wild horses. The land was characterized by high sand dunes, some of which were covered with grass. In addition one found, "large thick trees that are known as pale de muelas, a great number of willows, oleanders, short oaks, plenty of herbs known as aaise, and many fresh water lakes or pools covered with reeds."[27]

In 1828 the flora of Padre was much different than it is today. "Although Padre Balli has some stock, although not much," de la Fuente reported, "they do not make use of that water, but drink out of two earthen tanks made with a crowbar and hoe; that the pasture found on that island, although not good for horses, is useful for other large stock."[28] Like

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25. J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, The Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas (San Antonio, 1954), p. 43.

26. "Testimonie of the Expediente of Surveys and Demarcation of the Island of the Brazo de Santiago (Known as the Padre Balli)" (1828), "State of Texas vs. Balli."

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid.

the men who visited Padre in the eighteenth century, this party also noted the variety of drift material found on the beach. "The beaches situated on the island yield lumber, both finished and rough, that at all times the sea throws out, without naming other divers objects that for a long time have been found from wrecked ships; that in addition to this there are a number of willows that furnish lumber for laths to make huts."[29] The survey party found also Indian camp sites on the island, but, February being a winter month, they were unoccupied.

After the completion of the legal formalities, Balli's claim to Padre Island was confirmed. However, Padre Balli apparently did not live to see his title reaffirmed. He died in 1828. Juan José Balli, who owned one-half of the island in his own right and one-seventh as one of Padre Balli's heirs, named Raphael Solís, a brother-in-law, to take formal possession in the name of the family. Sometime during 1828 the alcalde of the village of Matamoros accompanied Solís to Padre Island where the act of formal possession took place. Somewhere on the south end the alcalde took Solís by the hand and following ancient Spanish custom said:

> I the judge in the name of the free and sovereign state of Tamaulipas and in the presence of those above cited and of the others who were there present, took the aforesaid Rafael Solís by the hand, led him across the land, he took some earth and scattered it, he picked up a stick, he tore up the grass, he took some water and sprinkled the earth and performed other acts of possession and said in a loud voice: Gentleman, all of you present are my witness that I have taken possession in conformity with law without opposition from a third party that may claim a better right.[30]

As of 1828, Padre Island was clearly the sole possession of the Balli family. It was perhaps the last time for the next 140 years that legal ownership of the island was not being challenged by one party or another. Starting in 1830 title to the island began to change hands. In that year, Juan José Balli conveyed the one-half of the island he owned in his own right to one Santiago Morales. Morales apparently ranched the northern half of Padre until 1845, when he sold it to a Jose Maria Tovar. With the exception of 7,500 acres, all of the southern half, which was owned by Padre Balli's seven heirs, eventually came into the hands of one Nicolás Grisante. Grisante may have also grazed cattle on his half.

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29. Ibid.

30. The South Western Reporter, 2nd Series (1943), (St. Paul, 1943), p. 530.

In the 1830s events occurred which affected not only Padre Island but also all the land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces. In 1836 Texas won her independence from Mexico. Texas claimed that the Rio Grande was the border between the new republic and Mexico. Mexico refused to recognize the claim, contending that Texas began at the Nueces and not at the Rio Grande. The land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces was a part of Tamaulipas, which had been formed out of Escandon's Nuevo Santander. It was not a part of Texas. Being unable to militarily occupy the disputed area, neither side was able to enforce its claim. It was not until the Mexican War in 1846 that the issue was finally settled when General Zachary Taylor marched from Corpus Christi to the Rio Grande and on into Mexico.

Between 1800 and 1836 Padre Island, like other areas of the Spanish-American West, had undergone a qualitative change. A European culture replaced a North American Indian culture as the island's principal occupant and major beneficiary. Each culture's level of relatedness to the island centered on the utilization of its environment for economic purposes. However, whereas Indian land utilization was characterized by primitive subsistence types such as fishing with the bow and arrow and shell fish gathering, Spanish land utilization involved a structured and ordered form of agriculture. A higher form of land utilization replaced a lower and thus qualitatively changed man's relationship to the island. Padre ceased to be an unknown wilderness island. It was surveyed, described, and mapped. It became the object of civilization (and this at a time when the West of Lewis and Clark and fur trade mountain men remained a vast, unknown wilderness).

Spanish settlement of Padre Island and the cattle ranching operation Padre Balli began around 1805 demonstrated the feasibility of a civilized form of land utilization on the island. Padre Balli not only gave the island its name, but he also set a precedent that would continue for the next 166 years. Until 1971, cattle ranching was the major land utilization activity on Padre Island. As we shall see, the techniques employed by Padre Balli to adapt cattle raising to the island were employed by all those who followed him.

Chapter 3

Americans and An Island

The history of Padre Island from 1836, the year the island de facto became a part of Texas, to the Congressional authorization of the Padre Island National Seashore in 1962 is long and complex. It can be viewed from a number of perspectives. In terms of land utilization, it is a history of cattle ranching, oil and natural gas exploitation, resort promotion, and outdoor recreation. Between 1836 and 1962 land utilization on the Texas gulf coast became ever more sophisticated and complex. The open range gave way to fenced ranches and the ranches in turn gave way to citrus fruit, cotton, and vegetable farms. With the discovery of oil and natural gas, the region's economy was again transformed. Not only did wells, tank farms, and refineries dot the landscape, but also industrialization and urbanization came to the coast. As a modern diversified economy developed, it brought higher incomes and more leisure time to large numbers of Texans. Many turned to the coast with its islands and fish-rich waters as a place to spend happy hours fishing, swimming, and boating. As cattle ranch, as source of minerals, and as object of outdoor recreation, Padre Island participated in the diversification of land utilization on the Texas gulf coast. Americans defined their relatedness to the island in terms of how they could use it.

One can also view the history of Americans and Padre Island in relation to the people who lived and worked there. There is no detailed record of all the men who at one time or another went to Padre Island to establish a home and make a living. This history does not intend to present one and will instead deal with only the more prominent. Although countless people lived on Padre between 1836 and 1962, and there arose one or more small settlements, only a few names are historically connected with the island. John Singer, a displaced Yankee, shipwrecked on Padre in 1846 or 1847 and decided to remain there. Beginning in 1879, Patrick Dunn, the son of Irish immigrants and a man whose name was to be joined to the island until the present day, moved cattle to Padre. Then there was Colonel Sam Robertson, an energetic promoter who had visions of turning Padre into the Miami Beach of the Texas gulf coast. These men and many others joined their interests to Padre Island and became a part of its history.

Still another way of looking at Padre's history is in relation to the considerable body of folklore associated with the island. Here the dividing line between fact and fiction is erased. With a mystery island providing the soil, tales grew tall. It is a fact that the

water of the Gulf of Mexico off Padre have witnessed literally hundreds of shipwrecks ranging from ancient Spanish galleons to modern shrimpers. It is a fact that Spanish reales (silver coins) have been found on the island. It is also a fact that the gulf carries debris of all kinds onto the island's long beach. (Indeed, Padre is sometimes called the garbage bin of the Texas gulf coast.) Given these facts, it is not surprising that fertile imaginations have through the years concocted grand stories about Padre Island being one long treasure kingdom. Books have been published giving dates and locations of ships that went down with treasure aboard. This treasure, naturally, may still be there. One such book, written by a man who sells metal detectors, even gives specific locations on the island where one can expect to find treasure.

Still other stories of Padre Island center on pirate activities. According to these tales, the famous Jean Lafitte often sailed in Padre's waters while on his privateering voyages. Some suggest the Laguna Madre was one of Lafitte's favorite pirate hideaways. There is no doubt that Lafitte did in fact live for a number of years around 1817 on Galveston Island at a settlement called Campeche. He engaged in number of dark and mysterious activities ranging from privateering to possibly spying on Mexico. There is good deal of doubt that he ever set foot on Padre Island. Nevertheless, stories that the island conceals buried pirate treasure abound, to the delight of countless children who have for years diligently dug the sands searching for Lafitte's buried gold. Yet another tale claims that John Singer, who because of his Yankee sympathies was forced to leave Padre at the outbreak of the Civil War, buried sixty, seventy, or even eighty thousand dollars before crossing to the mainland. This buried treasure, of course, is still missing.

Buried treasure is only one theme in the folklore of Padre Island. Another centers around a romantic image of the Karankawa Indian. The Karankawa is described as being indeed cannibalistic, but he is given the virtues of the noble savage. He is depicted as being a child who enjoyed a freedom in nature unknown to civilized man. Not only did he live in harmony with nature and the so-called Web of Life, he was also tall, straight, well-proportioned, daring, skillful, and brave. In these stories of the Karankawa, Padre Island is a Garden of Eden.

When stories of buried treasure, pirates, and an idealized conception of the Indian as noble savage are joined with tales of the supposed exploits of such early adventures as Cabeza de Vaca and La Salle, Padre becomes an island of romance and adventure. Folklore is rarely derived from a critical examination of historical sources. Rather it comes from the fantasy and imagination. Although the folklore of Padre Island is not historical in the sense of actual event or deed, it is nevertheless a part of the island's past. Padre as island of romance and adventure, of Indians, buried treasure, and shipwrecked Spaniards is as much a part of its history as Padre the cattle ranch or Padre the national seashore.

These are only three of many perspectives which help bring the history of the American's interaction with Padre Island into clearer focus. The interaction of man and the island is indeed complex. Man uses the land. He adapts his technologies to the biophysical environment in order to exploit the resources which support human life. He joins his fortune and interests to the land and depends on it for material well being. He fights over it, speculates on it, and creates legends and myths to explain its meaning and significance. He paints its landscapes and writes songs and poems about it. He preserves it in national parks. In the sections which follow we once again pick up the chronological history of the interaction of man and Padre Island. It was all of the above. The story begins with a war and ends with a national seashore.

1. Uncertainty, Wars, and the Wild, Wild West, 1836-79

By 1836 Padre Island had become an established cattle ranch. Its herd was small in comparison with the thousands of cattle which grazed the open range between the Rio Grande and Nueces, but it was a settled and producing ranch. The Karankawa Indians continued to visit the island. However, having been battered by the American settlers, they were the pitiful remnants of a once powerful tribe. In 1830 Juan José Balli had sold his interests on Padre, i.e., the northern half and one seventh of the southern, to Santiago Morales. The remainder of the southern half apparently came into the hands of one Nicolás Grisante. It is unknown who actually lived on the island at this time or what the extent of the cattle operations were. In all probability the practice of the absentee landowner continued to function with hired vaqueros actually living on Padre. In 1835 the quiet routine of the island was broken and events began which resulted in Padre ceasing to be an island off the coast of Tamaulipas and becoming instead the longest barrier island in the United States.

The military events of the Texas War of Independence did not touch Padre directly. No battles were fought on the island. The closest the war came to its beaches was when a Mexican agent stationed at Matagorda Bay was forced to flee his post. He escaped back to Mexico by traveling down Padre Island. The war did, however, place Padre in an undefined position between Mexico and the new republic. Texas claimed that its territory extended to the Rio Grande. Mexico claimed that Tamaulipas, which was formed out of Escandon's Nuevo Santander, extended to the Nueces. With neither side possessing the military capability to enforce its claim, the status of the region including Padre Island became no man's land where, as one historian has put it, "for nearly a decade a predatory and guerrilla like warfare was waged between Mexicans and Texans."[31]

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31. Joseph M. Nance, After San Jacinto, the Texas-Mexican Frontier, 1836-1841 (Austin, 1963), p. 4.

It is unknown how the Texas War of Independence affected Mexican citizens living on Padre Island. Like their compatriots who had ranches between Matamoros and Refugio, they might have been forced to flee to the Rio Grande settlements. However, in that they were in little danger from the Texans, who were more interested in filibustering along the Rio Grande than in routing a few Mexican peons on a remote island, they probably stayed on Padre and tended the cattle and horses.

In 1839 Americans for the first time arrived in the immediate vicinity of Padre Island. In that year one Henry Kinney established a trading post on the shores of Corpus Christi Bay. The trading post would later become the prosperous and modern city of Corpus Christi. There were reasons why the Americans had not come at an earlier date. Prior to 1836 the land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces had not been granted Texas empresarios, but rather to trusted and reliable Mexican citizens. Moreover, Mexican authorities allowed no foreign immigrant colonies within ten miles of the coast. The closest foreigners had come to Padre was an Irish colony at San Patricio. It was only after Texas had achieved her de facto independence that Americans could move into those coastal areas, which had previously been reserved for Mexicans.

Kinney and his partner William P. Aubrey choose well the location of their trading post. It was right on the de facto border between Texas and Mexico. The post was easily supplied by sea and Kinney prospered. Although Mexican officials frowned on the trade, American goods such as calico, hardware, and tobacco moved south and Mexican silver, beans, sugar, flour, shoes, and saddles arrived at Corpus Christi Bay. Kinney's success soon attracted other frontier enterpreneurs.

In May 1841 three men named Philip Dimitt, an early trader on Lavaca Bay who had been one of the first to raise the Texas flag, James Gourlay, and John Sutherland set up a trading post in competition with Kinney. This post was located either at Flour Bluff on the Laguna Madre or at the head of Padre Island.[32] Dimitt's activities aroused the anger of the Mexican authorities, who thought he was involved in smuggling and purchasing stolen cattle. They were probably right. In September 1841, a Mexican force raided Dimitt's post, capturing him and several other traders. They plundered the establishment of all its merchandise, which they loaded on boats and took south to Mexico. Dimitt and a colleague named James C. Boyd were packed off overland to a Mexican jail where Dimitt committed suicide. Dimitt's arrest naturally enraged his fellow Texans. Irish immigrants from San Patricio organized to conduct a reprisal raid. They received intelligence as to Mexican troop strength from fellow countrymen living at the south end of Padre Island.[33] The Texans captured a

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32. Ibid., p. 446.

33. Ibid., p. 470.

Mexican colonel and nine enlisted men and took them back to San Patricio. In addition they accused Kinney, who was left untouched by the Mexican raid, of being in league with the Mexicans. Kinney was arrested and charged with treason. He was subsequently acquitted. For a brief five months in 1841 Padre Island was the possible location of a busy trading post. In transporting goods south into Mexico, it is probable that Dimitt's agents often traveled the beach on Padre Island. When the weather is right, the beach becomes a hard, flat surface, an ideal wagon road. Those desiring to smuggle goods into Mexico could easily do so by rolling down Padre Island and boating the contraband across the Laguna Madre to the mainland. Although records of this illegal but romantic activity are of course not available, it is almost certain that Padre has often been used for this purpose.

The unstable conditions which prevailed between the Nueces and the Rio Grande, and especially the hostility that Texans demonstrated for all things Mexican, were noted by Santiago Morales, the owner of one-half of Padre Island. In 1845 Texas joined the United States. Morales recognized that it was only a matter of time before Texas enforced its claim that the Rio Grande was the border. He also apparently knew that Mexicans would have a difficult time as citizens of the United States. In 1845 he sold his interest in Padre to one José María Továr.

As Továr and perhaps Grisante continued to ranch the island, and American immigrants arrived at San Patricio and Corpus Christi, American manifest destiny was casting ever more covetous eyes on the vast Mexican possessions of New Mexico and Upper California. By 1846 the American desire to settle its territorial questions with Mexico reached a climax.

When in July 1845 Texas joined the union, President James Polk ordered a detachment of the regular army to take up position on the Nueces River and await the results of diplomatic efforts to negotiate the Rio Grande border dispute. Although Mexico had not yet recognized the annexation of what she officially considered a rebellious province, she had no intention of making Taylor's landing at Corpus Christi a cause for war. Taylor set up camp near Kinney's trading post, which quickly grew into a small town when merchants and camp followers arrived to benefit from quartermaster vouchers and soldier's pay. Here the small army of 3,900 men awaited developments.

At the beginning of February 1846, President Polk ordered Taylor to proceed to the Rio Grande and take up a defensive position opposite the small Mexican town of Matamoros. "Although Taylor for been on the ground for six months," historian Justin H. Smith informs us, "he was utterly ignorant of the way to Matamoros, and had now to investigate the matter."[34] Taylor immediately dispatched two scouting parties to carry out a recon-

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34. Justin H. Smith, War With Mexico (2 vols., New York, 1919), 1, 145.

conaissance to determine the best route south. One went overland via the old road between Matamoros and Refugio. The other, under command of Capt. William J. Hardee, set out to reconnoitre a coastal route down Padre Island. That Taylor sent Hardee to Padre is another indication that the island was a well known route to Point Isabel, a small settlement opposite Brazos Santiago Pass, and Matamoros. On February 9, 1846, Hardee and a detachment of about 25 men forded the Laguna Madre at Flour Bluff and arrived at the head of Padre Island. From there he reported to Taylor that three Mexicans and an American were living at Mr. Eilly's. Mr. Eilly is another of those many Padre Island names that are fleetingly mentioned in sources and about whom nothing is known. Perhaps he lived at Dimitt's old trading post. Hardee said that these men informed him there was a ford "ten miles this side of Brazos Santiago, but none of them are able to take me there."[35] On February 11 Hardee and his men set off down the island and on the 15th made camp fifteen miles from Brazos Santiago Pass. Unfortunately, he made no note of people living at the south end nor did he mention passing Padre Balli's Buena Vista ranch site. From this camp Hardee scouted the Brazos Santiago Pass and a possible ford across the Laguna Madre to Point Isabel. In a message to General Taylor on February 17, he reported that the beach was firm enough to support wagons, but there was no practicable ford back onto the mainland.[36] When the reports were in on the two potential routes south, Taylor decided to go via the mainland. By the end of February the road, which because of the winter northers had been impassable in December and January, had dried out. In March the army marched south through the chaparral and set up camp on Brazos Island.

After the outbreak of hostilities, Brazos Island became the primary staging area for the coming campaign. Volunteers from throughout Texas and the Mississippi Valley converged on the island and headed inland for camps at Point Isabel and along the Rio Grande. In May 1846, a group of these volunteers, a Texas outfit called McCulloch's Texas Rangers, traveled from Corpus Christi to Point Isabel via Padre Island. Samuel Reid, a Louisiana volunteer who had joined McCulloch, was with the outfit at this time. He reported that, with the exception of an old man, Padre was deserted. According to Reid, the old hermit was a wrecker, i.e., an early-day beach comber who salvaged material from wrecked ships.[37]

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35. Capt. William Hardee to Gen. Zachary Taylor, February 9, 1846, Letters Received, Mexican War. R. G. 94, Records of the Adjutant General, National Archives (hereafter cited as Mexican War Records).

36. Hardee to Taylor, "Report of His Reconnaissance of Brazos Santiago," February 17, 1846, Mexican War Records.

37. Reid, The Scouting Expedition of McCulloch's Texas Rangers, p. 39.

During May 1846, another man visited Padre on his way to join Taylor's army at the growing camp on Brazos Island. S. Compton Smith, a doctor from Louisiana, volunteered in New Orleans aboard a Texas outfit. The volunteers shipped out of New Orleans aboard a schooner named Rosella. According to Smith, Rosella was a worthless little tub, which would hardly hold her rotten timbers together while lying in the harbor, and must inevitably go to pieces if caught out in rough weather."[38] As Rosella neared Brazos, rough weather set in and the feared happened. "I will not attempt to describe," Smith wrote, "the fearfully sublime spectacle of a vessel, crowded with human beings, dashing into the jaws of the maddened breakers, whose foamy spray was tossed above her tallest spar."[39] At the end of their terrifying ride through the surf, Smith and his fellow volunteers found themselves on the beach at Padre Island. He did not speak well of the island's natural values. In his shipwrecked eyes, Padre was a "wretched, barren sand bank . . . destitute of animals, and nothing found existence here, but disgusting sand crabs, and venomous insects."[40] After salvaging what they could save from the ship, most of the survivors headed south for Brazos Island, leaving twenty men behind to look after the supplies. Wagons were sent out to pick up the men and stores. As Smith proceeded south he noted the rich variety of beach objects ranging from fragments of wrecks to fresh Brazil nuts. He also passed a dead steer which wolves had eaten. Although Smith thought that animal must have been washed overboard from a supply ship, it probably came from the herd on the island.

Brazos Island and Point Isabel became the major points of Mexican War activity on the Texas gulf coast. During the initial buildup on Brazos Island, there were times when the island became overcrowded. When the Brazos camp filled up, it is possible that some volunteers camped on the south end of Padre before moving to the camps in the Rio Grande Valley. Padre, however, played no substantive role in the Mexican War. General Taylor did not march down Padre in full dress uniform with banners flying. When in February 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was negotiated in Mexico City, the Rio Grande became the border and Padre Island joined the United States. The island quietly awaited the return of its legal Mexican owners.

With the war with Mexico decided, Texans promptly turned their attention to acquiring Mexican owned land south of the Nueces. The cattle industry was quickly revived and herds once again began to roam across the open ranges. On Padre Island an American arrived, who also hoped to

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38. S. Compton Smith, Chile Con Carne, or, the Camp and the Field (New York, 1857), p. 15.

39. Ibid., p. 18.

40. Ibid.

acquire land and establish a ranch. In 1847 John V. Singer captained a vessel named Alice Sadell. While on a voyage to Brazos Island the Alice Sadell, like so many of her sister ships, shipwrecked on Padre Island. Unlike other survivors, however, Singer did not hurry to get off the island and return to civilization. He decided to remain on Padre and seek his fortune. Using materials salvaged from his wrecked ship, Singer built some structures and his ranch was in business. The exact location of the Singer ranch is unknown. It might have been originally located at the site of Padre Balli's Buena Vista ranch. It is probable that Singer lived at more than one location near the southern end of Padre. In 1867, when James Boyd surveyed the mouth of the Rio Grande for the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, he placed the Singer ranch at the southern tip of the island opposite Port Isabel. Little is known of Singer's activities during the years he lived on Padre between 1847 and 1861. He raised cattle, engaged in wrecking and general beach combing, and raised vegetables which he sold in Port Isabel and Brownsville, the town on the border opposite Matamoros which sprang up around the fort General Taylor had constructed in 1846. Singer purchased the property of one of Padre Balli's seven devisees, i.e., Singer apparently acquired one-seventh of the southern half. He may have also speculated in Padre land. With his wife and six children, Singer lived on Padre for 11 years and probably would have stayed there for the rest of his life, if it had not been for the Civil War. As a Yankee, and the brother of the sewing machine king of the same name, Singer made no secret of his sympathies. When war finally came, the Texans regarded him and his ranch, which was located at the strategically important Brazos Santiago Pass, a security risk. They forced him to leave the island. A long-standing tale contends that Singer buried as much as $80,000 on the island before leaving. Naturally, nobody has ever found this treasure. Singer did not return to the North, but rather moved up to Corpus Christi Bay and settled on Flour Bluff. He had hopes of opening a steamship company, which would transport goods and passengers between Brownsville, Corpus Christi, and New Orleans. The company apparently never functioned. When his wife died in 1866, Singer sold his one-seventh interest in Padre to Jay Cooke and moved to New Orleans.

At the end of the Mexican War the owner of the northern half of Padre Island, José María Továr, returned and resumed cattle raising. When in 1855 his will was filed in Corpus Christi, Továr's Padre Island holdings were valued at $4,049.[41] The will stated that Továr owned three leagues of land, more or less, with improvements. The land was worth $1,000. In addition he had 430 head of cattle ($2,580), one mare and a colt, one two-year old filly, 13 hogs, and an assortment of guns, hides, lumber, tools, and three branding irons. Figuring 4,428 acres to the league, Továr's will would indicate he owned 13,284 acres on Padre. The early measurements of Padre's size were little more than rough estimates.

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41. "State of Texas vs. Balli."

It is probable that Továr owned considerably more land than his will claimed. Továr's land was later divided into the standard sections and in future transfers became known as the Továr sections.

Továr and Singer were not the only men who lived on Padre Island during the years between the Mexican and Civil Wars. Unfortunately, however, there are very few records that would give a clear picture of activities on the island during these years. Mustang Island, at this time separated from Padre by the shallow Corpus Christi Pass, became the location of a customs house and a wrecker station. In 1854 Robert Mercer established a ranch on Mustang where he raised "sea lions," as coastal cattle were called, and horses. As of 1850 Nueces County and Corpus Christi had a population of 698 and 533 respectively. By 1860, thanks to immigration from the Mississippi Valley and Europe, the population of the county had grown to 2,906. It is possible that as Nueces County grew a community was established on Padre Island, but its exact location and size are unknown. One source speaks of a settlement on the Laguna Madre side of the island located 65 miles from the north end. It is almost certain various men ran cattle on the island and they might have lived at this settlement. Other men combed the beaches and still others smuggled goods into and out of Mexico. A type of Padre Island visitor called a wrecker also pursued his trade during these years. A wrecker's business consisted of salvaging whatever could be saved from shipwrecked vessels. Legitimate wreckers, such as those stationed on Mustang Island, worked for the county. Whenever a ship went down on Padre, they hired a crew, went down the island to the wreck site, collected the goods, inventoried them, and sold them at public auction with the proceeds going to the lawful owners. Naturally, there were many men in the tough Texas gulf coast towns who recognized the opportunity of gathering a valuable cargo from a wrecked ship and selling it on their own behalf. These men were also called wreckers. However, when referring to this type, one pronounced the name with a different inflection. These wreckers were not content to wait patiently for a particularly stiff norther or hurricane to blow fortune their way. They gave nature a helping hand. First they placed lanterns on poles which were then attached to a horse or donkey. After dark they led the animal down Padre's beach. The animal's rolling gait swung the lantern on the pole from side to side as if it were hanging from the yardarm of a ship riding a gentle swell. Coastal schooners seeing the swinging light naturally thought they were near a good anchorage. Coming about they headed for the light. By the time they realized the ruse, it was usually too late and they found themselves stuck fast in Padre's surf. The wreckers then moved in, stripped the stranded vessel, loaded the plunder on wagons or skiffs, and made their silent getaway, leaving an unfortunate captain cursing Blunt's Coastal Pilot for not providing reliable information and swearing that he would never again head into unknown waters following a swaying light.

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Padre Island was the lonely home of a few hardy men who wrung a living from its hard environment. Corpus

Christi had grown into the largest trading center south of San Antonio. The town was a wholesale center and distribution point for the gulf coast area and northern Mexico. Immigrants heading for California often landed in Corpus, where they outfitted for the overland journey. In the countryside cattle covered the vast expanses of open range and giant ranches, such as the famous Kenedy and King spreads, were supplying beef to the New Orleans market. When Texas joined the Confederacy, the residents of the coast from Corpus Christi south to Port Isabel and Brownsville rallied to the support of the state's leaders.

The decisive military events of the Civil War of course took place on battlefields far to the east of Padre Island. Although the Texas gulf coast was not the scene of major military action, its citizens were not spared the presence of the enemy and the roar of gunfire. Union ships, intent on blockading all Confederate attempts to ship the South's valuable cotton crop to the English mills, patrolled the entire Gulf coast from Key West to the Rio Grande. The effectiveness of the Yankee blockade forced cotton growers from as far away as Louisiana to ship their foreign exchange earning crop across country to Mexican ports south of the Rio Grande. The coastal trade was also disrupted. Schooners out of New Orleans carrying manufactured goods from northern factories or cloth from England no longer regularly visited the gulf ports to pick up cattle, hides, and other agricultural products. Peacetime commerce came to a halt.

Like their sister Confederate harbors to the east, the Texas ports were soon blockaded by Union men of war. Nature assisted the North. The barrier islands which extend from Galveston to the Rio Grande restrict access to the south Texas ports to the narrow passes which separate the islands. Ships wishing to enter Corpus Christi harbor had first to pass through Aransas Pass between Mustang and St. Joseph's Island. The Union Navy effectively disrupted Corpus shipping by simply blockading the pass. In February 1862, a Confederate engineering officer in charge of coastal defenses visited Mustang Island to inspect the fortifications which had been hastily thrown up there to guard Aransas Pass. He reported that "The line of trade for the present is destroyed."[42] It did not return to normal until the end of the war.

The military events of the Union blockade of Aransas Pass took place during 1862 and 1863 and they indirectly touched Padre Island. In July 1862, Yankee ships entered Corpus Christi Bay and captured three prizes, the sloop Bella Italia and the schooners Monte Cristo and Reindeer. Unable to challenge the Union navy, Confederate officers at Corpus decided to block the channel. They sank several boats. However, the Yankees quickly cleared them away. In August 1862, eight northern vessels entered Corpus Christi Bay and bombarded the town. Having little artillary with which to respond, the Confederates were unable to counter effectively. It was only a matter of time until the Union forces captured the town.

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42. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, Ser. 1, Vol. 9, p. 484. (Hereafter cited as O.R.)

In December 1862, the war came to Padre Island. Early in the month Confederate Capt. John Ireland and seven men crossed Corpus Christi Bay to Corpus Christi Pass in order to check the depth of the bars on both ends of the pass. The depth measured three and a half feet at one bar and five feet at the other, i.e., the pass was too shallow to allow any ships to use it. While checking the depth, Ireland and his men observed a Union bark, Arthur, which apparently was looking for them. Beaching their boat on Mustang Island, Ireland spent an hour watching Arthur's movements. At noon the Confederates returned to their boat, Queen of the Bay, with the intention of returning to Corpus. No sooner had they pushed off from Mustang than they discovered that Arthur had succeeded in putting overboard two launches which were closing fast on the Queen. Quickly realizing that he would not be able to escape the launches, Ireland beached his boat on Padre Island. The Confederates hastily grabbed some baggage and their weapons and took up a position in the sand dunes. When the Union launches closed to within two hundred yards of the beached Queen, the rebels opened fire. The Union force returned the fire, but realizing that they were exposed in their open boats, while the Confederates enjoyed the cover of the dunes, they turned away and landed on the other side of Corpus Christi Pass on Mustang. In their haste to get out of range of the Confederate sharpshooters, the Yankees failed to secure or anchor their launches. No sooner were they safely under cover than the two boats came loose from the beach and drifted across the pass towards the Confederate position. Seeing his good fortune Captain Ireland waded out to one of the launches and secured it. When he looked into the boat, he discovered why the northerners had been so anxious to find cover. Two men lay at the bottom of the launch, one dead and the other wounded. Meanwhile the other Union launch, which had also broken away from Mustang, was drifting towards the gulf. Jack Sands quickly jumped into the captured Union launch, rowed out into the pass, and pulled it in. With the two Union boats in their hands, the Confederates reboarded the Queen of the Bay, pushed off from Padre, and headed back to Corpus. The 22 stranded Union soldiers watched them sail away and, badly embarrassed, wondered how they would get back to the Arthur. Back in Corpus, Captain Ireland proudly reported that his party had captured two launches with full equipment, one double-barrel shot gun, three holster pistols, four percussion muskets, four cutlasses, and one bayonet.[43] The affair of Padre Island, as the official records call this minor encounter, was an insignificant rebel victory, but it did much to boost Corpus morale.

During the two years the Union forces blockaded the passes at each end of Padre, men from the ships often visited the island to patrol it and secure provisions. Militarily their objective was to make sure cotton stored on Flour Bluff did not get through the blockade. In addition Yankee

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43. Ibid. pp. 190, 191.

commanders strived to prevent salt gathered along the Laguna Madre from reaching Corpus, where it could eventually reach Confederate forces. Indeed, in September 1862 Texans captured a Yankee party which had landed on Flour Bluff looking for cotton and salt. The Confederates undoubtedly tried to get through the Union blockade by transporting cotton across the Laguna Madre to Padre Island and then loading it on ships standing off shore. Nevertheless, these ventures were infrequent. The difficulty of getting across the very shallow lagoon and the island, and then loading the cotton on a ship with the Union patrol craft always just over the horizon, made such attempts hazardous and time-consuming. During the Civil War, Padre did not become a secret door through which the South shipped cotton to Europe.

In addition to patrolling the island to disrupt the Laguna Madre salt trade and to stop any blockade running, Union troops also landed to secure fresh provisions. The cattle grazing on both Padre and Mustang provided many a Union mess with roasts and steaks. It is possible that by the end of the war most of the cattle on Padre had been requisitioned by the North.

Contact between the northern soldiers and sailors and Padre's residents during the war is largely unknown. There is one report that the Union soldiers often visited the Curry settlement, which was located on the Laguna Madre about twenty miles from Corpus Christi Pass. Although Mrs. Curry's sons and son-in-law had all joined the Confederate army, she apparently became popular with the men from the North who always stopped by for a slice of her famous cornbread.[44]

In November 1863, Union forces captured Brazos Island and reoccupied the camp originally set up by General Taylor in 1846. From Brazos Island they moved north, intent on capturing the passes all the way to Galveston Island. On November 18, 1863, a large body sailed along the Padre to Corpus Christi Pass and landed on Mustang Island. Moving quickly and quietly in the grey morning light up the island, they surprised the Confederate garrison at Aransas Pass. After minor skirmishing the Confederate force, which consisted of nine officers and ninety men, surrendered.[45] Brazos, Padre, and Mustang were securely in northern hands. For all intents and purposes they remained so until the end of the war.

Unfortunately, very little is known about Padre Island during the years between the end of the Civil War and 1879, the year Patrick Dunn came to Padre. On the mainland, Nueces County continued to grow. By 1870 it had a population of 3,975 and the town of Corpus Christi counted 2,140 citizens. The decade of the 1870s in Nueces County was in fact a time of

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44. Padre Island, Corpus Christi Writer's Round Table (San Antonio, 1950), p. 167.

45. O.R., Ser. 1, 26, 426.

the wild, wild West. Huge cattle and mustang herds roamed the open range throughout the countryside. At one time in the early 1870s perhaps as many as 1,000,000 head were to be found between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. Every winter herds seeking grass moved south towards the coast. The abundance of cattle led inevitably to a drop in prices. As both cattle and land became valueless, a "skinning war" broke out. All cattle, branded or maverick, became free game for the lawless and hungry men who "peeled" them for their hides. The Rio Grande, always a source of controversy, became known as the "bloody border." Thieves and cutthroats from both sides raided the herds and kept peaceful citizens in a constant uproar. When the price of beef dropped to 2 1/2 cents a pound, large packing houses called packeries sprang up all along the coast from Port Isabel to Galveston. At the packeries, cattle were slaughtered by the thousands for their hides and tallow. Some meat was pickled, i.e., packed in salt, and shipped to New Orleans or Cuba, but the bulk of the valuable commodity was simply discarded or fed to pigs. Rockport was the center of the packeries, but one was also located at the head of Padre Island. It probably functioned from 1870 or 1872 to 1874. Very literally thousands and thousands of sea lions or coasters passed through these houses. In 1872, 300,000 hides were shipped from Rockport and Corpus Christi.[46] In 1875 prices started to rise. The great cattle drives north up the trails to the railroad or to pastures in Colorado, Wyoming, or Montana, which had started in 1867, proved ever more profitable.

Beginning in the 1870s a change took place on the great range of south Texas which altered the nature of the cattle industry. In the early 1870s Mifflin Kenedy and Richard King, two men who had hauled supplies up the Rio Grande during the Mexican War and had since then acquired giant ranches between Corpus and Brownsville, fenced their land. With the invention of barbed wire in De Kalb, Ill., in 1875, the fencing process became simple and cheap. Others soon followed the example set by Kenedy and King. The result of fencing the free open range was revolutionary. No longer could men enter the business simply by purchasing a herd or a brand and then running their cattle on the open range. Having no land of their own, small cattle owners were driven out of business. Land ownership became crucial and, equally important, a good water supply determined the value of land. Some men whose cattle had for years headed for the most convenient water source, suddenly discovered that their acreage was valueless because they could no longer get to water. These changes were the stuff of countless later Western stories, movies, and television serials.

The fencing of the range had a direct effect on Padre Island. In 1876 a young man from Corpus Christi named Patrick Dunn discovered that he was no longer able to graze cattle freely on the open range. Dunn

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46. J. Frank Dobie, A Vaquero of the Brush Country (Dallas, 1929), p. 26.

faced the choice of either moving farther west, where the range was still free, securing a ranch, or getting out of the business. Desiring to remain in the Corpus area, he looked around for a place of his own. His eyes fell on Padre Island as a good place to work cattle and make his fortune. He was not to be disappointed in either venture.

On Padre itself little changed during the years after the war. John Singer, who had been forced to leave the island at the beginning of the war, did not return. The Curry settlement, which was named after one of its occupants named Carrey Curry, a hardshell Baptist preacher, apparently thrived about twenty miles south of Corpus Christi Pass.[47] Curry moved to Padre sometime before the Civil War and apparently raised cattle on the island. A man named J. T. Lyne, who worked at the packery at Corpus Christi Pass during its heyday from 1870 to 1874, also lived on Padre about six miles south of the pass. He ran cattle and horses on both Padre and Mustang. Another settlement may have been located at Murdock's landing on the Laguna Madre about 30 miles south of Corpus Christi Pass. Next to nothing is known about this settlement, but it might have been connected with the King ranch. When R. E. Halter surveyed Padre from 1876 to 1882 for the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey, he noted the landing on his maps and showed a road running from it across the island to the beach. (The landing and road are still shown on U.S.C. & G.S. maps of Padre.) Although pure speculation, the road might have been used during the Civil War to move cotton across Padre to launches on the beach. It also could have been a smuggler's road or perhaps it was simply a wagon path connected with ranching operations. There were undoubtedly men living at the south end of the island, but their names and activities are unknown. Perhaps Nicolás Grisante, who owned much of Padre at this time, had some kind of ranch there.

At the beginning of 1876, R. E. Halter from the United States Coast and Geodetic Survey arrived in Corpus Christi for the purpose of surveying the coast from Brazos Island to Aransas Pass. Between 1876 and 1882 he and a crew of about four to six men spent several months every year moving up and down the island setting markers and making observations. From his correspondence with Washington, one gains the impression that Padre was all but deserted during these years. In December 1876, in one of his monthly progress reports to Washington written from his camp at the north end of the island, Halter remarked that his nearest neighbors were a family living twenty miles down the island and an old hermit "living in a hovel without even a dog."[48] From a camp sixty miles down the island he commented again on conditions on Padre. He had found it necessary to purchase a rifle

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47. Padre Island, p. 166.

48. R. E. Halter Correspondence, 1876 Vol. United States Coast and Geodetic Survey Textual Records, Record Group 23, National Archives (hereafter cited as Halter Correspondence).

for protection against coyotes, wolves, and "panthers," which had "become more plentiful as we go down the island." In April 1878, Halter observed, "This is a very desolate place. There is no one living within forty miles of me that I know of. Even the sea is particularly lonesome. . . . We do have plenty of sand, rattlesnakes, and coyotes."[49] In March 1879 he explained why he preferred to locate his camp on Padre, although the island was very lonely. Not only was it easier to survey the Laguna Madre from Padre, but also, and just as important, he wrote, "Camps on the mainland are not considered safe to life or property, the country is frequented by cattle thieves, lawless men, Mexicans and others of whom it is said they will kill a man for his saddle and clothes."[50]

In 1879, Halter finished the triangulation of the Laguna Madre and started back up Padre to carry out the topographical and hydrological portions of the survey. Because the survey left the island during the hot and humid months from May to November, leaving the camp equipage and horses at a deserted shack, Halter did not reach Corpus Christi Bay until 1882. Although from 1876 to 1882 Halter spent several months each year on Padre, he unfortunately did not leave a detailed description of the island's flora and fauna. His maps of the topography and hydrology of the island and the Laguna Madre are excellent.

Halter's survey is important in the history of Padre Island, because it marked the first time that the island's physical characteristics had been studied from the perspective of the practical scientist. Padre had ceased to be wilderness in 1805 when Padre Balli introduced a civilized form of land utilization to the island. However, it was not until about 1880 that Padre ceased to be wilderness in the sense of disciplined, scientific knowledge of aspects of its natural environment. In supplying topographical and hydrological data about Padre, Halter began the study of the island's natural history. This study continues to the present day. A national seashore has been created on Padre to institutionalize it.

The years between 1836 and 1879 were for Padre Island, as they were for the rest of the Texas gulf coast, a time of uncertainty, wars, and the wild, wild West. The period saw the island transferred from Mexico to the United States. As political control changed so did actual occupation. Although Mexicans had a legal claim to the island, Padre became in fact Texan. Men like John Singer and Carrey Curry slowly replaced Nicolás Grisante and José María Továr. Cattle ranching continued to be the major form of land utilization. In the 1870s a packery was

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49. Halter Correspondence, 1878 Vol.

50. Halter Correspondence, 1879 Vol.

built on the island to process hides and tallow from the vast Texas herds. When the packery went out of business in 1874, an attempt was made to turn it into a cannery, but this too failed. Many men lived on Padre during these years, but they came and went. The only records of their activities are a brief note in a diary or a line or two in an early newspaper.

At this period no Mexican or Texan spoke of Padre as a pleasant place to spend enjoyable and relaxing hours swimming, fishing, or just walking the beach. Parties from Corpus probably sailed out to Padre or forded the Laguna Madre to spend a Sunday on the island, but such visits were infrequent. Padre remained an isolated and desolate sweep of sand and grass. During this period Texans were much too busy establishing viable forms of economic life to devote their attention to such things as outdoor recreation. For them, nature was an immediate reality. Their task, and it was one which consumed all their energies and attention, was to subdue and transform the natural environment in order to exploit nature's resources. It would be at least another half century of technological and economic progress before Texans started to think of Padre Island in terms of scenic, scientific, and recreation values.

2. The Patrick Dunn Ranch, 1879-1926

In 1835 every square foot of land between the Rio Grande and the Nueces including Padre Island had been granted in large tracts to Mexicans. Two years before the Civil War all but one of these grants had passed into American hands.[51] The Mexican War was the event which accelerated the transfer of the land from Mexican to American ownership. This change of ownership was not a simple real estate deal. As the historian Paul Taylor points out, "But when the Mexicans first sold to Americans they were under stress to sell. They were not simply holders of property selling at their own free will; they were selling because they were Mexicans who, in a time of chaos, could no longer occupy their land, and who saw the imminent American military and political domination."[52] Taylor quotes one Texas old timer as simply saying, "The Americans took the land from the Mexicans. History will tell; it may be too soon now."[53]

The history of land ownership on Padre Island is long and very, very complex. The island has been in and out of the Texas courts almost continuously for about a century. Although always valuable as a cattle ranch, the discovery of minerals in the 1940s immeasurably increased the island's

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51. Paul S. Taylor, The American-Mexican Frontier. Nueces County, Texas (Chapel Hill, 1934), p. 180.

52. Ibid., p. 182.

53. Ibid., p. 188.

worth. As one can easily imagine, everyone with even the remotest claim to Padre desired to share in the wealth. Countless suits appeared on Texas court dockets and one of them, "State of Texas vs. Balli," a claim by the state of Texas to own all but 11 1/2 leagues of the island, was finally decided against the state by the Texas Supreme Court. During the period from 1855 to the time that Pat Dunn went to Padre in 1879, the same thing happened on the island as on the nearby mainland. By purchase and just plain occupation, Americans took over Padre. The Továr sections on the north went in pieces to such prominent residents of Corpus Christi as John McCampbell and Stanley Welch. At the south end, John Singer had purchased some land, but the majority apparently still legally belonged to Nicolás Grisante. Singer and others simply claimed it by right of possession, a right with which the Texas courts could be expected to sympathize. It would be a mistake to claim Americans stole Padre from its Mexican owners. By purchase, payment of back taxes, and other means the original Balli land grant, which was the legal basis of ownership, legally passed into American hands. Whether the transfer was fair and just is another question. Beginning in 1879 a major beneficiary was a man named Patrick Dunn.

Patrick Dunn was the son of Irish immigrants who came to Corpus Christi in the 1840s or early 1850s. Born in 1858 and left fatherless in 1865, Pat Dunn grew up in the tough social and economic environment of the Texas gulf coast. It was a period when a young man without means was forced to work hard to create a material existence. Like many of his contemporaries, Pat Dunn turned to cattle as his vocation and occupation. With his brother, Dunn as a teenager worked cattle on the open range. The fencing of the range in the 1870s meant the end of the landless cattle entrepreneur. Either one moved farther west to the Big Bend country or even to Arizona or one turned to another trade. As Dunn himself many years later described his decision to go to Padre Island, "The occasion of going to Padre Island was this: in the early days the range was all free, there were no pastures, and then people commenced building fences and buying the land, and my brother and I had some cattle and we had to go some place and so we went to Padre Island."[54] When Dunn first went to Padre in 1879 he did not, as far as is known, own any land on the island. When he sold the island in 1926, he owned almost all of it.

When he moved onto Padre, Dunn apparently had a lease from two Corpus Christi gentlemen who owned land on the island, John McCampbell and Stanley Welch. It is probable that this was a verbal agreement, for that is how Texas gentlemen conducted their business. After a man named Healy moved his cattle off Padre, Dunn stocked the island with 400 cows he had purchased

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54. Pauline Reese, "The History of Padre Island," M.A. Thesis, Southwestern University, Georgetown Texas, 1938, p. 19. Copy La Retima Library, Corpus Christi, Texas.

from a man named Rachel who lived at White Point,[55] Dunn and his brother drove the cattle from White Point to Flour Bluff and then forded the Laguna Madre. For decades this was the way Dunn got his cattle on and off the island. Nature was unkind the first year. A severe winter badly damaged the herd, which was not in any case made up of prize animals, and Dunn was unable to meet the payment on the note due Rachel. Fortunately a firm called the Coleman-Fulton Pasture Company was looking for someone to drive 1,000 head to a ranch in Webb County. Dunn took the job and received a dollar a head as commission. The money enabled him to meet his payment. It was to be the last time that Dunn was not able to earn a living on Padre.

By 1884 he had firmly established his cattle operations. In that year he decided to move his family to the island. The family lived at the settlement about 20 miles from the north end. About five or six years later one of his daughters contracted scarlet fever, which left her partially paralyzed. Thinking conditions on Padre contributed to this misfortune, Dunn moved his family into Corpus Christi. For the next sixteen years he lived at the settlement or at one of the line camps he built to manage his cattle ranch. In 1907 Dunn decided to build a two-story house on Packery channel. Constructed entirely from drift lumber found on the beach, the house was an imposing structure (see illustrations). Although the family continued to maintain its permanent residence in Corpus, they spent several months during the summer on Padre. In 1916 an exceptionally severe hurricane blew the house away. Dunn replaced it with a smaller structure also located at the north end of the island. This structure, which since 1916 has been remodeled a number of times, is still standing and in use.

When Dunn moved the first four hundred cows to Padre in 1879, he was confronted with the problem of adapting a type of agricultural land utilization to the island's environment. The two most important elements of successful cattle raising, food and water supply, were already present. The island's grasses had for years supported cattle and horses. Padre Balli, who had learned the technique from the Indians, has solved the problem of obtaining fresh water by digging shallow wells in the sand. Dunn simply adopted this technique. Padre had additional environmental characteristics which were advantageous to cattle raising. The island required no fencing. The Gulf on the east, the Laguna Madre on the west, Corpus Christi Pass on the north, and Brazos Santiago Pass on the south formed natural barriers. Dunn never had to worry about his cattle wandering off his range nor did he have to construct fences to distinguish his land from his neighbors. The sea was the fence. Good grass and water plus natural fences made Padre an ideal place to run cattle. The island possessed still another attribute which very few cattle ranches

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55. V.M. Harris, "History of Cattle Raising on Padre Island," South Texas Agriculture, Vol. 1, No. 2 (1965) p. 5.

in that part of the country could claim. There was no brush on Padre such as the mesquite and chaparral which made cattle raising on the mainland as difficult as the periodical drought. Brush was as much the vaquero's enemy as the outlaw steer. When riding in the brush he dressed appropriately. Toe fenders and thick boots protected his feet while heavy leather leggings and ducking jacket covered his body. Gauntleted gloves took care of his hands and wrists and a stout hat shielded his head. When working cattle in brush the vaquero did not quietly ride along singing a cattle song with one leg swung over the saddle horn. He "tore a hole" in the brush or "split the brush." He was not called a cowboy but rather a "brush popper" or a "brush wacker." As J. Frank Dobie was fond to note, a good brush wacker chasing a cow was "likely to emerge from a thicket with enough wood hanging in the fork of his saddle to cook a side of yearling ribs."[56] For some reason the brush so typical on the mainland was not found on Padre. Vaqueros working the Dunn ranch did not have to weigh themselves down with extra clothing nor worry about splitting their skulls on branches or scarring their faces and hands. Cattle did not get lost in the brush, requiring the vaquero to spend hours searching for them. They were always in the open between the two water fences, easy to find and easy to string out. According to Jim Lynch, a south Texas cattle man who has worked Padre Island cattle since his boyhood, the island's good grass and water, the natural fences, and the absence of brush made Padre one of the easiest ranches in the area.[57]

Another environmental characteristic to which Dunn adapted his cattle ranch was the island's size and dimensions. Padre is approximately 115 miles long and from 500 yards to three miles wide. Although the majority of the cattle grazed on the northernmost sixty miles, some wandered down the island to the southern end. In order to work cattle spread out over such a great distance, Dunn built a string of line camps down the island. Ranch headquarters on Padre was located at the northern end. Here Dunn had a house, a bunkhouse, traps, and working pens. Going south down the island he located three line camps at approximately 15-mile intervals. They were called respectively Novillo, Black Hill, and Green Hill. These facilities covered about sixty miles of the island's prime range. The choice of 15-mile intervals was not accidental. That was the distance it was possible in the old days to drive the cattle and get them in the trap before dark. Each camp was similar to Novillo (see illustrations). First there was a large trap which enclosed the entire camp area. Within the trap Dunn built two huts or cabins, an outdoor kitchen, smaller traps, and corrals or working pens. One of the huts was for Dunn's personal use and the other functioned as a bunk house for the men.

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56. Dobie, A Vaquero of the Brush Country, p. 207.

57. Personal Interview, James Lynch with Sheire, February 5, 1971.

When Dunn built his Padre Island structures, he was unable to simply call up a lumber yard in Corpus and ask them to deliver so many board feet of lumber, so many kegs of nails, so many hinges, or so much glass. There of course was no causeway, lumber was expensive, and transportation to the island was difficult. Like Padre Balli, John Singer, and all those who had built structures on Padre before him, Pat Dunn turned to the island itself for his materials. He found them on the beach, where the gulf delivered a constant supply of hard and softwood boards of all lengths and widths. Dragged to one of the camps they became the huts, kitchens, fences, and corrals. Shingles were hand made from rough lumber. The sea also supplied furniture. Barrels with the tops removed and filled with sand became small stoves. Stools and chairs came in and found their way to the camps. Indeed, it is said Dunn furnished his headquarters home with furniture from the Nicaragua, an unlucky Mexican ship that stranded on Padre in 1912 or 1913. Tar barrels floated in and were melted to close holes. Other barrels collected rain water. Ropes of all sizes were used for a variety of purposes. The sea and island were generous and Dunn took advantage of it. In an architectural sense he in fact adapted his structures to the environment and used available materials in their construction. In relation to form the structures were not elegant. They were simple, plain, and rough like the men who lived in them and the island upon which they stood.

Throughout the island Dunn constructed the wells which were the most unusual feature of the Padre Island cattle operation. Again using lumber from the beach Dunn first built a rectangular frame about eight feet by two feet. A hole was then dug in the sand, usually near a sand dune, and the frame inserted in the hole. Water, which did not run off but which was rather trapped in the sand, slowly seeped into the tanks. According to Dunn, at one time or another there were as many as 75 of these tanks spread out on the island.[58] Keeping them clean was a constant task, but it was easily accomplished by bailing them out and then cleaning the sides and bottoms. Unlike the water supply on the mainland, sweet water was never a problem on Padre. During the 1940s Burton Dunn, Pat's son who had taken over management of the ranch after his father's death in 1938, decided to modernize the place by constructing windmills. The windmills functioned properly, but they marked no improvement over the time-tested tanks. Old timers silently shook their heads and wondered why anybody would want to spend money building expensive windmills when the tanks had always supplied more than enough good water.

For ten months out of the year the cattle on Padre peacefully grazed. Dunn and his men moved up and down the island checking on the new calves, taking care of distressed animals, and cleaning the water tanks. Twice a year, usually in May and October or November, it came time to round up the herd and cut out coasters for market. Dunn adapted the cattle drive

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58. Reese, "History of Padre Island," p. 20.

or roundup to the island's conditions. With a foreman, about twelve vaqueros, a cook, and the necessary baggage and camp gear, Dunn first proceeded down the island to Green Hill, the southernmost camp. (This camp is today called the Dunn Ranch.) After making any necessary repairs to the traps and corrals, the men were ready to begin the drive. Proceeding another thirty miles down the island to a fence Dunn had constructed in the area of the present-day Port Mansfield Channel, they slept on the beach. Getting up at 4:00 in the morning they ate breakfast and then spread out across the island in the form of a "V". When the men were in place the drive got underway. According to Jim Lynch, who pushed many of Padre Island roundup, the function of the men on the wings was to throw the cattle to the center of the "V" where they strung out and moved north. The foreman pushed the whole operation. He was always a man who, as J. Frank Dobie described him, "savvied the cow--cow psychology, cow anatomy, cow dietetics--cow nature in general and cow nature in particular. He must know how to water a herd, graze it, drive it, hold it up, string it out, manage it at will and yet leave it free to thrive and be contented."[59] On Padre the foreman's main job was to move back and forth across the island making sure that one of the wings did not get ahead of the other and that the herd was properly strung out. Cripples and outlaws, who could upset the herd, were either left behind to be picked up later or tailed to quiet them down. Tailing was a dangerous vaquero sport. It consisted of reaching down from the horse, grabbing the tail of an angry cow, and wrapping the tail around the horn and hump. If the vaquero was successful, and he usually was, the outlaw was violently thrown to the ground. Upon release the dazed animal docilely joined the string. If the vaquero missed, the cowboy could be dragged from his horse or the horse badly gored.

Slowly moving north the men on the wings continued to throw the cattle to the center of the "V". The herd gradually grew in size. When it approached Green Hill, three men were stationed on each side of the trap. Their job was to make sure no cattle got past the trap into the next section of the island. After the herd had been placed in the trap, the task of working the animals got underway. Calves were separated out into one of the working pens, where they were branded, castrated, and, in later years, vaccinated. Other cows were run through dipping vats or, again in later years, sprayed. The major concern, however, was to separate out the yearlings and other stock which would be taken to market. Once the work was complete and the prime beeves selected, the rest of the herd was turned out. They slowly drifted back down the island and resumed grazing.

The technique of the "V" type drive between the two bodies of water on each side of the island was repeated between Green Hill and Black Hill. Again the vaqueros spread out across Padre with the wings throwing the cattle

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59. J. Frank Dobie, Cow People (Boston, 1964), p. 32.

to the center, where they joined the animals from Green Hill. Reaching Black Hill, the cattle collected between Green and Black Hills were branded and vaccinated. When the cattle ready for market had been added to those from Green Hill, the herd resumed the slow drive up the island. The same roundup technique was employed between Black Hill and Novillo and Novillo and headquarters at the top of the island.

It usually took about three weeks to a month to work the entire island and collect a herd at the north end. The work, however, was not yet over. Dunn and his foreman still faced the problem of getting the cattle off Padre to the mainland. From the headquarters pens, Dunn and his men drove the herd to the Laguna Madre where they forded that salty body of water to the Peta Island holding pens on Flour Bluff. Cattle in general are good swimmers, but those from Padre Island were so good they became known as sea lions. At the Peta Island pens, the herd was sold on the spot or arrangements were made to drive it to another mainland ranch. In later years Dunn acquired still another place on Flour Bluff about two miles from the Peta Island pens. Here he kept his equipment and horses.

Between the 1880s and the 1940s Dunn's Padre Island cattle ranch underwent no significant changes. On the mainland, vehicles--especially the truck--took over many of the functions previously performed by horses and wagons. Gathering and working cattle became much easier and quicker. The old-time cattle roundup and drive disappeared. On Padre, however, the traditional techniques remained. Twice a year crews went down the island to Green Hill, gathered the cattle, and strung them out north. Beginning in the 1940s, change did come to Padre.

The first innovation involved the use of a four-wheel-drive vehicle. At the end of WW II, Dunn purchased an army surplus two-ton truck which he converted to a "bob-tail." Thanks to its four-wheel drive, the truck could easily move down the sandy Padre Island beach without getting stuck. The bob-tail changed the style of the roundup. Instead of riding the horses south to Green Hill and driving a herd north, Dunn and his men worked each camp. At the headquarters place at the north end, the horses were loaded on the truck and taken to Green Hill. Using Green Hill as a center and collection point the men first went south to the Mansfield Cut and drove the cattle into Green Hill. Instead of then proceeding north with a herd, they went to a point about halfway between Green Hill and Black Hill and drove the cattle south to Green Hill. The animals selected for market were loaded on the bob-tail and trucked to the headquarters pens at the north end of the island. Finishing at Green Hill, the crew proceeded north to Black Hill, where they again collected the animals north and south of the camp. The same procedure took place at Novillo. The use of the bob-tail not only cut the time necessary to gather a herd for market, but it also cut down on the shrinkage the cattle had experienced during the month-long drive up the island.

Another development which affected Dunn's Padre Island ranch during the 1940s was the digging of the Intercoastal Canal down the Laguna Madre. This waterway, which enabled vessels to pass easily from Corpus to Point Isabel and Brownsville, brought an end to the practice of fording the cattle across the Laguna Madre. Burton Dunn had to look for another way to get his cattle to market. He solved the problem by driving the cattle collected at the headquarters pens up Mustang Island. At the north end they were loaded on trucks and ferried across to the mainland. Although there was a small railroad on Mustang, with a Ford on its rims serving as engine, Dunn did not use it.

The 1940s saw still other changes. These involved the application of methods aimed it improving the quality of cattle and the efficiency of the industry. Perhaps following the lead of the King Ranch, Burton Dunn decided to adopt some of the new innovations on Padre. He installed windmills throughout the island. However, they marked no significant improvement over the ancient tank-type well. When hurricanes later blew most of the windmills away, they were not replaced. Dunn also sought to enrich his cattle's diet by introducing salt and minerals. For over 130 years the cattle on Padre had acquired salt and minerals from the natural environment. They simply sucked salt out of objects thrown up by the sea or they chewed fish found on the beach. Indeed, many a Padre Island visitor was startled to see a cow walking down the beach with a rope and half a fish hanging out of its mouth. Naturally, the immediate conclusion was that the strange Padre Island cattle ate ropes and fish. In addition, spraying replaced the dipping vat and vaccination became a routine part of working the animals. Although old timers with abundant cow knowledge were skeptical, the herd benefited from these innovations.

The Dunns apparently never experimented with one innovation that had changed the great mainland herds. They did not attempt to transform the Padre herd into a single cattle breed such as the King Ranch's famous Santa Gertrudis. Although new stock was often introduced to improve the herd, it is possible that Padre Island cattle retained traces of the cattle Padre Balli brought to the island at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Indeed, Padre cattle were famous for their ability to thrive on the food supply nature provided. They required little help from man. Animals taken from the mainland to Padre took a long time to adjust to the island's environment. Cattle raised on Padre Island had no difficulty adjusting to mainland conditions.

The construction of the Padre Island causeway in 1951 again changed cattle raising on the island. The causeway made it possible to bring large trailer truck type vehicles to the island. The traps and corrals at the north end were abandoned and Novillo became the major collecting point. Cattle gathered at Green Hill, Black Hill, and north of Novillo were held in the Novillo traps. The large semis drove down to loading chutes at Novillo and picked up the cattle. In that it was no longer necessary to drive the cattle up to the north end of Mustang, shrinkage was again reduced.

At one time the Novillo loading chutes were located at the beach. One year Jim Lynch and his father P. A. Lynch, who was Dunn's foreman from 1942 until his death in 1962, had backed the trucks up to these chutes and were busy working the cattle in the corrals. Suddenly they noticed that the tide was rising much earlier and faster than normal. Dropping everything, they ran for the trucks and scrambled into the cabs. The water was already up over the wheels as they gunned the engines and headed up the beach toward higher ground. The sand, which a few hours before had been smooth and hard, had become soft and it sucked at the big tires. Jim Lynch thought that at any moment he would get stuck and be forced to leave the expensive equipment to the mercy of the salt water. After several anxious moments, they made it.[60]

Technological change such as trucks and a causeway effected cattle raising on Padre. However, one aspect or element of life on the Dunn ranch remained almost totally unchanged from the 1880s to 1970. That element was the men and their daily routine.

Following the Mexican War, Americans moved to acquire the land between the Nueces and the Rio Grande. By the time of the Civil War, almost all of this territory had passed into American ownership. During the same period a division of labor emerged which has dominated the economic life of the Texas gulf coast until the present day. White Texans who owned the great ranches and banks, formed the elite. A middle class controlled the professions and the businesses in towns such as Corpus Christi. Labor was supplied by Mexican-Americans. Often living in an almost peon-type relationship to their employers, the Mexican-Americans were the vaqueros and pastores. Under the guidance of the ranch owner and his foreman, they worked the cattle or herded sheep. In later years, when cattle ranching gave way to cotton and other agricultural products, the Mexican-Americans became the field hands. An old-timer nicely summed up the relationship between the Mexican and other Texans when he said:

> The Mexicans are a wonderful people; they are docile; I just love them. I was paying Pancho and his whole family 60 cents a day before the war (WW I). There were just no hours; he worked from sun to sun. . . . Don't get to pitying the Mexican and depreciating the white people; holding him in subjection. He wouldn't have it any other way. The white man will cuss Mexican and then in the evening on the cattle ranches, he's down by the fire with him, with the frying pan, and eating tortillas with his coffee. There never was a grander companionship between men.[61]

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60. Lynch interview.

61. Taylor, An American-Mexican Frontier. Neuces County, Texas, p. 298.

Pat Dunn was a son of Texas who grew up during the time of the often bloody antagonism between the Texans the Mexicans. He shared the prejudices and attitudes of his environment and time. On his ranch he followed the economic practices which prevailed throughout Nueces County. Like other ranchers he too employed Mexicans as his vaqueros and servants. And like the others his relationship to them was that of the paternalistic patron, "Don Patricio." A few of his servants were permanent employees. The vaqueros, who drove the cattle up the island during the twice-yearly roundups, were temporary employees. They were experienced cowboys whom the foreman hired in Corpus Christi or in smaller towns such as Robstown.

Dunn moved his family from Padre Island into Corpus around 1890. As his Padre Island ranch prospered, Dunn turned his attention to other activities and soon became one of Corpus Christi's leading citizens. From 1912 to 1915 he represented Nueces County in the Texas State Legislature. Among his friends were such prominent Texans as John Nance Garner, Richard King, and Edward Kleberg. When in Corpus, Dunn dressed and conducted himself in a manner fitting the prominent citizen. In later years he lived in a suite in the Driscoll Hotel, Corpus Christi's finest, and had a chauffeur-driven automobile. However, his heart always remained on Padre, where he spent much of his time. When Dunn went there, off came the city clothes and he became a man of the land, riding from one camp to the next, checking on the water tanks and working the cattle with his men. From all accounts he was a hard and strict boss, but always fair. Above all, he was the patron. At each of his line camps, such as Novillo, he constructed two houses. One was for his use and the other was for the men. He commanded and received obedience and loyalty. In the hierarchy of the cattle ranch, patron, foreman, and vaquero, each "knew his place" and behaved accordingly. In the evenings, after a hard day of working the cattle, Dunn was down by the fire eating carne quesada with his men. For Pat Dunn, there probably never was a grander companionship between men nor a better life.

For the vaquero, life on Padre Island was hard work. He of course did not work a conventional 8:00-to-5:00 with coffee breaks and a two-hour lunch. The day began at four in the morning and often ended long after the sun had sunk into the Laguna Madre. Food was ample, but plain. Breakfast, which consisted of bacon and eggs and the ever-present coffee, was prepared by the camp cook over an open fire. The men ate well, for it would be evening before they again sat down to a hot meal. Driving cattle was an all-day operation. Once the cattle were strung out, it was impossible to stop for an hour to eat lunch. Such a break would have upset the "Y" and allowed the cows to wander. The men kept the animals moving until they were securely in a trap. During the day they carried food in their pockets and ate in the saddle. Dutch oven bread was the usual fare. This was a low-yeast bread, which the cook baked by placing the dough in a covered cast iron skillet and then covering the skillet with hot coals. The Dutch oven, which had become an item in Western

museums, was in use on Padre as late as 1969. In addition to satisfying a hungry vaquero, Dutch oven bread had another function. As Jim Lynch, who has eaten a lot of the bread, put it, "You put some in your pocket and take it out to kill rattlesnakes."[62] After the men had driven the cattle into the trap, and had taken a dip in a water tank to wash away the day's grime and sand, they sat down to dinner. The meal may not have appealed to the television gourmet, but the bacon and beans or carne quesada satisfied the hungry crew. Meat did not come from a nearby supermarket in neat celophane covered packages. At the beginning of the drive the cook killed a calf and butchered it. Because there was no refrigeration, it was impossible to keep fresh meat. The cook cut the beef into thin strips and hung the strips over a wire to dry. Decades after this famous food had disappeared from the West, Padre Island cowboys were still eating jerked beef. Until 1969 the salted bacon and beans or jerked beef stew were prepared over an open camp fire. No vaquero strummed a guitar or played nostalgic melodies, but a scene of cowboys around a fire, which is a standard element of the cowboy's romantic life style in the "Old West," was a reality on Padre Island until 1969. In that year technology finally caught up with the vaquero. An ice refrigerator was installed at Novillo and the cook was supplied with a Coleman gas stove.

From 1879 to 1971 Dunn was a name synonymous with cattle ranching on Padre Island. Like Padre Balli, José María Továr, and John Singer before him, Pat Dunn adapted a major agricultural type of land utilization to Padre's natural environment. In so doing he defined a level of man's relationship to the island. Until 1926, Padre's major value was its adaptability to cattle raising. In that year other men came to Padre who felt the island possessed additional resources that merited exploitation. As Dunn had defined his level of relatedness to Padre in terms of cattle ranching, they would define theirs in terms of outdoor recreation.

3. Outdoor Recreation, 1926-62

Between 1879 and 1926 Pat Dunn had acquired legal ownership of almost all of Padre Island's 130,000 acres. During these years the exclusive use of the island had been as cattle ranch. Although many people from Corpus Christi and the communities along the coast south to Brownsville enjoyed fishing, hunting, and swimming on Padre, Dunn frowned on such trespassing. As early as the 1890s he placed notices in Corpus Christi and Brownsville papers declaring that anybody wishing to trespass on Padre required permission. In Dunn's eyes the island existed for the contentment of cattle and not for the benefit of Texans who wished to spend time outdoors.

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62. Lynch interview.

By 1926, society on the Texas gulf coast had changed dramatically since the 1880s. Cattle ranching had been joined by cotton, vegetable and citrus fruit farms as regional agricultural activities. The towns and communities from Corpus to Brownsville experienced the typical cycles of prosperity and recession characteristic of American agriculture during these years, but they had continued to grow slowly and to prosper. As economic productivity increased, more and more people acquired the leisure time and incomes that allowed them to turn their attention to concerns other than "making a living." Outdoor recreation, which throughout the nineteenth century had been the prerogative of the rich, had by 1926 come within the reach of millions of Americans. An industry composed of such diverse elements as sport equipment manufactures, railroads, hotel and resort owners, and magazine publishers emerged to satisfy the public's demand for fun and relaxation in the great American outdoors. Remington, Yellowstone National Park, Miami Beach, and The National Geographic Magazine became national symbols of outdoor recreation.

On the south Texas gulf coast, entrepreneurs quickly recognized the economic potential for their region of this new industry called tourism. Like the southern parts of Florida and California, the Texas gulf coast in the area of the Rio Grande Valley enjoys a semi-tropical climate. When it is freezing in Minneapolis, Chicago, Denver, and Kansas City, it is balmy in Brownsville and warm in Corpus Christi. Texans hoped that just as New Yorkers traveled to Miami Beach and people on the west coast to Santa Monica, so Midwest citizens would come to the south Texas gulf coast. One Texan, an entrepreneur named Col. Sam Robertson, took a look at Padre Island with its beautiful white beach and had a vision.

It is unknown when Robertson first approached Pat Dunn to discuss the possibility of purchasing Padre Island. As early as 1911, the island's recreation potential had been recognized, but no serious attempt had been made to develop the island. It is also unknown why Pat Dunn decided to sell to Robertson. It is possible that Dunn, always the clever Texas cattle trader, might have thought Robertson would not make a go of Padre. Should Robertson be unable to make his payments, the island would revert to Pat Dunn. In any case on February 1, 1926, Pat Dunn conveyed to Sam A. Robertson all his holdings on Padre Island. The price was $125,000.[63] Dunn retained mineral and grazing rights. Although the land passed out of his hands in 1926, the Dunn cattle operation continued until 1971.

Robertson had no sooner purchased Padre than he set out to turn the island into the Miami Beach of the Texas gulf coast. His first problem was to find ways for tourists to get to the island. Visitors arriving in Corpus in Fords or Buicks or at Port Aransas via steamers

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63. Reese, The History of Padre Island, p. 21.

from New Orleans could not be expected to ford the Laguna Madre like Pat Dunn and his vaqueros. In 1927 Robertson constructed the first causeway between Flour Bluff and the northern end of the island. He called it the Don Patricio Causeway after Pat Dunn. It consisted of four wooden troughs supported by a trestle. Each pair of troughs, which were as wide as the standard automobile, allowed two-way traffic to and from the island (see illustrations). One wonders who backed up when a driver took the wrong set of troughs and met another car in the middle of the Laguna Madre. A photograph of the causeway shows a charming sign which informed the Padre vistor that there was no charge for fishing, but he was requested to "please do not leave fish and bait in the troughs" (see illustrations). In the first month of its operation, the Don Patricio Causeway registered 1,800 cars. In the second month 2,500 vehicles passed over it to Padre. The number fell thereafter.

In addition to the Don Patricio Causeway, Robertson stationed ferries at Port Aransas and built a bridge over the Corpus Christi Pass. At the south end he stationed another ferry. The ferries and the bridge allowed visitors coming from the north and south to reach the respective ends of the island without having to go around Corpus Christi Bay or make the long journey north to the Don Patricio Causeway.

At the same time as he solved the problem of access to Padre, Robertson also developed accommodations for the expected tourist influx. As part of his plan to link the two ends of the island in a long ocean beach drive, Robertson built a hotel and about five houses. He located the hotel and four of the five houses within the southernmost 45 miles of the island, which is warmer in winter than the north end. The fifth house was located at the north end about three and a half miles below the causeway.[64] Unfortunately, little is known about these structures. There are apparently no photographs of them. In addition, he put in a telephone line joining the houses.

Little is known concerning the promotional effort Robertson undertook to attract visitors to Padre. He might have published advertisements in newspapers throughout the Midwest. It is probable that the Chambers of Commerce in Corpus and Brownsville also performed various public relations activities in support of Robertson's Padre vacation paradise. It was all to no avail. Although more and more people from the Midwest states were coming to the Rio Grande Valley to spend the winter, Padre attracted only a few. By 1930 it had become apparent that Robertson's grand plan to transform Padre into the Miami Beach of the Texas gulf coast had failed. The tourist boom just did not develop. When the depression struck in 1929, Robertson was no longer able to make his payments. However, instead of allowing Padre to revert to Dunn, Robertson sold his interests on the island to two brothers from Kansas City named Albert and Frank Jones.

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64. Ibid., p. 22.

The Jones brothers formed a company called the Ocean Beach Drive Corporation to continue Robertson's development. However, they apparently invested little or nothing in the island. When in 1933 an especially harsh hurricane hit Padre, it blew away all of Robertson's investment including the Don Patricio Causeway. The first story of the hotel survived and for many years was used as a bathing house. As of 1933, the first attempt to turn Padre into a vacation and resort area had failed. The island once again became the domain of Dunn's cattle, a few fishermen, and beach combers.

Although Robertson failed in his efforts to develop Padre's outdoor recreation potential, he did make a contribution to changing the American's relationship to the island. Before Robertson's attempts to develop Padre, the people of the Texas gulf coast thought of the island primarily in terms of Dunn's cattle ranch. By the time the 1933 hurricane blew away the Don Patricio Causeway the same people also thought of Padre in terms of the opportunities the island presented for outdoor recreation. The number of people visiting Padre was small, much too small to support a hotel and tourist cabins. A few people, however, had learned to enjoy fishing on the island. Still others valued it for the opportunity Padre presented to visit an untouched natural environment where one could spend a weekend walking the beach, observing the bird life, collecting shells, or just watching the sea.

Between 1933 and 1950 little happened on Padre. The Ocean Beach Drive Corporation continued to own the land, but it made no developments which would have changed the island's environment. On the mainland the situation was exactly the opposite. The exploitation of oil and natural gas on the Texas gulf coast transformed the area. Corpus Christi changed from a small town supplying ranchers, farmers, and commercial fishermen into a booming seaport with refineries and industrial facilities. Oil was but one cause of change. World War II was another. The war brought military bases to south Texas and bases brought people and incomes. Economic growth, long an American goal and a Texas obsession, brought with it an increase in demands for more and better goods and services. One of the services which many demanded was public facilities for outdoor recreation.

Although Padre Island was almost untouched between 1933 and 1950, it remained an object of interest. With the discovery of underground minerals on the gulf coast, oil companies quickly moved in and purchased leases on Padre. During the 1940s natural gas wells on the island itself and oil wells offshore started pumping their valuable natural resources to the mainland. The oil companies did construct permanent facilities on Padre, but in general they do not intrude on the natural landscape.

With the outbreak of WW II, Padre Island became off limits for all but those having business there. The Navy, apparently thinking

Padre's beach, which for over a century had been used by smugglers of everything from cotton to liquor, would also present a temptation to foreign enemies desiring to infiltrate spies and saboteurs ashore from submarines, decided to patrol the beach. The United States Coast Guard was assigned the task. For the duration of the war armed Coast Guard patrols with German shepherd dogs routinely marched back and forth along the beach. The men were quartered in Quonset huts built approximately six miles apart. Those who spent the war on Padre found the sand and rattlesnakes to be greater enemies than the Germans or Japanese. There is no record that any enemy was ever caught sneaking over the beach.

At the end of the war, the Navy retained an interest in Padre. The island's proximity to the large Corpus Christi Naval Air Training Station and its desolation in terms of human occupants made Padre an ideal bombing range. The Navy set up targets on the island, and for about 13 to 15 years the harmony of waves beating on the beach was often interrupted by the crashing dissonance of exploding ordnance. Dunn's cattle adjusted well to this activity. It is said they by themselves quickly moved away from the targets when they heard the planes coming and somehow knew when a day's practice was over.

Between 1933 and 1950 Padre's principal inhabitants were the Dunns and their vaqueros, the Coast Guard, and the Navy. Other men also lived on the island during these years, but there is little record of their activities. They were fishermen, men who worked for the oil companies maintaining the equipment, and beachcombers. The best known of these men is a gentleman named Louis C. Rawalt. Lou Rawalt was born in 1898 on the gulf coast and attended high school at Portland.[65] When the United States entered World War I he enlisted in the army and saw action in France, where he was wounded on November 10, 1918. At the end of the war, Rawalt spent two semesters at the University of Paris. Returning to Texas, he spent two years fighting the effects of his wounds and then entered the University of Texas, where he studied during 1922 and 1923. Still carrying shrapnel in his body, he was forced to give up his studies and seek further medical attention, which he received by joining the Navy. In 1925, seven years after the end of the war, Rawalt finally left the hospitals and doctors behind and returned to Corpus Christi. Remembering that he and his brother had sailed and fished around Padre Island as children, Rawalt decided to go there and make his living. For the last 46 years the island has been his home and fascination. It has provided a living, adventure, and an education.

At one time or another, Lou Rawalt worked at almost every one of the many ways a man could earn a living on Padre. Fishing was a primary occupation. For the thirty years between 1925 and 1955 Rawalt

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65. Louis C. Rawalt interview with Sheire, February 4, 1971.

spent some time out of almost every year fishing. In the beginning he lived in a tent near Corpus Christi Pass. Equipped with a 16-foot boat, he transported his catch to Corpus Christi. After the construction of the Don Patricio Causeway, Lou purchased an old Model T pick-up. Once a week he loaded his catch into the pick-up and transported it to town. In town he purchased supplies for the week and returned to the island. Fishing consisted of throwing lines with a couple of hooks baited with mullet out into the surf. To preserve the fish until they could be taken to market, Rawalt had two large iceboxes of 500- and 3,000-pound capacities. The first was taken to the fishing site. When it was full, Rawalt took it to his main camp, dumped the contents into the 3,000-pound box, and returned to get another 500-pound load. As the years passed, Rawalt moved up and down the island, living at approximately seven different locations. A Model A Ford converted to a pick-up replaced the Model T. Housing also improved. Like so many before him, Rawalt built his structures from materials found on the beach. Timbers, tar paper, and tar were the basic materials. Heat came from wood burning in sand-filled barrels. He constructed furniture from drift wood. Water came from wells dug in the time honored tradition of the Indians and Padre Balli. Food was simple, but adequate. From the island came coquina, fish, sea greens, and occasional wild fowl. Supplies bought in town included beans, salt, potatoes, coffee, flour, sugar, salted pork, and some fresh meat.

When it came time to send his children to school, Lou moved the family into Corpus. During WW II he was one of the few men allowed to remain on the island. Except for a two-year break from 1947 to 1949, Rawalt made his home on Padre until 1955. With the opening of the Padre Island Causeway in 1950, more and more people were coming to the island. Although Rawalt moved his camp site far down the island to the wreck of the Nicaragua, his cabin was repeatedly vandalized. In 1955 he moved up to the causeway and set up the combination store, gas station, and bait stand which remains his headquarters.

In addition to fishing on the island, Rawalt worked at a number of other jobs. He sometimes worked for the Dunn ranch during roundup. He guided people to Padre and showed them the best place to fish and camp. He combed the beach, often selling his finds. In 1948 the Saturday Evening Post published a story dealing with Padre's beach treasure entitled "Isle of Plunder." The article contained several photographs of Lou Rawalt and depicted him as Padre's number one beachcomber.[66] From 1947 to 1949 he worked with Dr. Armstrong Price, the well-known south Texas geologist and conservationist, who at the time was preparing a geological survey of the Padre for the oil companies. During this time, Rawalt designed several tools which the oil company adopted in their drilling operations on Padre.

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66. Lewis Nordyke, "Isle of Plunder," Saturday Evening Post, January 3, 1948.

Rawalt's life on Padre Island was not a romantic existence of man living in harmony with nature and subsisting from the land. By working hard he was able to earn a living on the island, but his was never an affluent existence. As the years passed Padre did become more than just a place to live and work. It became a fascination which ranged across several disciplines. Although not formally trained in any one discipline, Rawalt educated himself in geology, biology, archeology, and history. In pursuing each of these interests he turned to Padre. The island became his laboratory, primary source, and archeological site. He knows Padre's flora and fauna, can discuss its geology, and has researched its history. Above all, archeology interested him. Padre is in fact one large archeological site. The sands turn up artifacts from the Indian, Spanish, and American periods. During the long years of walking Padre's beach and dunes, Rawalt developed an archeologist's eye for artifacts. His collection, which he has painstakingly catalogued, is probably one of the finest private collections on the Texas gulf coast. It has been coveted by university professors and famous museums.

Like Padre Balli, John Singer, and Pat Dunn, Lou Rawalt defined a level of man's historical relatedness to Padre's natural environment. The island sustained him as fisherman, ranch hand, tourist guide, beachcomber, oil field worker, and store owner. As flora and fauna, barrier island, landscape, and source of ancient artifacts, Padre provided intellectual stimulation and spiritual satisfaction. Man's hsitorical interaction with nature on Padre Island has been varied. Lou Rawalt is another witness to that variety.

4. A National Seashore

When the 1933 hurricane blew away the Don Patricio Causeway joining Padre Island to the mainland to Flour Bluff, easy access to Padre came to an end. For the next eight years, a variety of ambitious plans to develop the island circulated in Corpus and Brownsville, but no actual development took place. During World War II, which absorbed the attention and energies of the people of the region, the public discussion of turning Padre into a Miami Beach was dropped. After the war, interest quickly revived. By 1948, plans were on the drawing boards for a new causeway. With the completion of the causeway in 1950, Padre once again became readily accessible. Land owners made plans to subdivide the area for residential and commercial development.

At the south end development took a similar course. During the 1930s a few people had constructed beach houses on Padre. A "casino," in which the rooms were reportedly identified by the name of their female occupants, flourished. At the end of the war developers energetically began to make plans to turn the southern section into a resort combining beach houses and hotels. As had been the case at the northern end, access to Padre was a major problem. After the usual public pressure a causeway was constructed linking Padre with the mainland at Port Isabel. Completed in

1954 the causeway signaled the beginning of a large scale promotional effort by hard-sell real estate developers intent on selling lots on Padre. Eventually, it was hoped, development of beach houses, hotels, marinas, and motels would reach all the way to the Mansfield Cut.

While businessmen from Corpus to Brownsville concentrated their energies on developing the island's tourist and residential capacity, others turned their attention to developing Padre's outdoor recreation potential. Recognizing that private development could possibly limit the enjoyment of the island's natural values to a privileged few, they set out to preserve the public's right also to enjoy Padre. There was nothing new in the desire to create areas of public access on Padre. As early as 1936 a bill had been introduced in the Texas legislature to purchase a large portion of the island and turn it into a state park. Actively pushed by such Padre Island enthusiasts as Corpus Christi's William Neyland, the bill received wide support throughout south Texas. A Padre Island Association formed to arouse public opinion in support of the bill and 35 towns expressed their sympathy.[67] The legislature passed the bill and authorized $400,000 to purchase land. Governor James Allred, however, vetoed the bill, contending that the true ownership of the island had not yet been legally decided. It was possible the state already owned a large portion of Padre. (In "State of Texas vs. Balli et. al.," which was finally settled in 1945, the Texas Supreme Court ruled that the original Spanish land grant covered the entire island. Those claiming under that grant were the legal owners. The state had maintained that the grant covered only eleven and a half leagues, or 50,912 acres of Padre's approximately 130,000 acres.)

After World War II, interest in public facilities on the island revived as quickly as private real estate development plans. In 1949 one thousand acres were set aside at the north end for a Nueces County Park. At the south end two county parks called Isla Blanca and Andy Bowie were established. Nevertheless, these county parks were very small. The real issue of what was to become of Padre's extensive undeveloped natural environment was still to be decided. Some suggested that the island should become a national park.

The idea that Padre Island was a natural resource ideally suited to becoming a national park was also not new. As early as the 1940s a few Texans had thought that a national park would be the best way of preserving the island's almost untouched natural environment. They were in a long tradition. Since the second half of the nineteenth century the national park had become a institution by means of which Americans preserved natural resources. The roots of the institution are deep and complex. In a broad cultural sense a park represents a response to the environmental circumstances created by American civilization. Historically the transition

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67. Reese, "The History of Padre Island," p. 44.

or transformation of the natural environment from a natural to an artificial condition was one of the most important pre-conditions for the creation of national parks. The American industrial revolution in the nineteenth century and a literal explosion of technological creativity in the twentieth century reduced nature to an object of scientific understanding and technological exploitation. Bulldozers moved mountains, plows carved the land, and dams changed the course of rivers. Cities and towns with their goods and service industries replaced the farm and village as the country's population centers. The environment in which most Americans lived became one which man himself had created.

The man-made or artificial environment made it necessary for the American to redefine his relationship to nature. An element of this new definition was the national park idea. The creation of national parks preserved selected natural resources from undergoing the transition from a natural to an artificial condition. These resources would remain as nature created them and the hand of man held at a distance. Americans recognized that their relatedness to the land took place on many levels. Economic exploitation of natural resources was one level indispensable to material progress and prosperity. Prosperity became synonymous with growth and growth was measurable in terms of increases in the GNP, rising per capita income, new housing starts, bushels per acre, miles of highways constructed, and automobile units produced. But there were also other levels of man's relationship to nature in addition to the economic. These levels were more qualitative than quantitative. They were theological, intellectual, scientific, esthetic, and psycho-biological. For many Americans, nature was a God-created cosmos. In experiencing nature as God created it, one achieved transcendent union with the divine. In terms of intellectual ideas, many Americans conceptualized nature as wilderness. Wilderness was defined as an untouched natural environment similar to the environment their forefathers struggled to overcome in building a nation. For other Americans, nature was a place to learn. By studying nature according to the forms of knowledge of the natural and physical sciences, one learned how and why nature worked. Still others perceived nature as landscape possessing scenic or esthetic values. Finally, for most Americans, nature was a place where civilized urban man could "get away from it all," i.e., from the artificial environment of cities, factories, and offices with their attendant social and psychological pressures. In a natural environment, one could seek a more simple existence and in swimming, boating, camping, fishing, and the like cultivate psychological and physical health. Conservation and preservation groups articulated these needs and demanded that society preserve natural and recreational areas where the American could experience these human ways of being in relation to nature. Society's answer was the creation of an institution called the national park.

As the movement to make a national park out of Padre Island gathered momentum between 1955 and 1960, the area's supporters spoke of the island in terms long familar in the American conservation and preservation move-

ment. First, the island's environment was almost totally untouched. Save for the residential and commercial developments at the two ends near the causeways, Padre remained as nature created it. As of 1955 there were few, if any, coastal barrier islands that could make this claim. Padre was an example of a barrier island as they existed before the Americans began to alter nature. In preserving Padre from development and exploitation, one preserved a specimen of the primitive American landscape as the Indians, the explorers, and the pioneers experienced it.

Padre's unmodified condition led many to perceive the island in wilderness terms. "The spell of Padre is brought about by its suggestion of a primeval world," a Padre Island admirer wrote in Travel, one of the country's leading outdoor magazines. "Infinity seems close at hand with a thousand miles of the Gulf of Mexico on one hand and the unconquered island on the other." On Padre the visitor could "gaze across infinity and fill his spirit with the fruits of silence and contemplation on one of American's true island idylls."[68] Padre's wilderness value became one of the principal themes presented by those desiring the creation of a national park. Wilderness and commercial development were incompatible. If one wished to preserve Padre's untouched wilderness, commercialism must be kept out. Testifying in support of the bill to create a national park on Padre Island, a representative of the San Antonio Conservation Society contended that the area, "when it becomes a reality, will be the greatest gift of natural wilderness type beauty, and, if I may coin a word, un-Miamied commercialism all of us could leave to our descendants."[69]

Padre's wilderness natural environment was many things to many people. Some perceived it in terms of infinity and others as a God-created harmony of natural phenomena. Above all, Padre's wilderness was a place where civilized man could retreat from the complexities of modern society and find a more simple and natural existence. Experiencing the island's wilderness brought psychological benefits. As one wilderness lover put it, Padre was "a vast wilderness of sea, sand, and surf where it is possible to escape the anxieties, tensions, and complexities of our time." In escaping from modern society, man returned to nature where he discovered one of the primordial conditions of his existence. "Padre Island's primitive conditions pit a man against the elements."[70]

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68. Cash Asher, "Island Idylli: Padre Island," Travel, December 1954, p. 22.

69. Hearing Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on S. 4, A Bill to Provide for the Establishment of the Padre Island National Park in the State of Texas (Washington, 1960), p. 47 (hereafter cited as Senate Hearings, 1959).

70. William M. Hall, "The Many Faces of Padre Island," American Forester, October 1966, p. 31.

Padre's wilderness condition was only one of its values. The same environment also had scientific value. Padre constituted an outdoor laboratory and museum for all those interested in the natural and physical sciences. The island's natural history had interested scientists since the turn of the century. In 1891 a naturalist named William Lloyd had visited Padre. His observations were published in Vernon Baily's North American Fauna, Biological Survey of Texas. Describing the islands' vegetation, Lloyd wrote that shin-oak "extends from the north end for about a mile and continues on sandy hills on the lagoon side for five or six miles further. This is usually six inches to eighteen inches high, but there are trees, perhaps a different species, six to eight feet high. As this oak is always loaded with acorns, even now it is the favorite wintering ground of birds such as wood ibis, whooping and sand hill cranes."[71] Lloyd saw deer and coyotes and noted the absence of hackberry, mesquite, and Mexican persimmon, all of which were found on the nearby mainland.

Although Padre never acquired a reputation for possessing unique or distinguished scientific value, it remained of interest to many naturalists. The south Texas gulf coast lies at the end of the central flyway. Literally thousands of birds migrate yearly to the area and rookeries abound. Professional and amateur ornithologists have long had an interest in the region and were instrumental in the establishment of the Aransas Wildlife Refuge to protect the whooping crane. In the 1930s the National Audubon Society took a special interest in two prominent rookeries in the Laguna Madre called the Bird Islands. When the plans to build the Intercoastal Canal and a causeway to Padre Island were first presented in the late 1940s, the society became alarmed. Praising Padre for its remoteness, the society claimed the two projects might do ecological damage to the area. "The time to save a natural environment," it was pointed out, "is before it is made accessible, not after."[72] The canal and causeway were constructed and in themselves did not damage the environment. Nevertheless, interest in preserving Padre for its wildlife value had been aroused. When in the 1950s the area came up for consideration as a national park, naturalists immediately supported the proposal. Dr. Eula Whitehouse, a representative of the Dallas Audubon Society and the Texas Ornithologist Society, testified at the hearings held in Corpus Christi in 1959. He expressed the sentiments of the natural science community when he said, "I come to you as a Texan, a botanist, and an artist to plead for the preservation of Padre Island as a living outdoor museum and a place of beauty."[73] He described Padre as being a mecca for scientists desiring

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71. Vernon Baily, North American Fauna, Biological Survey of Texas (Washington, 1905), p. 24.

72. Joel W. Hedgpeth, "On the Shores of the Laguna Madre," Audubon Magazine, March-April 1948, p. 106.

73. Senate Hearing, 1959, p. 63.

to study an undisturbed ecological balance. Robert Mitchell, a biology professor from Lamar State College, provided further support. He told the senators, "We strongly feel that the best interests of scientific study would be served only if the entire island, from its beginning in the temperate zone at Corpus Christi to its semitropical zone termination at Port Isabel, be preserved."[74] The island's geology was also of great interest. According to the editor of Recreation, another nationally distributed outdoor magazine, "Padre is a classical example of an offshore bar and presents an excellent opportunity to witness and study the forces of sea disposition and erosion at work."[75] Conservation groups and garden clubs throughout Texas wrote petitions on Padre's behalf and a host of scientists supported the area with expert testimony. All shared a similar concept: Padre Island, which presented a rare instance of an unmodified barrier island environment, should be preserved as a place where the American could engage nature in the dialogue of the natural and physical sciences.

Another value that Padre's supporters perceived in the island's unspoiled natural environment centered on outdoor recreation. Like the wilderness idea, this concept also distinguished between the environment created by civilization and the environment created by nature. Civilization's environment harmed the American's physical and psychological well-being. On the other hand, nature's environment was good for what ailed the body and mind. Padre Island offered the opportunity to play in a natural environment and thus cultivate psycho-biological health. Look magazine pointed out that Padre's "size and unspoiled character give the island a fascinating atmosphere of spaciousness and isolation."[76] Such an atmosphere was ideal for surfing, horseback riding, swimming, and other outdoor activities.

Although Texas Senator Ralph Yarborough, one of the fathers of Padre Island National Seashore, introduced the first Padre bill in 1958, hearings were not held until 1959. The original bill called for the creation of a national park. At the same time two other coastal areas, Point Reyes, California, and Cape Cod, Massachusetts, were also being considered for preservation. All three areas possessed some of the traditional characteristics of a national park, but they were located on the sea and would also include extensive recreational facilities. It was decided to call them national seashores.

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74. Ibid., p. 69.

75. "Our Fourth National Seashore," Recreation, November 1962, p. 470.

76. "Padre Island: Texas Size Beach," Look, October 8, 1963, p. 95.

At the 1959 hearing held in Corpus Christi, Senator Yarborough outlined the basic political and social reason for the new national seashore. "We in Texas," he said, "do not want a Miami type of development here. The right to go down to the sea is a natural right and should be recognized as one of the inalienable rights of man."[77] Everyone in Texas agreed that Americans should have the right to access to the sea on Padre Island. However, some disagreed on how much access they should have. The owners of Padre Island and those interested in real estate and commercial development felt that the proposed seashore should be limited to thirty or at the most fifty miles. As one developer who envisioned hotels and motels put the case, "Millions of Americans who could and would enjoy this great shoreline very likely would go instead to other coastal areas where they could enjoy some of the wonders of private enterprise along with the wonders of nature."[78]

The conservation groups opposed this position, claiming that the new area should include at least eighty to ninety of Padre's 115 miles. Thinking of Miami Beach-type development, one conservationist claimed that "There would undoubtedly be a picture window view of the sea, if one is fortunate enough to be located on the right side of the structure, but the beach might prove to be a bit crowded. Beach developers advertise the wild, romantic appeal of sand and surf, but they fail to mention how little beauty is left after development gets underway."[79]

In addition to the question of the area's size, there were also the problems of mineral rights and the Navy's use of Padre as a bombing target. Both considerations delayed action on the bill. In 1961, additional hearings were held in Washington. A representative of one of the oil companies holding leases on Padre appeared and testified that "We are not opposed to the park. All we want to do is to see that we have continued mineral rights that we have at this time."[80] In Texas, mineral rights are often viewed as another of man's natural rights. The bill was worded to guarantee that all mineral rights would remain dominant after the seashore's establishment. When the Department

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77. Senate Hearings, 1959, p. 9.

78. Ibid., p. 82.

79. Ibid., p. 48.

80. Hearings Before the Subcommittee on Public Lands of the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs on a Bill to Provide for the Establishment of the Padre Island National Seashore (Washington, 1961), p. 210 (hereafter cited as Senate Hearings, 1961).

of Defense informed the committee that the loss of the Padre Island targets would not affect operations at the Corpus Christi base with its sizeable payroll, this issue was settled. The size of the seashore remained a problem. The owners continued to insist that as much of the island as possible be left free for private development. The conservation groups on the other hand insisted that as much of the island as possible be preserved. When Texas business interests, the mayor of Corpus Christi, and the editor of the Corpus Christi Caller-Times lined up behind an 88-mile size, this issue was also settled. As a representative of the East Texas Chamber of Commerce, thinking of the tourist attraction of a national seashore, testified, "We are vitally interested in this legislation in view of the far reaching effect it would have on the future development of this area of Texas, which we believe has great possibilities for development into another gold coast."[81]

In 1962, Congress passed the legislation authorizing the establishment of Padre Island National Seashore. The final step of purchasing the land remained. The issue went to court and the Federal Government was ordered to pay approximately $17,000,000 for the present seashore. Padre's value had increased, to say the least, since the days when José María Továr valued his half ownership at $1,000 or when Pat Dunn sold for $125,000. A Texas-sized natural wonder brought Texas-sized fortunes to its owners. Although the people paid a large dollar-and-cent price for the national seashore, there are those who argue that Padre Island is priceless. As of 1962, Padre Island's natural environment was preserved.

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81. Ibid., p. 168.

Conclusion

Man's relationship to Padre Island has been long and, as is always the case with his relationship to the land, complex. For the Indians of the Texas gulf coast, Padre was an island environment that provided subsistence and security. On Padre they seasonally fished and in other ways adapted their cultural forms to the island's environment. When danger from an enemy threatened, they fled to the mainland in their canoes and sought safety on Padre. Although the Karankawas were not the only Indians who lived on Padre, they are the tribe most closely associated with the island. Like the other Texas gulf coast tribes, their history is a two-century record of resistance to Spanish and American domination. By the time of the Mexican War in 1846 the Karankawas had ceased to exist. The Indians disappeared from Padre, leaving behind artifacts for archeologists and legends and tales for story writers.

Euroamerican interaction with Padre Island took place on a number of levels. From 1519 to around 1800 the Spanish called the island a variety of names including Isla Blanca and Isla de Corpus Christi. Survivors of shipwrecks and venturesome explorers encountered Padre during these centuries, but they had no special interest in the island. To them Padre was simply another barrier island off the coast of a vast wilderness land mass. It had no value for the Spanish. The only reason for going to Padre was to make sure the English or French were not there. Unfortunately, visits to Padre by such famous explorers as Cabeza de Vaca or La Salle took place not in history but rather in the fantasies of imaginative story tellers.

By the beginning of the nineteenth century, Spanish settlements dotted the Rio Grande Valley. Spanish settlement policy included the granting of large sections of land to members of the colonial elite. Around 1800 Padre Nicolas Balli, a member of one of the valley's richest and most prominent families, received a grant to the Isla de Corpus Christi. Padre Balli and his nephew Juan José moved cattle to the island and gave it a name. The island ceased to be an unused wilderness stretch of sand and grass and became a producing cattle ranch. For the first time man defined his relationship to the island in terms of an economic form of land utilization. This relationship of rancher and island was to continue for the next 166 years.

In comparison to the over 300 years of Spanish possession of Padre Island, actual Spanish occupation of the island was short. By the time the Texas War of Independence broke out in 1835, the Ballis were no longer

actively engaged in ranching Padre. The island had begun to change hands. The Mexican War in 1846 brought the island under American jurisdiction. After the war the Spanish land grants in Texas began immediately to pass into American ownership. The same thing happened with Padre Island. Americans simply moved onto the island and took possession. One of these men, John Singer, established a ranch at the south end of the island in 1846 and remained until the Civil War.

After the Civil War, conditions on Padre were as unsettled as they were on the mainland. Great cattle herds, which became the object of thieves and peelers, roamed the open range and flooded the markets. Packeries for processing hides and tallow did a booming business. One of these packeries was located on Padre Island. Beginning in the late 1860s, fences came to Texas and revolutionized the cattle industry. Men without land and good water were forced to either move or give up cattle raising. One such man, Patrick Dunn, decided to do neither. Instead, in 1879 he moved a herd to Padre Island.

Between 1879 and 1926, by one means and another, Pat Dunn acquired almost total ownership of Padre Island. He developed the island into a large cattle ranch. In order to adapt the techniques of cattle raising to Padre's environment, he built a series of line camps down the island which took advantage of the natural fences provided by the Gulf of Mexico and the Laguna Madre. From these line camps it was possible to work cattle spread out over approximately 130,000 acres and conduct the twice-yearly cattle drives. Although technological change such as trucks and causeways in the twentieth century affected cattle raising on Padre, the basic activity as developed by Dunn remained remarkably little changed between 1879 and 1971. Padre was probably one of the last places in Texas where the cattle roundup and vaqueros eating carne quesada around an open camp fire were not sentimental memories but rather a fact until 1970.

In 1926, Pat Dunn sold his holdings on Padre to a Col. Sam Robertson. By this time outdoor recreation and vacations had become accepted American leisure-time activities. An industry called tourism had developed to satisfy the demand for outdoor recreation. Robertson, who hoped to turn Padre into the Miami Beach of the Texas gulf coast, drew up ambitious development plans for Padre. He constructed a causeway to get visitors to Padre and a hotel and cabins to accommodate them. Unfortunately, Robertson miscalculated the island's attraction. When the depression hit in 1929 he was forced to sell.

Between 1930 and 1950 Padre remained undeveloped except for natural gas wells drilled into its sands. With the construction of the Padre Island causeways at the north end in 1950 and the south end in 1954, commercial development, which continued today in the form of condominiums and residential areas, got underway. The idea of utilizing Padre

Island for public outdoor recreation was not forgotten. Beginning in the middle of the 1950s a movement led by Texas conservation groups and championed by Senator Ralph Yarborough urged the preservation of approximately eighty miles of Padre Island in the form of a national park. Pointing to the country's changed environmental circumstances and especially the disappearance of barrier islands in their primitive natural condition, they argued that Padre should be preserved from any environmental transformation. After four years of diligent work their efforts were rewarded in 1962 when Congress passed the Padre Island National Seashore legislation. In the past man had defined his relationship to the island in terms of economic exploitation of its environment. In the future man would define his relationship to Padre in terms of scenic, scientific, and recreational values. Padre would be a place in nature where, as Sigurd Olson expressed it, we may glimpse not only the mystery of the universe, but also ourselves in the new role we must now play.

Appendix One

Padre Island in the Year 1766

Although Spaniards had visited Padre Island before 1766, Diego Ortíz Parrilla's inspection of the island in that year was one of the first detailed reconnaissances. His report is one of the first accounts, if not the first, of the island that has survived. A transcript of the document is located in the University of Texas Archives among the Dunn Transcripts. Mr. Ricardo Torres-Reyes of the Office of History and Historic Architecture, National Park Service, provided the following translation.

Year of 1767

Deposition of the writs and inquiries made by Col. Don Diego Ortíz Parrilla about the conditions of the Malaquittas Island, commonly known as Isla Blanca.

Decree: Real de Santa Petronila, September twenty two of the year one thousand seven hundred and sixty six. The ensigns Don Joseph Antonio de la Garza and Don Eugenio Fernández and the Patro Matheo Martínez certify as follows everything performed and observed from the thirteenth of the present month when they began the reconnaissance of the Island of San Carlos of the Malaquittas until last night when they arrived in this camp, carrying out with clarity and precision all the instructions and advice issued in the written orders they received.

Don Diego Ortíz Parrilla

Report:

Colonel and Commandant of this expedition:

Carrying out the above mentioned orders, we the ensigns Don Joseph Antonio de la Garza, Don Eugenio Fernández, and the Patro Matheo Martínez certify, and if necessary swear, that having departed the thirteenth of this month to reconnoiter the Island of San Carlos de los Malaquittas, with twenty four soldiers and nine Indians from the missions of Rio Grande, and with instructions dated the same date, declare: that having gone to the said Island of San Carlos we found that the water of the Island on the western part is one vara deep in some places, and half a vara in others, with places as shallow as the

length of four fingers more or less; on the east the water has in some places a depth of from one fourth of a vara to a vara and a half at a distance of fifty steps towards the sea. We saw clearly that at one fourth of a league distant from the center of the Island the water is somewhat deeper since the sea beats the sand banks along the whole front of the Island. The port located at the northeast of the said Island some days has enough water, but most of the time it has so little water that only very small boats could enter; sand banks are formed in the center of the port and the water moves them from one part of the mouth of the port to another. The same thing happens to the port located at the southeast of the said Island, and which is formed by the end of the Island and some dunes; although it has no sand banks, it has much less water at its entrance than at the other port. We found out that the width of the said island is one league more or less in most of it, in other parts three fourths of a league, and where it ends it is a little less than one fourth of a league wide. We found out that the said Island has no permanent running spring, but only some small ponds formed when it rains and they do not last long; in the old hamlets that were found the Indians obtained the water from some small holes that they make, and that is what we did the first day we arrived on the Island. The said Island has no palisade timbers of its own other than two small patches of laurel and elders, but to the eastern beach the sea waters bring all kinds of timbers, and among them some topmasts, yards, blocks, and others belonging to the masts of all sizes of ships. We saw that on the beach of the said Island were some broken canoes, one broken down Bongo, part of a ship that had a capacity for ten or sixteen canons, and which we set on fire, but from the whole Island we did not see any ship sailing out, nor anchored. We found out that the only pasture grown in the Island were red grass, and three-spined stickleback, that only by necessity was eaten by the horses. The said Island has no quarry nor loose stone. We cannot tell the number of huts that exist nor the number of persons who live in them, because the huts found were depopulated. Land cannot be seen from the eastern part of the Island, nor sand banks but those found on the border of the Island. This Island is fifty five leagues long more or less, and from its end to the Rio Grande, J. Mathes Martínez certifies that there are two leagues more or less. From this end of the said island of San Carlos of the Malaquitta to the port of Vera Cruz there is found only the so called Island of Lobos, and the Blanzuilla; the others are some bars or sand banks which appear and disappear some times, according to the seasons. I have practical knowledge of these waters because I have sailed them for a long time in the schooner of Col. Joseph Escandon. Following his orders I left the Port of Santander in the year of sixty four to reconnoiter the mouth of the Rio Grande. By that reconnaissance and the one now completed I assure that from the mouth of the Nueces River to the Rio Grande, which are more or less seventy leagues distant from each other, there is no other Island than that of Lobos and the other that your Lordship has seen and that is situated in the same direction and with which the port is formed. Having requested the Indians Miguel el Nuso, and Jácabo to show

us the place where the vessels anchored, the first one said that vessels passed by along the whole front of the Island and anchored, and some of them sent persons in boats and canoes to speak with the Indians; the second Indian said the same, but these waters could not be sounded because the boats we found were useless. We came back to this camp the same way we went out because we did not find on the mainland a passage for horses and due to the obstructions of the lagoons. No vessels were found grounded, nor anchored. From the shore of Corpus Christi to the point where the said Island begins there must be more or less a distance of two leagues. Having answered all the questions, and not having any other information to offer, we feel we have complied with what was ordered, and therefore we sign it on the Camp of Santo Petronila on September twenty four of one thousand seven hundred and sixty six.

Eugenio Fernández,
Joseph Antonio de la Garza Falcon
Matheo Martínez

Advise:

Most Excellent Master:

Though I have informed Your Excellency on April twenty four of this year, about all the affairs of the Island of the Malaquittas, commonly known as Isla Blanca, following instructions and commission from the most Excellent Master Viceroy Marques de Craillas, enclosing exact maps of the said Island, and that of the Culebras, and coast of the mainland from the mouth of the Rio Grande, situated at twenty four degrees, and forty minutes, to the Bay of San Bernardo that is situated twenty nine degrees and twenty minutes. I also put in the hands of Your Excellency a memorandum book with the legal papers that I received about the Island of Culebra. It has seemed to be proper for the certification of my stated information about Isla Blanca, or of the Malaquittas, to accompany this with a paper signed by two officers, and an experienced sailor who went with me to reconnoiter the said territories; these documents, and my special intelligence included in the account prepared the said April four, can supersede all other news that have reached the Courts of Spain and France. June twenty one, one thousand seven hundred and sixty seven.

Diego Ortíz Parrilla
Most Excellent Master Marques de Croix

Appendix Two

Recommendations for Historic Resource Preservation

The historic resources of Padre Island are many and varied. They range from artifacts of the Indian, Spanish, and American periods to maps, documents, and photographs. When the Padre Island National Seashore visitor's center is constructed, museum displays based on such resources will deal with the totality of man's historical interaction with the island. The historic resource which here concerns us is the historic structure. By definition, an historic structure is a work of man, either prehistoric or historic, consciously created to serve some form of human activity. It is usually by nature or design immovable. Besides buildings of all kinds, the term includes engineering works, such as dams, canals, bridges, stockades, forts, and associated earthworks serving a similar purpose, Indian mounds and ruins, historic roads, mill races and ponds.

Historic structures are found from one end of Padre to the other. Among them are the ruins of the packery on Packery Channel, the pilings of the Don Patricio Causeway, the site of Murdock's landing, and a host of structures associated with the Dunn Ranch. Other historic structures such as the site of Padre Balli's Buena Vista Ranch could possibly be located by archeological investigation. The centers of activity on Padre have been the two ends of the island. As a result the majority of the historic structures are located outside the boundaries of the National Seashore. National Park Service preservation of historic structures will be limited to preservation of those structures located within the seashore.

This historic resource study makes the following recommendation for historic structure preservation within the Padre Island National Seashore. It is recommended that the Dunn Ranch Novillo camp located at the north end of the seashore be preserved. Novillo is the best single remaining artifact of the primary historical land utilization activity on Padre, namely, cattle raising from 1805 to 1971. As detailed in the preceding narrative, Novillo documents and graphically illustrates a level of man's historical interaction with the island's environment. Novillo is a symbol of man's adaption of an agricultural economic form to Padre Island.

In terms of development and management, Novillo does not appear to present any major problems. The site is located at the north end or developed area of the seashore. In relation to land utilization, its classification as Class VI land will not conflict with any other appropriate use land classification. Development of the site itself also presents

no problems. A short road from the main road and parking lot will make the site accessible. A simple self-guiding trail will take the visitor to and through the site.

The immediate preservation problem at Novillo is to bring the resource to a condition where it can be managed according to NPS historic resource management standards. The level of treatment of each Novillo structure is dealt with in the List of Classified Structures. As a general statement of the level of treatment of the site as a whole it is recommended that Novillo be preserved in its present condition. Whatever structural changes have taken place between the time of its construction and the present are a part of the site's functional history. Some of the individual structures will require stabilization work and two of them may require partial roof restoration. Nevertheless, stabilization, not restoration and/or reconstruction, is the recommended level of treatment. Should any of the structures be in any immediate jeopardy, emergency stabilization should take place. Final stabilization will take place after the completion of the normal Historic Structure Report for the resource as a whole. It is further recommended that the site not be made the object of visitor use until stabilization has taken place.

The Novillo resource is the only one of the three Dunn Ranch sites within the seashore that merits preservation. The other two sites, Black Hill and Green Hill, should be removed. Their preservation is not compatible with other appropriate use land classifications, i.e., their preservation would prejudice the development of the island as seashore. A good photographic record should be obtained before they are removed, especially photographs of the unusual water tanks. In addition some materials from the sites, and especially the shingled roof at the "Dunn Ranch," should be salvaged for possible use in structure stabilization and partial roof restoration at Novillo.

Appendix Three

List of Classified Structures

The Dunn Ranch Novillo line camp is of the Third Order of Significance for the purposes of the National Park Service List of Classified Structures. Novillo is significant primarily in the presentation and interpretation of the history of Padre Island. The recommended level of treatment of the Novillo resource is its stabilization in its present condition by means of preserving techniques for arresting and slowing the resource's deterioration. Once stabilized, Novillo can be managed according to normal NPS historic resource management standards. Novillo will be entered on the National Register of Historic Places as a district. However, for purposes of historic resource management each structure will be dealt with individually on the List of Classified Structures. Those structures and recommended treatment are:

Number	Name	Treatment
1. PAIS-HS-1	Fence (all, including gate)	Stabilize in existing condition
2. PAIS-HS-2	Bunkhouse-A	Stabilize in existing condition until preparation of Historic Structure Report which will determine feasibility of restoring wood shingle roof
3. PAIS-HS-3	Bunkhouse-B	Same as Bunkhouse A
4. PAIS-HS-4	Kitchen	Undertake immediate measures to stabilize structure; e.g., strengthen portal eating area
5. PAIS-HS-5	Corrals	Stabilize in existing condition
6. PAIS-HS-6	Windmill and Tank	Stabilize in existing condition
7. PAIS-HS-7	Historic Grounds	Stabilize in existing condition until preparation of HSR which will determine which objects can be removed.

DON PATRICIO CAUSEWAY, 1927-1933

PACKERY, 1870-1874

PADRE ISLAND AFFAIR, CIVIL WAR, 1862

DIMITT'S TRADING POST, 1841
(LOCATION UNCERTAIN)

FLOUR BLUFF

LUIS DE MOSCOSO, 1542
(LOCATION CONJECTUAL)

PADRE ISLAND

NOVILLO (DUNN RANCH)

INDIAN CAMP SITE

BLACK HILL (DUNN RANCH)

BAFFIN BAY

LAGUNA MADRE

YARBOROUGH PASS

MURDOCK LANDING SETTLEMENT, 1870s

GREEN HILL (DUNN RANCH)

GULF OF MEXICO

MESQUITE
RINCON

WRECK OF THE 300
(LOCATION UNKNOWN)

INDIAN CAMP SITE

LAGUNA MADRE

KENEDY COUNTY
WILLACY COUNTY

MANSFIELD SHIP CHANNEL

PADRE ISLAND

LEGEND

PADRE ISLAND ROUTE — — —
DIEGO ORTIZ PARRILLA, 1776
CAPT. WILLIAM HARDEE, 1846

PARK BOUNDARY ——— ——

INDIAN CAMP SITE

WILLACY CO.
CAMERON CO.

SANTA CRUZ DE BUENA VISTA, 1805-1836

N

5 0 5 10

SCALE STATUTE MILES

SINGER RANCH, 1846-1861

PORT ISABEL

BRAZOS SANTIAGO PASS

UNITED STATES
MEXICO

HISTORIC BASE MAP

PADRE ISLAND NATIONAL SEASHORE

TEXAS

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
EASTERN SERVICE CENTER
OFFICE OF HISTORY AND HISTORIC ARCHITECTURE
PREPARED BY DIVISION OF CENTRAL MAP SERVICE
SEPTEMBER 1971

PLATE 1

This is a copy of the 1828 Padre Island survey which confirmed Padre Nicolas Balli's ownership of the island. The surveyor measured Padre in varas. Note the location of Padre Balli's Buena Vista ranch. (Nueces County Court Records)

H. PRESIDENCIA MUNICIPAL
ESTADO DE TAMAULIPAS
MATAMOROS, TAM.

PLATE 2

This illustration outlines the extent of Karankawa Indian territory on the Texas Gulf Coast. The map shows the location of a Karankawa camping site on Padre Island. More recent archeological investigations indicate that Karankawas frequented a number of camps on the island. (Library of Congress)

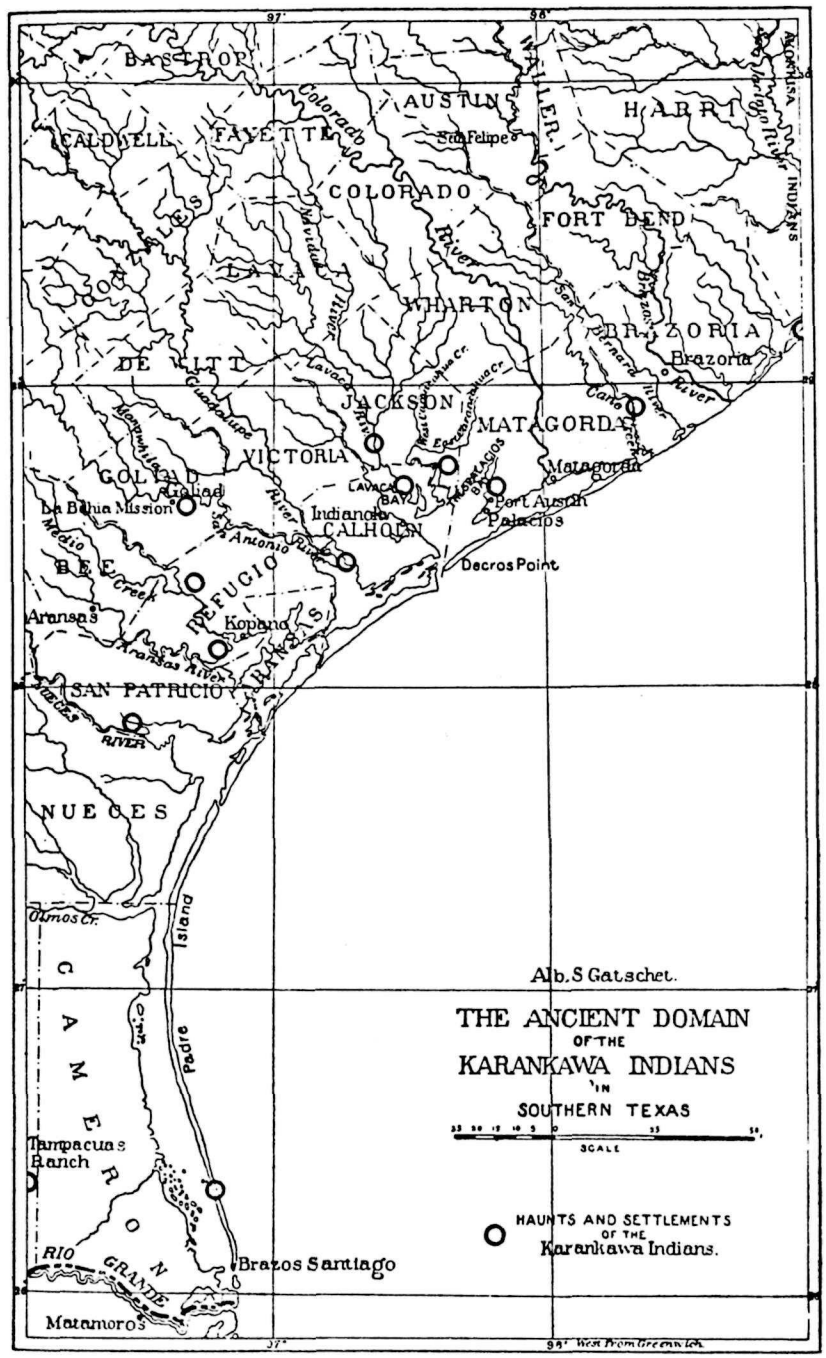

97°
96°
BASTROP
AUSTIN
WALLER
HARRI
CALDWELL
FAYETTE
San Felipe
COLORADO
FORT BEND
WHARTON
BRAZORIA
Brazoria
DE WITT
JACKSON
MATAGORDA
VICTORIA
GOLIAD
Goliad
La Bahia Mission
Indianola
CALHOUN
Port Lavaca
Palacios
Matagorda
Decros Point
REFUGIO
Refugio
Aransas
Copano
ARANSAS
SAN PATRICIO
NUECES
Nueces River
Olmos Cr.
Padre Island
CAMERON
Tampacuas Ranch
RIO GRANDE
Brazos Santiago
Matamoros
Alb. S Gatschet.
THE ANCIENT DOMAIN
OF THE
KARANKAWA INDIANS
IN
SOUTHERN TEXAS
SCALE
HAUNTS AND SETTLEMENTS
OF THE
Karankawa Indians.
97°
96°
West from Greenwich

PLATE 3

This 1846 map shows the extent of settlement around Padre Island at the time of the Mexican War. Note the "Indian wells" on the island. (National Archives)

MAP OF
the Reconnaissance in Texas
by
LIEUTS BLAKE & MEADE
of the Corps of Topl Engrs
1845'6

The routes in the direction of Matamoras are made from the examinations of said Officers and Lieut Meade of Corps of Engineers. The remainder of the map from actual survey and examination by J.F. Blake U.S.Topl Eng

Most of the counties in Texas and San Patricio counties have been surveyed and the lines as there marked as borders, taken up

SCALE OF 10 MILES TO ONE INCH

0 10 20 30 40 50 60

VAR. 9° 45' EAST

TRUE MERIDIAN

SAN PA

NUECES RIVER

TABLE HILL

NUECES RIVER

SAN PATRICIO

NUECES BAY

Corpus Christi Bay

MUSTANG I.

Corpus Christi Pass

Rio Nueces

Oso Creek

Rio Alamo

Rio San Fernando

Rio Santa Gertrudes

Rio Morteo

LAGUNA PENASCAL

LITTLE

ISLAND

MADRE

MEXICO

GULF OF

LAGUNA MADRE

SANDY SALT DESERT

PRAIRIE AND CHAPARRAL

WITH

WILD

PRAIRIE

Arroyo Colorado

Arroyo Colorado

THICK MESQUIT

Pt Isabel Promontory

Depot

BRAZOS SANTIAGO

ROCA CHICA

OPEN PRAIRIE

Rio Bravo del Norte

MATAMORAS

RIO BRAVO DEL NORTE

TAMAULIPAS

BRAVO DEL NORTE

MEXICO

Scale
1/4 Mile to one inch

RIO

To Reinosa (60 miles) to Monterey

Plaza

MATAMORAS

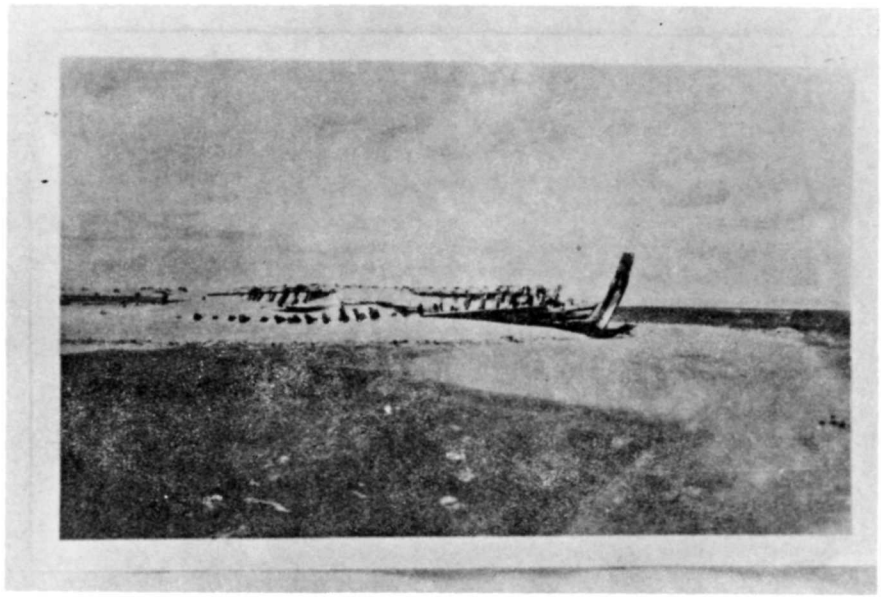
To Monterey

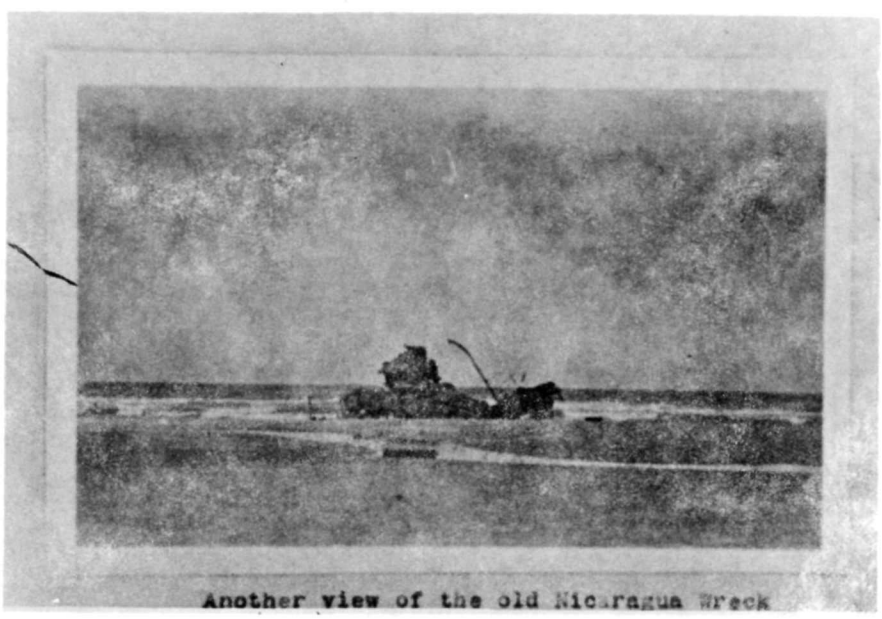
To North of Mexico

POND

PLATE 4

These are but two of the many ships and boats that have found a final resting place on the shores of Padre Island. The boiler from the Nicaragua, lower illustration, is still visible today. (La Retema Library, Corpus Christi)

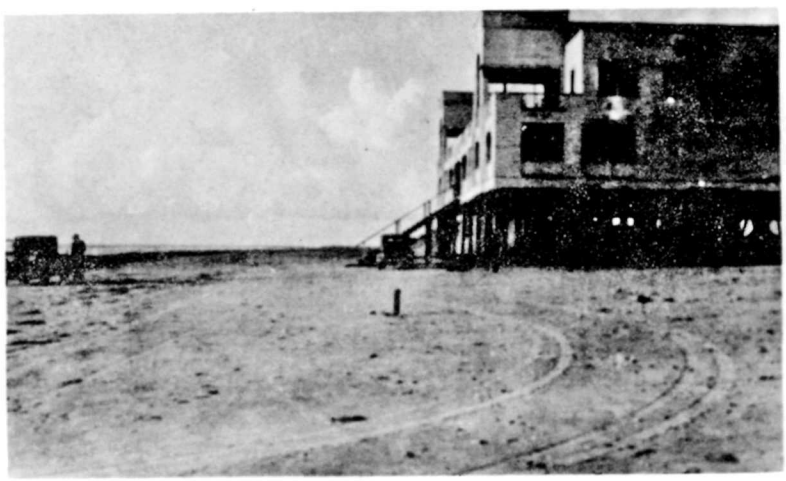




Another view of the old Nicaragua Wreck

PLATE 5

Both the Surf Side Hotel and the Don Patricio causeway shown here were part of Col. Sam Robertson's plans to capitalize on Padre's outdoor recreation potential. The depression and a 1933 hurricane washed away this Padre Island development.
(La Retema Library, Corpus Christi)

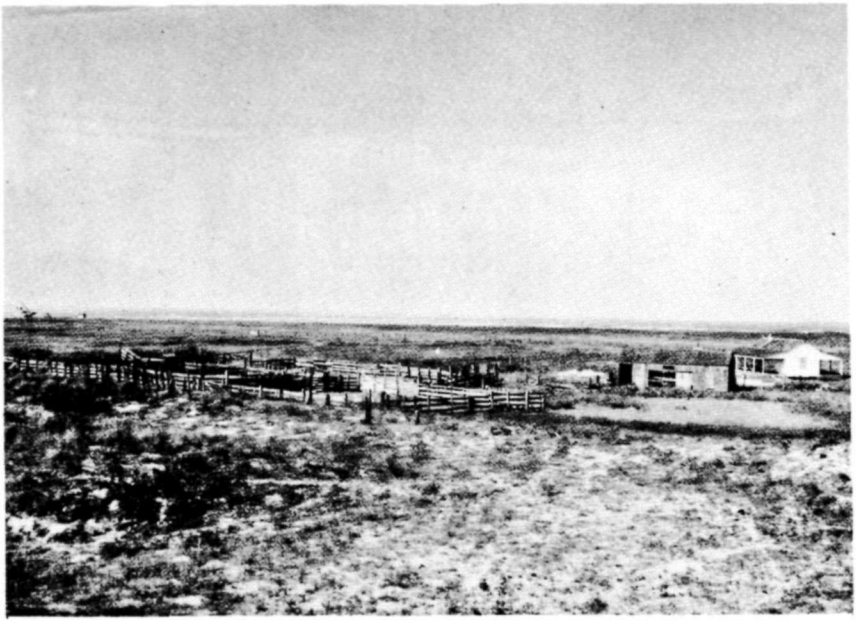


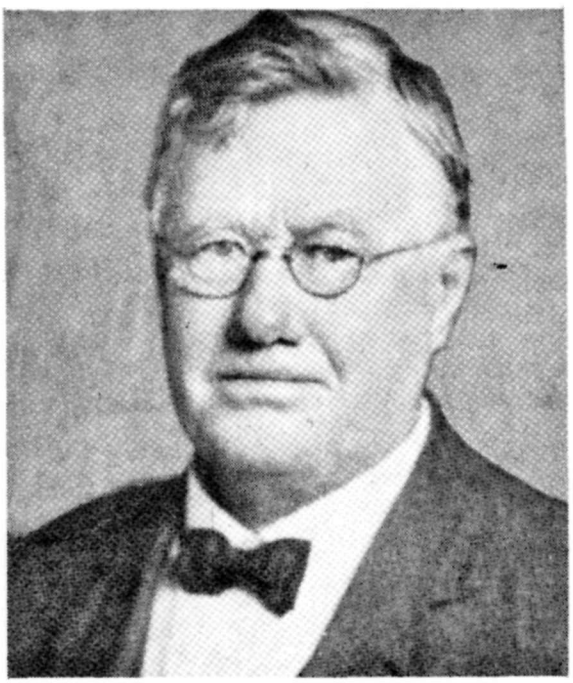
water caused by a storm 120 miles away. July 10, 1933



PLATE 6

Beginning in the 1780s Pat Dunn established a successful cattle ranch on Padre Island. Shown here are the homes Dunn built of the island from materials he collected from the beach. The elegant two-story structure blew away in a hurricane. The second home is still in use.
(Courtesy of Dr. V.M. Harris, Perry Foundation)





Mr. Pat Dunn 1858 — 1937

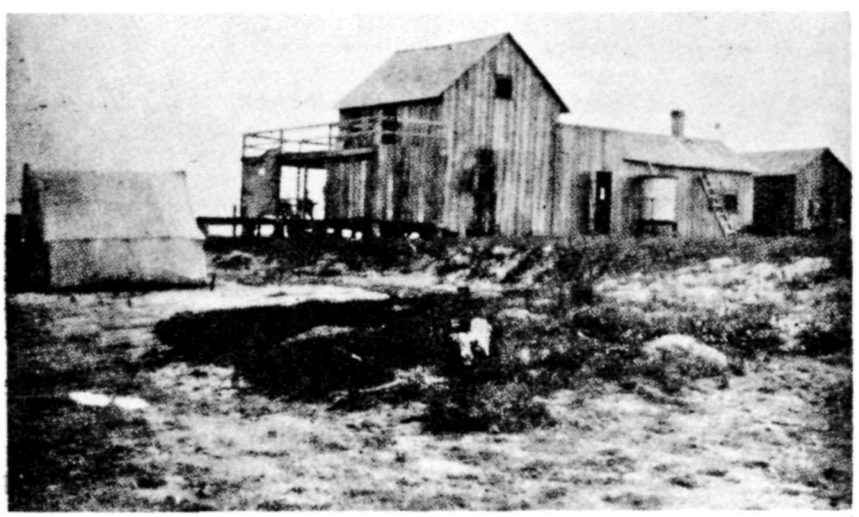
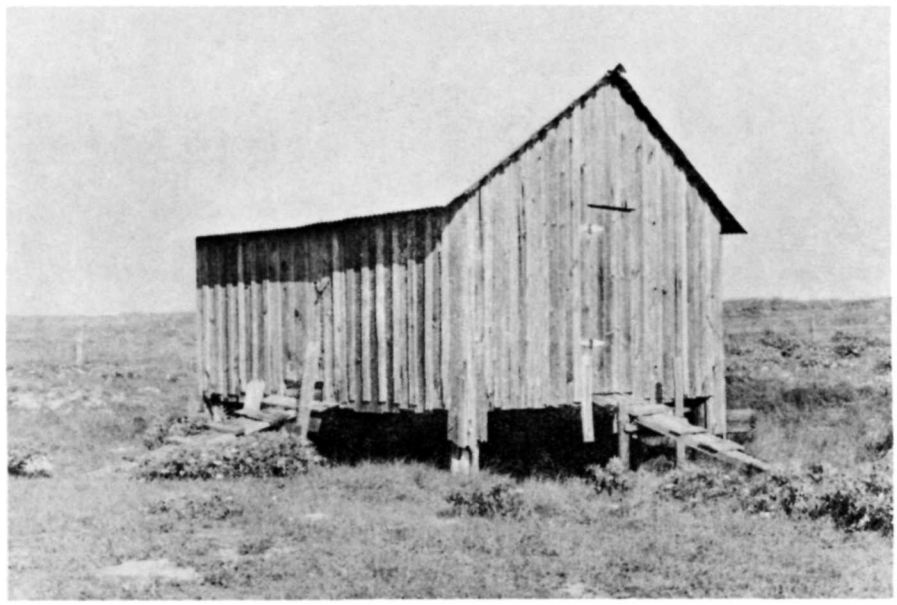
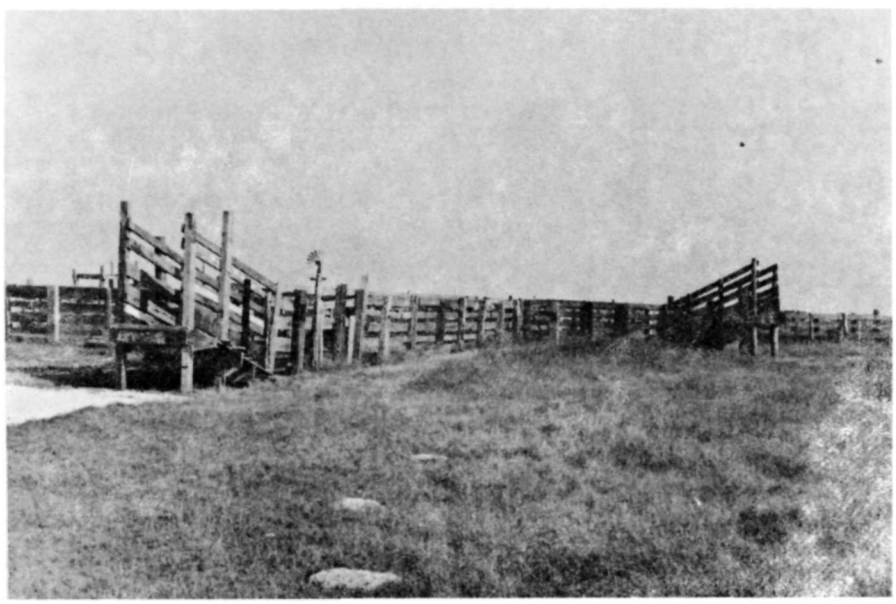


PLATE 7

To support his cattle raising operations Dunn built a number of line camps down Padre Island. Shown here are two of the structures at Novello, one of these camps. Novello will be preserved within Padre Island National Seashore. (National Park Service)





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