

First Recordings of Historic Mexican-American Ballads (1928-37)

# CORRIDOS & TRAGEDIAS DE LA FRONTERA



CD 7019/7020

## DISC I: CD 7019

1. GREGORIO CORTÉZ *Parts 1 & 2*  
Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez
2. JOAQUÍN MURRIETA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Los Madrugadores
3. EL DEPORTADO *Parts 1 & 2*  
Hermanos Bañuelos
4. LA ELENA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Hernández & Sifuentes
5. LA CIUDAD DE JAUJA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Ramos & Treviño
6. EL CORRIDO DE TEXAS  
Silvano Ramos & Daniel Ramírez
7. CORRIDO PENSILVANIA  
Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez
8. CORRIDO DE LOS HERMANOS  
HERNÁNDEZ *Parts 1 & 2*  
Los Madrugadores
9. JESÚS CADENA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez
10. EL HUERFANO *Parts 1 & 2* – Trio Matamoros
11. LA CRISIS – Dúo Latino
12. LA CRISIS ACTUAL *Parts 1 & 2*  
Los Cancioneros Alegres
13. CORRIDO DE JUAN REYNA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Hermanos Bañuelos.
14. SUICIDIO DE JUAN REYNA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Nacho & Justino.

## DISC II: CD 7020

1. EL CONTRABANDO DEL PASO  
*Parts 1 & 2* – Dúo El Arte Mexicano
2. CONTRABANDISTAS TEQUILEROS  
*Parts 1 & 2* – Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez
3. CORRIDO DE LOS BOOTLEGGERS *Parts 1 & 2*  
Francisco Montalvo and Andrés Berlanga
4. CAPITÁN CHARLES STEVENS *Parts 1 & 2*  
Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez
5. LA TRAGEDIA DE OKLAHOMA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Silvano Ramos & Ortega
6. CORRIDO DE LA NIÑA JUNE ROBLES  
*Parts 1 & 2* – Trinidad & María López
7. INUNDACIÓN DE NOGALES *Parts 1 & 2*  
Sifuentes & Guzmán
8. CORRIDO DE BONIFACIO TORRES  
*Parts 1 & 2* – Hermanos Bañuelos
9. LUZ ARCOS *Parts 1 & 2*  
Hermanos Chavarria
10. NUEVO CORRIDO DE LAREDO *Parts 1 & 2*  
Salas & Mendoza
11. EL MOSCO AMERICANO  
Cancioneros Picarescos
12. ZENAIDA *Parts 1 & 2* – Los Madrugadores
13. LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIDA *Parts 1 & 2*  
Antonio Flores & Manuel Valdéz

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MEXICAN-AMERICAN BORDER MUSIC VOL 6 & 7

# CORRIDOS & TRAGEDIAS DE LA FRONTERA



7019 / 7020

First Recordings of Historic  
Mexican-American Ballads (1928-37)

Includes the first recording of "GREGORIO CORTEZ"



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## CORRIDOS y TRAGEDIAS De La Frontera

### An INTRODUCTION by Chris Strachwitz

*Corridos* and *Tragedias* (ballads and tragedies) have been sung for over 100 years in Mexico and especially along both sides of the **Frontera**, the border with the United States. Some of the *corridos* in this collection, although recorded in the USA, are Mexican in origin but are part of the common Mexican American heritage and tradition. Others are the result of the ongoing conflict which often results when the Mexican and Anglo civilizations come into contact. For these *corridos* the term "Border" should be taken in its broadest possible sense, extending often hundreds of miles from the actual line. These story songs range in content from factual newspaper-like accounts giving the date and place where a memorable event or tragedy took place, to purely fictional ones. Among the "true" *corridos*, are traditional stories from the last century as well as recent tales, often detailing heroic actions by brave individuals who stood up to authority in defense of their rights. Fictional *corridos*, on the other

hand, although perhaps based on true events, have been enhanced for broadest possible popular appeal and maximum commercial exploitation. They have in recent times frequently served as scripts or texts for popular movies or hit records for stars of the Mexican American music world.

*Corridos*, both old and new, true and fictional, constitute a significant element of the popular music and literature of the community. Some *corridos* about local events appeal mainly to hard core fans of the genre, usually men alone or gathered at socials or in *cantinas*, while others become widely popular, sung by famous singers and *conjuntos*. The men in the cantinas are passionate about what they love and enjoy, and will frequently hire and spend considerable sums for *conjuntos* or *mariachis* to sing their favorite ballads at their table. If you appreciate *corridos* or have ever witnessed such performances you know how these stories affect the listeners who by their *gritos* and singing along



become active participants and relive these stories in a very personal way.

Old *corridos* about the heroes and events of the Mexican Revolution, the Mexican nineteenth century Robin Hood-like figure of "Heraclio Bernal," the ancient story of incest as told in "Delgadina," or the brave exploits of Texan "Gregorio Cortéz" who in 1901 stood up to authorities to defend his rights and successfully evaded a huge posse of *rinches cobardes*, are all still popular evergreens with audiences and singers along the Frontera. Such old ballads may well alternate with more recent stories about famous race horses, exploits of notorious drug lords, the tragic killings of the Archbishop of Guadalajara and Mexican presidential candidate Colosio, or perhaps the latest problems resulting from US immigration rulings.

True *corridos* tell the story of heroic events or tragedies as singers and composers heard or perceived them and like all history, are very subjective. They must also be sung in the vernacular language of the people in order to be remembered. Although poetry has always been a popular literary form it has a very special appeal if

put to music. As in the case of English ballads, the tunes are usually simple and basic. Most *corridos* were probably sung slowly in the past but the melodies were easily adapted to the up-tempo polka rhythms so popular in the dance halls of today. Although true ballads seem to be no longer a major element of English language popular music and culture, they certainly are alive and well along the Mexican American Border. One of the last true ballads from Texas in English which comes to mind is the story of plantation owner, "Tom Moore" whose treatment and exploitation of his workers was the subject of a commercial record made by blues singer Lightning Hopkins in the late 1940s.

In spite of the old saying that truth is stranger than fiction, many of the most popular and widely circulated *corridos* sung and heard today are fiction. This brings us to the role which recordings, radio, and commercial exploitation of songs has had on the field of balladry. To protect the composer, singers, record company, and publisher from possible legal action for slander or libel, or the subjects from revenge or prejudice, and to freely ex-

ploit the ballad commercially without problems, the fictional *corrido* has come, with the growth of the music business since the 1930s, to the forefront and almost restricted true *corridos* to private gatherings and the *cantinas*. When I was in Guadalajara asking for *corridos* about the recent Indian uprising in the state of Chiapas, I was told by musicians and shop owners that they had not heard of any, but that if one were to appear it would most likely not be the true story as the Indians saw it but one based only on official newspaper reports. In San Antonio, not many years ago, one of the major regional record companies was sued by the sheriff of Laredo because the firm had released a *corrido* about a jail break in his city, and unlike the newspaper report, had put some blame for it on the sheriff. Forced to pay large legal fees and to withdraw the recording from the market left the label's owner bitter about true or real *corridos* and he swore at the time not to record any more. The popularity of the genre however has since changed his mind. As the producer however he now probably checks all details with newspaper and radio reports before letting his artists sing

or record such a ballad.

Some years ago when driving through Las Cruces, New Mexico, I inquired about local *corridos*. The gas station attendant who was filling my tank told me he had recently heard one on the local radio station about a killing in the area but had heard that the *corrido* had to be taken off the air because the family of the victim of the crime had objected to the public airing of such personal matters. Political censorship of *corridos*, especially in Mexico, is also a reality. When Jim Nicolopoulos and I were recently visiting the *conjunto* Los Pingüinos Del Norte in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, their new bass player, who came from Mexico City, told us about several edicts. In the early 1970s in the state of Guerrero during the insurgency led by Lucio Cabañas, the PRI government ordered the Musicians Union to prohibit its members from performing *corridos* favorable to the rebels. The Cabañas uprising was the last major outbreak of rural rebellion and guerrilla warfare prior to the recent uprisings in the state of Chiapas. In spite of such efforts at censorship, many *corridos* of the Cabañas revolt were not only sung widely but



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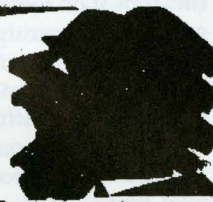
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Rodolfo Hoyos con Los Castillans  
Secreto Eterno (Danza Oriental)  
Milla Domínguez
- 40828 La Expedición Punitiva—1a. Parte  
La Expedición Punitiva—2a. Parte  
F. Montalvo y M. Rodríguez
- 40839 Prendado Quedé de Ti (Canción Yucateca)  
Presentimiento (Canción Yucateca)  
Arturo Larios con guitarra
- 40840 Jesús Cadena—1a. Parte (Tragedia)  
Jesús Cadena—2a. Parte (Tragedia)  
Guerra y Guerra con guitarra
- 40842 Jesús Leal—1a. Parte (Tragedia)  
Jesús Leal—2a. Parte (Tragedia)  
Luna y Montalvo
- 40848 Me Abandonas (Canción)  
Una Cautela (Canción)  
Cortez y Gutiérrez con guitarra

### DISCOS CUBANOS

- 40810 El Cervera—1a. Parte (Diálogo Cómico)

Pages 6 & 7: Parts of a full  
column ad in La Prensa,  
San Antonio, January, 1930



did appear on records. A similar edict was announced recently in the state of Sinaloa where the state government has prohibited the performance of *corridos* celebrating the drug traffickers, but apparently with even less success.

In the days before records, radio, films, juke boxes, TV, or the invention of the amplifier, which have aided the massive commercial exploitation of songs, *corridos* were passed on and enjoyed on a more personal level. Singers entertained their audiences, as they had for hundreds of years, on the street, in restaurants, at small gatherings and celebrations, saloons, or at house parties. Until recordings (and some twenty years later the radio) suddenly brought voices from around the world directly into people's homes at the beginning of the 20th century, *corridos* were circulated mainly by itinerant singers traveling from market place to market place, from street corner to street corner, or from ranch to ranch, singing their verses for anyone willing to listen and pay. Sometimes these *corridistas* or *trovadores*, would have the texts of popular stories printed along with a picture illustrating the ballad and offer

such broadsides for sale as well.

This collection brings you the original historic recordings of 27 important *corridos* from the Border. Many of these first commercial recordings, all made on the US side of the Border, are remarkably traditional, honest, uncensored, pure in their content, and complete. Many were originally issued in two parts, filling both sides of a 10" 78 rpm record, giving the singers just a little over 6 minutes to tell their story. The recordings were mainly made in the Southwest by singers from the Border country during a short decade, which I like to call the "Golden Era of the Recorded Corrido": 1928 to 1937. The most interesting ones were recorded during a four year period, starting in 1928, two years after the general introduction of the electrical recording process, when the national record companies began semi-annual field trips to San Antonio and El Paso. An era when many singers and composers were still directly in touch with the living oral tradition. Competition, however was fierce from the start and as soon as one company had a record of a popular ballad, the other three firms would often record their own artists' version and

hope to overshadow the others by more imaginative marketing techniques or better distribution.

The apparent commercial success of many recorded *corridos* just prior to the Great Depression which brought the record business to its knees, gave impetus to singers and composers to come up with more *corridos* as long as the public was responsive to their tales and bought the discs. Singers generally felt honored and delighted to be chosen to make records and the \$25 to \$50 fee per disc was at the time considered a nice reward for singing two parts of a song which might bring five or ten cents from a listener in the plaza.

During the first few years of recording regional musics in hotel rooms out in the hinterlands, away from the studios of New York or Los Angeles, the producers were apparently receptive to a wide range of material. The desire on the part of the record producers to find anything that would sell and the lack of understanding of the language of the repertoire they were recording probably kept the "record men" from attempting political correctness or censorship. Attempts were made however

by several of the early Spanish-speaking intermediaries to "improve" some of the singers, whom they often considered to be of rather low class. The late Guadalupe Acosta of San Antonio was a professional musician and orchestra leader who also built and repaired musical instruments. He was hired to help in recording local musicians and once proudly told me that he helped several singers use proper Spanish and improve their pronunciation before making recordings!

Once voices could be heard clearly in homes emanating from a radio or phonograph, it quickly became apparent that vocal duets with guitar accompaniment were the most popular recording combination in the Mexican American music field. *Duetos* were also cheaper to record than a 20-piece orchestra. *Duetos* were also among the first recording combinations waxed in Mexico City around 1904 by Victor, Columbia and Edison's visiting engineers from New York, although only about forty *corridos* were documented on cylinders and discs at that time. During the drawn out years of turmoil of the Mexican Revolution, recording activities ceased



in Mexico itself and were not resumed until 1926. They remained very limited until the early 1930s when Peerless became the first Mexican company to build recording and pressing facilities. "The Golden Era of the Recorded Corrido" was primarily documented in the US since the public in Mexico was either too poor to create a demand for such records or was not interested in that type of repertoire.

By the mid 1930s and the continuing Great Depression, all US record companies introduced cheap 35 cent records (they had previously cost 75 cents) with the hope of selling recorded music even to the poor and rural masses. The demand for *corridos*, however almost disappeared as far as the record-buying public was concerned. The brief "Golden Era of the Recorded Corrido" was over.

In Mexico, the 1930s saw the development of the Mexican film industry which was quick to discover that film stars who were also *ranchera* singers or *ranchera* singers who could also act in films, were a very popular commodity and the rural masses loved to see movies which featured new songs and new singers. Many of the big-

gest *ranchera* recording stars such as Jorge Negrete and Pedro Infante became famous via the films they made. Movies also eventually helped elevate rural *mariachi* music to become Mexico's national music. During the late 1930s with the increased commercial exploitation of vernacular music, fictional *corridos* became increasingly popular via films which used the stories and songs to appeal to the masses.

During World War II, the major labels in the US who controlled the record industry, just about gave up marketing regional musics because of the shellac shortage. With the end of the war in 1945 however, a resurgence of *corridos* on records began with an upswing in the economy, and the increased buying power of the masses. Local entrepreneurs filled the vacuum left by the major labels by starting small record companies all over the country. During the 1950s, 60s and 70s real *corridos* once again became popular especially on records. The death of President John F. Kennedy, who was perhaps the most popular American president ever among Mexican Americans partially due to his Catholic minority status, gave cause for an amazing number of

*corridos* on records. These *corridos* were almost without exception homages (*homenajes*) which praised their hero for his stand on what he believed was right including rights for the poor. Dan Dickey collected about 24 of them in his book *The Kennedy Corridos: A Study of the Ballads of a Mexican American Hero* (Austin: University of Texas, Center for Mexican American Studies, 1978).

The 1960s saw powerful *corridos* of protest such as "Rinches De Texas" by Willie López who produced the record on his ORO label in McAllen, Texas. It was a strong complaint against the then governor of Texas, John Connally, who called out the hated Rangers (*rinches*) to put down a melon field workers' strike with brutal force. The 60s and 70s were also an era when pride in La Raza blossomed. It was also a time in the development of the recording business when you could, if I may paraphrase composer and record company owner, Salome Gutierrez: "write the *corrido* in the morning, record it that afternoon, take the lacquer master to the pressing plant that evening and the next day have the 45s to take to the radio stations

who would be playing the *corrido* within 24 hours of the event." Most *corridos* recorded since the 1950s however, were short and fitted on one side of a record. Unlike the late 1920s when people would listen to records on their player at home and gladly turn the disc over to listen to part 2, the juke box and the radio had now become the prime outlets. Most older juke boxes would only play one side of a record and radio stations were reluctant to play any record over two minutes and 45 seconds because it would encroach on their time for commercials.

Today, in the 1990s, there are still plenty of true *corridos* being sung and even recorded. You hear them primarily in the *cantinas* and in places where the so-called respectable people don't venture. After all, *corridos* are part of the literature of the common people and reflect their values which are often in opposition to the establishment or the wealthy classes. Although the early pioneer recording directors on this side of the Border documented even strongly anti-Anglo *corridos* or protest songs, several of which are heard in this collection, the recording industry today,



especially in Mexico, would be reluctant to release any anti-establishment *corridos*. Even fictional *corridos* are not without opposition. I've heard of citizens' groups here in California who would like to restrict the airing of any *corridos* glorifying the drug trade because they feel it reflects negatively on the Mexican American population and their culture. Popular singers, with some notable exceptions, are careful not to offend and are often reluctant to sing even traditional true *corridos* fearful of the wrath of wanna-be censors or the conservative elements in their audience. Yet some singers and *conjuntos* take great pride in being specialists in *corridos* and do not shy away from bringing their audience what they want to hear. Los Tigres Del Norte are perhaps the most enduring and hard core super stars of the *corrido* who have stayed on top of the charts ever since the 1970s when they recorded "Contrabando Y Traición" and "La Banda De Carro Rojo" which became hit records and hit movies.

Today, in addition to conservatives' objections to many *corridos*, the medium or sound carrier itself has become problematic for the *corrido* composers and singers

who require speedy release and distribution. The cassette is the only cheap sound carrier in use today which can be quickly produced. But most radio stations will not broadcast cassettes, juke boxes can not play them, and besides, they can be easily copied by anyone, thus taking away the potential profit incentive. Perhaps the broadside will make a comeback as it did a few years ago when visitors from New York told me about hearing a man sing a *corrido* on the bridge between El Paso and Juarez about the tragedy of illegals who had suffocated in a railroad car just east of El Paso. He was selling a computer generated sheet of paper with the lyrics which he had just composed.

(Chris Strachwitz - 1994)

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## The Singers:

The singers heard on these historic discs, like the Carter Family in Country music, Joe Falcon in Cajun music, or Blind Lemon Jefferson in Blues, were among the pioneer recording artists in the field of Mexican American vernacular music. The fact that many were already popular performers in their community, brought them to the attention of furniture and music shop owners who were used by the recording companies to act as talent scouts or intermediaries. In the plaza or in the street, singers had to be loud to be heard and survive. The public may have been boisterous but was also forgiving when they paid five or ten cents for a song delivered to them in person. However, when customers put down 75 hard earned cents for a phonograph record which they could play at home over and over and suddenly hear every nuance of the voices and every word of the song, they became much more demanding. The *duetos* heard on these records were successful because they had the right combinations of voices and the right songs to please the tradition oriented

ears and emotions of their listeners.

In most cases we know very little about these singers besides their names, what instruments they played, where and when the record was made, what the catalog release number was, and perhaps the matrix number as well. These details are known to us almost entirely due to the long, dedicated, and persevering work of discographer Dick Spottswood who spent years collecting this data from the files and catalogs of the record companies who originally produced the records. With only a small grant to keep him going, Dick Spottswood published his complete data in a seven volume set entitled: *Ethnic Music On Records - A Discography of Ethnic Music produced in the United States, 1893 to 1943* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1990).

The singers considered themselves fortunate to have their names appear on the record labels, in newspaper ads, on flyers, handbills, and catalogs. This publicity, especially if the records proved to be popular, could help focus the public's attention on them

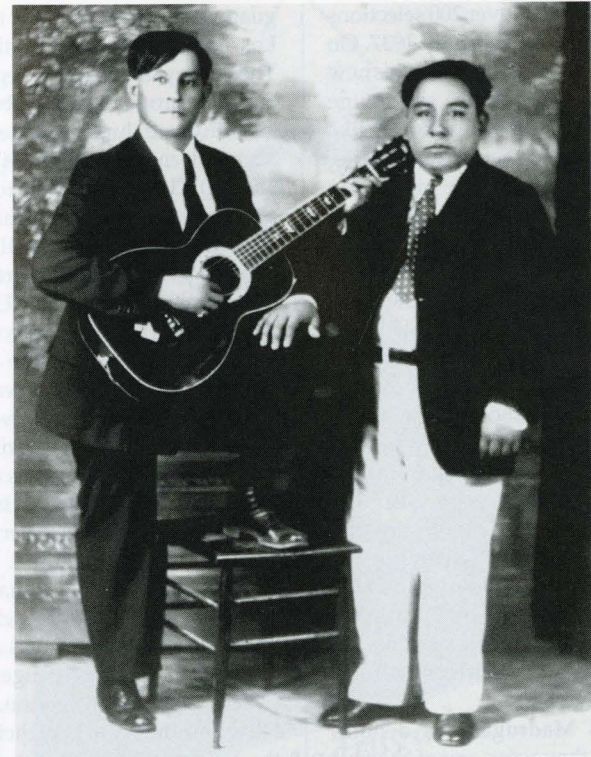


and perhaps lead to better paying personal appearances and further recordings. Since the companies who recorded Mexican American music at this time had strong national and even international distribution in the western hemisphere, the discs by San Antonio, El Paso, or Los Angeles based artists, were available not only on their home turf, but in most areas in the US with a substantial Spanish speaking population.

During the 1970s when I became seriously interested in Mexican American music and its history, I met many artists in south Texas and San Antonio and I tried to locate relatives of some of the pioneers. Ernestina Arismendez, daughter of Pedro Rocha, and Espectación R. Martínez, widow of Lupe Martínez, (Pedro Rocha's partner) supplied me with photos and some information. I met and interviewed Martín and Alfonso Echavarría who recorded as Hermanos Chavarría. Andrés Berlanga, who still lives in San Antonio, has been a long time friend whom I first met when he was singing and playing *bajo sexto* with accordionist Fred Zimmerle and his Trío San Antonio. Jesús Sánchez of Los Madrugadores was interviewed extensively by Philip Sonnichsen.

**Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez** were the

best and most popular *dueto* to record in San Antonio from the late 1920s into the late 30s, specializing in *corridos*. The distinct lead voice of Pedro Rocha and the perfectly matching second of Lupe Martínez were especially successful on radio and recordings where every nuance could be clearly heard. According to Andrés Berlanga who encountered the duo not only in San Antonio's produce plaza but also in small towns throughout south Texas, Rocha and Martínez sang mostly in the streets and were especially successful with *corridos* although they sang other types of songs as well. Pedro Rocha was born 2/21/1888, in Matehuala, Coahuila, and died in San Antonio, Tx., 5/11/1964. He came to the United States in 1909 when he was already singing but not professionally. Lupe Martínez was born 1/15/1901, in San Luis Potosí but moved with his family to New Braunfels, Tx., in 1906. The two singers apparently met in the 1920s through neighbors in San Antonio and began singing together. Every afternoon they went to the **Plaza de Menudo**, as Ms. Martínez referred to the Plaza de Zacate, located at West Commerce and San Saba Streets. The duo appeared on early Spanish language radio programs in San Antonio and Corpus



*Pedro Rocha (with guitar) and Lupe Martínez*



Christi and they recorded over 200 selections between March 1928 and February 1937. On Pedro Rocha's last sessions, however, his new partner was José Angel Colunga since Lupe Martínez had died in 1936. Pedro Rocha, like most troubadors, tried to keep up with changing musical tastes and he made his last recordings backed by an accordion *conjunto* in the early 1950s for the Río (note ARH CD 376) and Norteño labels. Pedro Rocha, along with Andrés Berlanga, was one of the few commercial recording artists recorded by John and Alan Lomax while documenting American regional traditions for the Library of Congress in 1934 and 36. A short article in San Antonio's newspaper, *The Light* of March 11, 1956, under a photo of Mr. Rocha tuning his guitar, announces: "Anniversary Near For Troubador." The article goes on to say that Mr. Rocha will that week be celebrating his 30th anniversary as a serenader at the Hay Plaza (Plaza de Zacate) and adds that Mr. Rocha as a youngster played catcher for the famous Monterrey Glass Works baseball team in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

The name **Los Madrugadores** denotes "early risers" and they were one of the first groups to make an impact via Spanish lan-

guage radio as well as via recordings in the Los Angeles area during the early thirties. The history of the group begins with the two Sánchez brothers: Jesús (born February 6, 1906, in Guadalupe de los Reyes, Sinaloa) and Víctor (born December 7, 1907, in Magdalena, Sonora). Their father came to Sonora with the opening of the mines in Cananea where the boys spent their early childhood. Eventually greener pastures of El Norte beckoned and the family came to the United States as *renganchados* (known as *braceros* in the 1950s) to work the fields of the companies that brought them over. Jesús was 14, Víctor was 13 and Phoenix, Arizona was the first stop. Jesús had begun playing guitar at age six and was largely self-taught. According to Víctor, Jesús' style was completely his own; he didn't copy anyone but soon after their successful records, many copied him. By 1927 the two brothers came to California and worked in the agriculturally rich Coachella Valley and later in Fresno. Music was a sideline, however and it was the orange groves and the fields of chile, onions, cotton, and melons that fed the brothers and kept them alive. This was the time of Prohibition and there were no cantinas in which musicians could practice

Left to right:  
 Víctor Sánchez,  
 Fernando Linare,  
 & Jesús Sánchez,  
 ca. 1940





their craft. There was the home made variety of booze and parties and fiestas which required music but these brought in very little income. In Los Angeles Spanish radio began in the late 1920s. Initially these programs were heard in the early morning hours because it was cheaper to buy air time and it was the time when farm workers got up to go to work. Up in Fresno the Sánchez brothers did not have a radio but their friends encouraged them to go to Los Angeles and "get on the radio." Víctor and Jesús finally headed for the big city, first to La Casa de Música de Mauricio Calderón, the music store that served as the principal outlet for all things musical to the Spanish-speaking in the area. There they met Pedro J. González who was an announcer in 1930 and together they started a program over KMPC every morning from 5 to 6 except Sundays. They billed themselves as Los Hermanos Sánchez and González. About a month after the program had gotten under way a friend of González, Fernando Linares, also joined the program. He did not play guitar but added an important third voice. In 1931 they all moved over to KELW in Burbank and their program was now two hours, from 4 to 6 every morning

seven days a week. The term "Los Madrugadores" was actually conceived by González just prior to their new program, but it was at KELW that the name became a household word in practically every Spanish-speaking home. After several highly successful years on KELW, González suddenly left and the program folded. In 1933 Los Madrugadores (Los Hermanos Sánchez and Pedro J. González) made their first records. Mr. González was also a political activist and had used his radio program to protest the deportation of hundreds of thousands of Spanish-speaking people. In 1934 Pedro J. González was sentenced from one to 50 years in San Quentin on trumped up charges of rape instigated by people who wanted him out of the way. Los Hermanos Sánchez kept going as Los Madrugadores on their own until around 1937 when on recordings they were replaced by other singers. The name had always included not only the original three but others who appeared on the radio programs. Between 1933 and 1941, when the last incarnation of Los Madrugadores of that era made records, the various combinations waxed over 200 selections. Los Hermanos Sánchez, still billed as Los Madrugadores,

moved back to Fresno and appeared there off and on until 1941 when Jesús drowned in a canal near Fresno and Víctor moved to Culver City to work in a die casting company.

**Los Hermanos Chavarría** consisted of Alfonso (born in January 1901, in Sacramento, Coahuila) vocal and guitar, and Martín (born January 2, 1908, in Parras, Coahuila). The family's real name was Echavarría but throughout their recording career it was spelled Chavarría. The entire Echavarría family came to San Antonio in 1922 earning a living by working in the fields in the surrounding counties. The brothers learned most of their songs from both parents and an uncle and their father played bass with various *orquestas típicas*. Once the brothers started to record, people would approach them and give them poems which they would sometimes make into songs. Their first recordings (including a short version of "Gregorio Cortéz") were made in the summer of 1930 after the Chavarrías had seen an advertisement in *La Prensa*, the only Spanish language newspaper in San Antonio, requesting artists to audition for recordings. They continued to record until April 1938 during which time they waxed over a hundred selections. The

Chavarría brothers frequently sang in the Plaza de Zacate and their career was aided when they joined Mr. Lozano's radio program over KMAC in 1928. They recorded for all four major labels during the 1930s. Alfonso told me that they were initially one of the

Otros Números Sensacionales  
por los

## Hermanos Chavarría

4633X—Te Amo en Secreto.  
Mi Madre Santa.

4555X—Luz Arcos.  
1a. y 2a. partes.

4621X—Veracruz.  
1a. y 2a. partes.

4609X—Almazán.  
1a. y 2a. partes.

Otras canciones con que han cimentado su fama los Hermanos Chavarría.

4198X—Llorar, Llorar.  
Los Barandales del Puente.

4325X—El Corrido de Laredo.  
No me Importa.

Surtimos pedidos por correo a todas partes.

## Escobar Furniture Co.

"La Casa de Confianza".  
509 El Paso St. San Antonio,  
Texas.

Ad in *La Prensa*, 1/3/1932





Los Hermanos Chavarria:  
left – Martín;  
below – Alfonso



very few Mexican artists under exclusive contract including even a royalty provision. Like Pedro Rocha, the Chavarría brothers found the older style of singing with only guitar accompaniment being slowly replaced in the mid-1940s by accordion *conjuntos*. Their last recording as a *dueto* was one single 78 of the *corrido* "Pancho Villa" (note: ARH/FL 7041/4 - The Mexican Revolution) made in the early '50s backed by Fred Zimmerle who had been a long time admirer and fan of the brothers and the rural vocal tradition they represented. Martín Chavarría made a final appearance in 1974 on an album I recorded with Fred Zimmerle and his Trío San Antonio. In the 1970s Arhoolie Records released an album (LP 9037) of the best original recordings by the Chavarría brothers.

**Andrés Berlanga** was born in Northern Mexico on November 30, 1907, and came to the United States three years later when the Mexican Revolution began. His father worked in the fields not only near San Antonio but north as far as Corsicana. Often the children would go along and there young Andrés heard singers with guitars and violins. By the late 1920s he heard his first accordion music which he feels originated in the

Rio Grande Valley. In 1926 Andrés Berlanga married and became a construction worker. He had been singing all along but now he also picked up playing the guitar and later he switched to *bajo sexto* which he says came from Mexico and is more suitable to accompany the accordion. Music store owner, Tomás Acuña paired Andrés Berlanga with Santos Guerra for their first record in March of 1934. By August of that year Berlanga had teamed up with Francisco Montalvo who had been one of the very first troubadours to record in 1928 and they recorded over 80 selections together over the next three years. Tomás Acuña was one of several middle men hired by the recording firms in the mid 1930s to find and rehearse talent. The pay was between \$20 and \$40 per selection and to have a record on the market was considered quite a status symbol and would generally lead to better jobs at hotels and on the radio. At the Plaza the fee per song was usually ten cents during the bad times of the Depression. Sometimes singers would get good tips but you could hire musicians for the going rate of 25 cents per hour at Ayala's Drug Store on Laredo Street which acted as the *cancioneros'* union hall. Berlanga and Montalvo traveled



all over south Texas mostly by hopping freight trains. They usually serenaded in the streets where people preferred *corridos* such as "Los Tequileros" or "Contrabando Del Paso." Upon discharge from the armed services, Berlanga got a civil service job in 1951 at a near by Air Force base from which he retired in the early 1970s. During this period

he became a part time member of Fred Zimmerle's Trío San Antonio (note ARHCD 311). When I met Berlanga, he was working most Sundays with various musicians at an "ice house" on West Commerce and today he lives in retirement at his home not far from there.

(Chris Strachwitz – 1994)



Andrés Berlanga – 1970s

## Corridos y Tragedias de la Frontera:

### The First Historic Recordings of Mexican-American Ballads

by Philip Sonnichsen

"Ballads are sung among people who are interested in hearing a story. It makes no difference if they have heard that story dozens of times before- it always comes back to them, just as fresh and entertaining as the first time." (Brownie McNeil)

**C**orridos, the ballads of Mexicans and Mexican-Americans, are the product of oral tradition, although they may be preserved and passed on via phonograph records, in *cancioneros* (song books) and/or on printed sheets (historically known as broadsides), radio, or TV. They keep alive the memory of important events and heroes, and those verses of lasting appeal are passed on from generation to generation, subject of course to changes and variants that may occur. The number of variants, incidentally, may well attest to the popularity of a given *corrido's* theme or subject.

The term *corrido* comes from the Spanish verb *correr*, meaning "to run" or "to flow," hence a *corrido* is, in effect, a running account of a particular story, that is a narrative ballad usually colored by the amount of information the *corrido* maker has at hand, his political

views, his feelings about circumstances surrounding a given incident, and his emotional attitude. Some emotional involvement is assumed and expected, otherwise the *corrido* maker would never have formulated the verses.

At the time of the conquest of Mexico in 1521, the *romance* was at its height in Spain. Many of these *romances* (and the Andalusian *romances corridos*) were brought over to the New World by the Spanish. Bernal Díaz del Castillo (1492-1581), the principal writer of the conquest of Mexico, tells of the popularity of the *romances* among the soldiers of the army of Cortéz. These *romances* kept alive the spirit of the old country in the hearts of homesick soldiers. Undoubtedly events in a new and strange land suggested new ballads. In time these *romances* became a part of the repertoire of the common people and through



the course of time developed into the *corrido*.

The first true *corridos* probably date to the period of the struggle for independence (c. 1810-20). Nonetheless, we have very few texts that all authorities will agree display the characteristics of the modern *corrido* from before the decade of the 1860s.

The late Vicente T. Mendoza defined the effective life span of the Mexican *corrido* (as an independent form in Mexico) as falling into three distinct stages: a period of ascent from 1875 to 1910 during which time the ballad heroes are Robin Hood-like outlaws in rebellion against Porfirio Díaz; a culminating period from 1910 to 1930; the epic period of the Revolution; and a period of decadence from 1930 to the present.

Mendoza's view may apply to the *corrido* in central Mexico. Along the Border and further north into what is now the American Southwest, the development, impact, and sustaining power of the *corrido* was and is somewhat different. Probably the earliest narrative ballad to be collected in the Southwest is "La batalla de los tulares," collected by the late Aurelio M. Espinosa. Though the work is neither a *romance* nor a *corrido*, Espinosa designates it by the title *romance* and explains that

it dates from a battle in 1824 "when the Indians of Santa Barbara, California, rebelled against the Spanish government struggling with the soldiers of the Presidio."

Arthur L. Campa, the late distinguished New Mexico scholar, unearthed "El condenado a muerte" (To Be Condemned to Death), which he regards to be a true *corrido* (although not grouped in stanzas). It gives the date "Wednesday, the twentieth of July, 1832." The author explains that on this date he will be taken to be executed, although he does not explain the crime and claims to be free from guilt.

From Nuevo León, the earliest work appears to be the "Corrido de Leandro Rivera," dating from 1841 and collected in 1939 near Brownsville, Texas, by John and Ruby Lomax.

Américo Paredes, the noted Texas scholar, speaks of "the *corrido* century," that is, that period from 1836 to the late 1930s as the life span of the *corrido* on the Lower Border. He places the starting point at 1836 as civil war, Indian raids, and the English-speaking invasion all began on the Border in that year.

Paredes feels that the favorite subjects in the ballads of the early part of this "*corrido* century" must have included the Indian raids,

the struggle to establish a Republic of the Rio Grande, and the guerrilla warfare against Zachary Taylor's troops. He also feels that the Indian fighter, Antonio Zapata; Antonio Canales, a Federalist and guerrilla against Taylor; ranchers such as Blas Falcon; and Juan Nepomuceno Seguin, the disillusioned Texas patriot, as among the subjects of ballads. Paredes has talked with informants who, as children, remember hearing ballads about these situations and individuals.

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## GREGORIO CORTÉZ

**Disc I: #1. Parts 1 & 2. Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez-** vocal duet with guitar by Pedro Rocha.  
(SA 283 & 284, Vo 8351) San Antonio, Tx. October 1929.

The most significant Border hero, Gregorio Cortéz, came along forty years after Cortina. The man, and the legend which surrounds him, sustained by a *corrido* and its variants, continues to live among the Spanish-speaking along the lower Texas Border. Américo Paredes wrote of the man, the legend, and the *corrido* in his book *With His Pistol in His Hand*.

They still sing of him—in the *cantinas* and the country stores, in the ranches when men gather at night to talk in the cool dark, sitting in a circle smoking and listening to the old songs and the tales of other days. Then the

Juan Nepomuceno Cortina was apparently the earliest Border *corrido* hero that we know of. In 1859 he shot the Brownsville, Texas, city marshal who had been mistreating a servant of Cortina's mother. Cortina and his followers occupied Brownsville briefly before being forced out. He fled across the Mexican Border establishing a pattern that would be followed by countless other *corrido* heroes for decades to come.

*guitarreros* sing of the Border raids and the skirmishes, of the men who lived by the phrase, "I will break before I bend."

They sing with deadly-serious faces, throwing out the words of the song like a challenge, tearing savagely with their stiff, calloused fingers at the strings of the guitars.

And that is how, in the dark quiet of the ranches, in the lighted noise of the saloons, they sing of Gregorio Cortéz.

Gregorio Cortéz was born on a ranch between Matamoros and Reynosa on the Mexican side of the Border, on June 22, 1875,



according to the best available information, the son of Román Cortéz Gara and Rosalia Lira Cortinas. In 1887 the family moved to Manor, Texas, and two years later Gregorio and his older brother Romaldo began working as farm hands as well as *vaqueros* for farmers and ranchers in Karnes, Gonzáles, and adjacent counties.

He married Leonor Díaz at an early age, their first child, Mariana, coming along in 1891 when Gregorio was only sixteen. After years of wandering, Romaldo and Gregorio finally decided to settle down in Karnes County. It was 1900; Gregorio was twenty-five.

The following year, June 12, 1901, Sheriff T. T. (Brack) Morris came out to the Cortéz place seeking a horse thief described only as "... a medium-sized Mexican with a big red broad-brimmed Mexican hat." Paredes continues the narrative as follows:

*"As an interpreter, Morris had one of his deputies, Boone Choate, who was supposed to be an expert on the Mexican language. Choate appears to have been one of those men who build up a reputation for knowing the Mexicans better than they know themselves on a few bits of broken Spanish and a lot of 'experience.' A number of*

*people might not have died had Choate either known more Spanish or known enough to know what he did not know."*

Through Boone Choate, Sheriff Morris questioned several Mexicans finally arriving at a man by the name of Andres Villarreal, who recently had traded a horse for a mare from Gregorio Cortéz. Later investigations proved that Cortéz had legally acquired the mare.

Accompanied by Boone Choate and John Trimmell as deputies, Morris drove out to discuss the mare with the Cortéz brothers. Romaldo spoke with the three visitors first, later calling Gregorio over. Choate asked Gregorio if he had traded a horse to Villarreal and Gregorio replied "no" (he had traded a mare). When Gregorio said "no," Sheriff Morris approached and told Choate to inform Romaldo and Gregorio that he was going to arrest them.

Morris apparently misunderstood Gregorio's reply, for in the next few seconds Morris shot Romaldo, shot at Gregorio and missed, and was, in turn, shot and mortally wounded by Gregorio. Boone Choate wasted no time running into the chaparral and joining up with deputy Trimmell where together they continued a hasty retreat back to the

town of Kenedy.

Gregorio knew the posse would be along shortly. He and a feverish Romaldo waited in the brush until dark, finally making their way into Kenedy, where Gregorio left his brother with the Cortéz family on the outskirts of town.

The *San Antonio Express* reported "The trail of the Mexican leads toward the Rio Grande," as the posse headed in that direction. In reality, Cortéz began his flight by walking north (some eighty miles Paredes estimates) in about forty straight hours. Near Ottine he hid out with another friend, Martín Robledo. Cortéz probably felt he was pretty safe and would have been except for Robert M. Glover, sheriff of González County and a good friend of Morris. Glover "pressured" a Mexican woman into revealing Gregorio's destination, and shortly thereafter a posse surrounded the Robledo house. A gunfight ensued in which Henry Schnabel, a member of the posse, was killed by a drunken deputy; Cortéz escaped.

This time he headed south toward the Rio Grande. Still on foot, his first stop was at the home of Ceferino Flores who gave Gregorio a pistol and a mare. Pursued by bloodhounds leading a posse, the chase led across the

Guadalupe River to the San Antonio River, a distance of some fifty miles as the crow flies, but Gregorio and the mare covered many times that distance. After two days and one night of steady riding, the durable little mare fell over and died. After dark Cortéz located another mare and began the last lap of his ride. The little brown mare earned herself quite a reputation. For three days (pursuers estimated she covered some three hundred miles) she outran posse after posse. Hundreds of men were out looking for Cortéz. Special trains moved up and down the tracks bearing men, dogs, and fresh horses. "The only hope," observed the *San Antonio Express*, "seems to be to fill up the whole country with men and search every nook and corner and guard every avenue of escape..."

Finally, the little brown mare gave out. In broad daylight Cortéz walked into the town of Cotulla and from there followed the railroad tracks to the outskirts of Twohig, and where, by a water tank, an exhausted Gregorio Cortéz lay down to sleep all night, all day, and all the next night as well.

Around noon on June 22, 1902, his twenty-sixth birthday, Cortéz walked into the sheep camp of Abrán de la Gárza. He was spotted by



a man named Jesús González, known as "El Teco." No doubt inspired by the one thousand dollars in reward money contributed by the governor, González led Captain J. H. Rogers of the Texas Rangers and K. H. Merrem, a posseman, to the sheep camp and shortly thereafter Gregorio Cortéz, caught completely off guard, was arrested.

He was jailed in San Antonio. A long legal fight began. Funds were collected by the Miguel Hidalgo Workers' Society of San Antonio and other workers' organizations through special benefit performances, and through the sale of a broadside in Mexico City. The fund raising campaigns united Mexicans, rich and poor, throughout South Texas. Even a number of Anglo-Americans came to admire the courage, skill, and endurance of Gregorio Cortéz adding their contributions to his defense.

His first trial, for the murder of Henry Schnabel, posseman at the Robledo house confrontation, began July 24, 1901. The quick guilty verdict that was expected did not materialize because one man, juror A. L. Sanders, believed Cortéz innocent. (Schnabel was actually killed accidentally by another member of the posse.) Family illness forced Sanders to

agree to a compromise; fifty years on a charge of second-degree murder. The charge satisfied no one, especially defendant Cortéz. Juror Sander was not satisfied either. He told his story to the defense lawyers who promptly filed a motion for a new trial. The judge denied the motion.

The next trial was in Pleasanton, Cortéz being sentenced to two years for horse theft, a conviction later reversed. At Goliad, Cortéz was tried for the Morris murder, but the trial resulted in a hung jury. The next attempt to try the case was in Wharton County, but the district judge dismissed the case for want of jurisdiction. Finally, on April 25-30, the case was tried at Corpus Christi. The jury of Anglo-American farmers found Cortéz not guilty of murder in the death of Sheriff Morris, agreeing that Morris had attempted an unauthorized arrest and that Gregorio had shot the sheriff in self-defense and in defense of his brother. The verdict was a victory, not only for Cortéz, but for all Mexicans in Texas. Meanwhile Cortéz had been found guilty of the murder of Sheriff Robert M. Glover of González County. The trial was conducted at Columbus and resulted in a life sentence for Cortéz. He entered the Huntsville Peniten-



*Gregorio Cortéz, seated center, with his guard*



tiary on January 1, 1905.

Eight years later, Cortéz was given a conditional pardon by Governor O. B. Colquitt. His release was met with mixed emotions. Two months later he was in Nuevo Laredo apparently to establish residence, but the Mexican Revolution was gripping the north. Cortéz joined the Huerta forces, possibly out

### GREGORIO CORTÉZ – Part I:

En el condado del Carmen  
miren lo que ha sucedido,  
Murió el *sherife* mayor  
quedando Román herido.

Otro día por la mañana  
cuando la gente llegó,  
Unos a los otros dicen  
no saben quien lo mató.

Se anduvieron informando  
como tres horas después,  
Supieron que el malhechor  
era Gregorio Cortéz.

Insortaron a Cortéz  
por toditito el estado  
Vivo o muerto que se aprehenda  
porque a varios ha matado.

of gratitude for those he saw as his benefactors. In the course of things he was wounded and subsequently returned to Manor, Texas, to convalesce. After his recovery he left for Anson, Texas, where he died at the home of a friend. The year was 1916; Cortéz was forty one. He is buried in a small cemetery eight miles outside of Anson.

In the country of the Carmen  
look what has happened  
The sheriff died leaving  
Román wounded.

The following morning  
when the people arrived  
Some said to the others  
they don't know who killed him.

They were investigating  
and about three hours later  
They found out that the wrongdoer  
was Gregorio Cortéz.

Cortéz was wanted  
throughout the state  
Alive or dead may he be apprehended  
for he has killed several.

Decía Gregorio Cortéz  
con su pistola en la mano,  
—No siento haberlo matado  
al que siento es a mi hermano.—

Decía Gregorio Cortéz  
con su alma muy encendida,  
—No siento haberlo matado  
la defensa es permitida.—

Venían los americanos  
que por el viento volaban,  
porque se iban a ganar  
tres mil pesos que les daban.

Siguió con rumbo a Gonzáles,  
varios *sherifes* lo vieron,  
no lo quisieron seguir  
porque le tuvieron miedo.

Venían los perros *jaunes*  
venían sobre la huella  
Pero alcanzar a Cortéz  
era alcanzar a una estrella.

Decía Gregorio Cortéz  
—Pa' qué se valen de planes,  
si no pueden agarrarme  
ni con esos perros *jaunes*.—

Said Gregorio Cortéz  
with his pistol in his hand,  
"I'm not sorry for having killed him,  
It's for my brother that I feel sorry."

Said Gregorio Cortéz  
with his soul aflame  
"I'm not sorry for having killed him ,  
self defense is permitted."

The Americans came  
they flew like the wind,  
Because they were going to win  
the three thousand pesos reward.

They continued toward Gonzáles  
several sheriffs saw him  
They did not want to continue  
because they were afraid of him.

Came the hound dogs  
they came on his trail  
But to reach Cortéz  
was to reach a star.

Gregorio Cortéz said  
"What's the use of plans  
If you can't catch me  
Even with those hound dogs."



**GREGORIO CORTÉZ - Part II:**

Decían los americanos  
—Si lo vemos que le haremos  
si le entramos por derecho  
muy poquitos volveremos.—

En el redondel del rancho  
lo alcanzaron a rodear,  
Poquitos más de trescientos  
y allí les brincó el corral.

Allá por el Encinal  
a según por lo que dicen  
Se agarraron a balazos  
y les mató otro *sherife*.

Decía Gregorio Cortéz  
con su pistola en la mano,  
—No corran rinches cobardes  
con un solo mexicano.—

Giró con rumbo a Laredo  
sin ninguna timidez,  
—¡Siganme rinches cobardes,  
yo soy Gregorio Cortéz!—

Gregorio le dice a Juan  
en el rancho del Ciprés,  
—Pláticame qué hay de nuevo,  
yo soy Gregorio Cortéz.—

The Americans said,  
"If we see him what shall we do to him;  
If we face him head on  
very few will return."

In the ranch corral  
they managed to surround him.  
A little more than 300 men  
and there he gave them the slip.

There around Encinal  
from all that they say  
They had a shoot-out  
and he killed another sheriff.

Gregorio Cortéz said,  
with his pistol in his hand,  
"Don't run, you cowardly Rangers  
from one lone Mexican."

He turned toward Laredo  
without a single fear,  
"Follow me, you cowardly Rangers,  
I am Gregorio Cortéz."

Gregorio says to Juan  
at the ranch of the Cypress,  
"Tell me what's new  
I am Gregorio Cortéz."

Gregorio le dice a Juan,  
—Muy pronto lo vas a ver,  
anda hablale a los *sherifes*  
que me vengan a aprehender.—

Cuando llegan los *sherifes*  
Gregorio se presentó,  
—Por la buena si me llevan  
porque de otro modo no.—

Ya agarraron a Cortéz  
ya terminó la cuestión,  
la pobre de su familia  
la lleva en el corazón.

Ya con esto me despido  
con la sombra de un Ciprés,  
aquí se acaba cantando  
la tragedia de Cortéz.

Gregorio says to Juan,  
"Very soon you will see,  
go and talk to the sheriffs  
that they should come and arrest me."

When the sheriffs arrive  
Gregorio presented himself,  
"You'll take me if I wish it,  
because there is no other way."

Now they caught Cortéz,  
now the case is closed;  
His poor family  
he carries in his heart.

Now with this I take my leave  
in the shade of a cypress,  
Here we finish singing  
the tragedy of Cortéz.

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**JOAQUÍN MURRIETA**

**Disc I: #2. Parts 1 & 2. Los Madrugadores:** Los Hermanos Sanchez & Linares; vocal duet with 2 guitars. (DLA 36 & 37, De 10036) Los Angeles, Ca. September 11, 1934.

Separating the man from the legend is frequently a major concern of the folklorist. In writing his book on Cortéz, Américo Paredes was able to refer to newspaper articles, eye-witness accounts, and interviews with Gregorio's son, Valeriano Cortéz. With our next hero, the situation is much more com-

plex. Indeed there is question, in the minds of some, if the man ever existed at all. Joaquín Murrieta is the complete legend. He has been dead over one hundred years, yet older Mexican-Americans with whom I have spoken continue to believe in the man and what he continues to represent to his people. In 1927,



at the University of California, Berkeley, Richard G. Mitchell wrote his master's thesis on "Joaquín Murrieta: A Study of Social Conditions in Early California." That thesis is reprinted, in part, in *Furia y Muerte; Los Bandidos Chicanos*. In their introduction to Mitchell's study, editors Pedro Castillo and Albert Camarillo observed:

*"Joaquín Murrieta is the Chicano social bandit who has enjoyed the greatest notoriety...The legend of Joaquín Murrieta has endured as story, drama and corrido for over a hundred years. But Murrieta and the social environment alone did not create the legend. A primary factor in the evolution of his story was supplied by the Chicano people. The Mexican population believed that Joaquín was their champion and avenger, and out of this belief legends were created about him. His life and legend endures among the Chicano people who think of him as a symbol of power and vengeance—a primary characteristic of a social bandit."*

The following is largely based on Mitchell's account:

Joaquín Murrieta was born in the Mexican state of Sonora. In his youth he was described as being of peaceful disposition, refined appearance, and endowed with the most gracious manners. Around 1850, at the age of

eighteen, Murrieta left home with a young lady by the name of Rosita Félix, to make his stake by gold mining in California. He built a comfortable home for himself and Rosita in the Stanislaus district where he was placer mining when a group of men informed him he had to move on. In April of 1850, he tried farming in Calaveras County only to be informed that no Mexicans could own land in that area. That same month, Murrieta arrived in Murphy's Diggings, but the placers here proved to be of little value, and Joaquín turned to dealing monte. Mitchell notes that "According to one version, the hate engendered by insults fanned into a frenzy, a desire for revenge, and led him to adopt a career of brigandage and murder."

About this time an American was found dead near the town of Murphy's Diggings, cut to pieces with a knife. The victim was later recognized as being a member of a gang that had once insulted Joaquín. Fear ran high and other corpses were found. By 1851 it was evident that the chief of a band of highwaymen was Joaquín Murrieta. His two principal lieutenants were sixteen-year-old Reyes Félix, Rosita's brother and Joaquín Valenzuela known as "Three-Fingered-Jack." There was

also a man by the name of Claudio.

In 1852, a horse was stolen from Judge Carter of Amador County. The trail led to a public house kept by a Mr. Clark. Carter's horse was tied at the door. Informed by Carter that the horse had been stolen, Clark offered to arrest the thief. He walked into the dining room and placed his hand on Joaquín's shoulder. Murrieta turned, drew his gun, and shot Clark dead.

There was another side to Murrieta, however, as attested by the following incident. Jack Sutherland who lived on Dry Creek near Plymouth was absent from his ranch leaving his son in charge. Murrieta rode up. To save his life and money, young Sutherland pretended not to know the notorious bandit and invited him to stay the night. Mitchell relates the story this way:

*"Joaquín called to his men in Spanish. He told them they had found a friend and to unsaddle while Sutherland prepared the supper. Joaquín asked him if he was not afraid to keep so much money in the house and replied that Murrieta was a gentleman and would not harm his friends. He told the bandit that his father at one time was acquainted with Murrieta and referred to some business transactions in which the elder Sutherland had ben-*

*efited Joaquín. The explanation was sufficient to prevent any outrage that might have occurred. The next morning Joaquín told Sutherland that if anyone should inquire concerning a party answering his description it would be well for him to remember nothing. He then paid his bill and departed."*

The next incident in Mitchell's narrative occurs in the summer of 1851. Now living on the outskirts of San José, Murrieta became involved in a row at a fandango. Arrested for disturbing the peace, the judge fined Murrieta twelve dollars. Joaquín said he did not have that much money on him but if the officer would go with him to this house he could get it there. The officer consented. The story was told that as the pair approached a thicket at the side of the road, Murrieta drew a knife and stabbed the officer in the heart. Apparently the story was spread by confederates of Joaquín in hopes of frightening the inhabitants of the city.

From San José, Murrieta and Rosita moved to the Sonorian Camp, a Mexican settlement near Marysville. A gang of some twenty men under Three-Fingered-Jack began working in the area. Various murders were attributed to them.



From Marysville the bandits rode into the mountains near Mount Shasta. With the help of a number of Indians, they spent the winter stealing horses. The settlers rose to action, located the thieves, and managed to hem them in between some perpendicular cliffs and a deep, swiftly flowing stream. The settlers opened fire upon the thieves who leapt into the water. Although a few succeeded in crossing the river, the majority were killed by the pursuers.

Before the spring of 1852 the remaining bandits had driven stolen stock into Sonora only to return to an area known as Arroyo Cantoova, a large pasture of some eight thousand acres which served as home to a large number of wild horses. Catching these horses now occupied the Murrieta gang. The arroyo also offered excellent protection. Joaquín's group now numbered about seventy men. He divided the group into three separate companies. The groups were sent to various localities to devote themselves to horse and mule stealing. According to Mitchell, Joaquín headed toward San Gabriel accompanied by Reyes Feliz, Pedro González, a man named Juan, and three women. While the bandits were in the vicinity of San Gabriel, General

Bean, a wealthy citizen of Los Angeles was shot and killed. Murrieta was suspected. A few days later Reyes Feliz was arrested on a charge of being a party to the assassination of the general. *The Daily Alta California* (Dec. 15, 1852) reported:

*"Feliz denied the charge, but admitted that he was a robber and a murderer. The next day he was taken to Prospect Hill and executed. Just before he was launched into eternity he addressed the crowd. He stated that his punishment was just and advised them to never put faith in a woman."*

General Josh Bean, older brother of Roy Bean (who later set himself up as the infamous judge of Langtry, Texas) had apparently done rather well for himself in California. C. L. Sonnichsen tells the story in *Roy Bean, Law West of the Pecos*:

*"The assassination of General Bean is a famous episode in early California history and has been carefully examined in several books, not so much because of the importance of the General himself as because of his opposition. The murder was probably planned by the great Joaquín Murrieta. There was a woman in it, of course. Some say she was Joaquín's own querida. Others...believe that she belonged to Joaquín's right-hand man, Felipe Read. [Read is not men-*

*tioned in the Mitchell account]...It happened about eleven o'clock of a Sunday evening. The day had been a lively one—Sundays always were at the [Bean] headquarters—and the final treat was a performance of the Maromas, a sort of Mexican circus. About eleven o'clock the General applauded the last performer, got his horse, and started home. As he approached the Mission two shots were fired at him from the darkness, one taking him in the breast and passing entirely through his body.*

*"...A poor Mexican cobbler, Cipriano Sandoval was accused of the killing, and it was made to appear that he was taking revenge for Bean's attentions to an Indian girl who had become interesting to both of them. With two others Cipriano was railroaded to the gallows, but the wise ones felt then, and still feel, that Murrieta was behind it all. Anyway, it was the beginning of the end for Murrieta. Poses were organized at once to run his band to earth...Ranger Harry Love...brought back Joaquín's head (or what some people thought was Joaquín's head) - the head which was preserved in alcohol in a San Francisco saloon until 1906 when fire and earthquake destroyed it along with other precious relics."*

There are many versions of the "Corrido of Joaquín Murrieta," each contributing to the

legend. The version here is no exception. It was recorded in 1934 by los Hermanos Sanchez and Linares known and remembered as the original "Los Madrugadores." In a 1975 interview, Victor Sánchez had this to say:

*"The corrido was written before I was born; it is from the last century. I heard it as a child in Mexico, sung during the time of the Revolution, and later in Arizona.*

*"We had many requests for this corrido, at parties, and then after we began to sing it on the radio, people would send us cards to the station and ask that we record it so they could have the disc. Felipe Valdéz Leal added three or four verses to make it fit both sides of the record—I don't remember which ones but possibly the one about coming from Hermosillo.*

*"This story was famous because to the people of Sonora, he [Joaquín Murrieta] was like Robin Hood of England. The people of California were more concerned with what happened to him. They killed his brother; they tied up and violated his wife. He was a worker panning gold—he and his brother later becoming a bandit. He robbed to give to the poor and the Indians. The pueblo thought of him as a Robin Hood."*



**JOAQUÍN MURRIETA – Part I:**

Yo no soy americano  
pero comprendo el inglés.  
Yo lo aprendí con mi hermano  
al derecho y al revés.  
A cualquier americano  
lo hago temblar a mis pies.

Cuando apenas era un niño  
huérfano a mí me dejaron.  
Nadie me hizo ni un cariño,  
a mi hermano lo mataron,  
Y a mi esposa Carmelita,  
cobardes la asesinaron.

Yo me vine de Hermosillo  
en busca de oro y riqueza.  
Al indio pobre y sencillo  
lo defendí con fiereza  
y a buen precio los *sherifés*  
pagaban por mi cabeza.

A los ricos avarientos,  
yo les quité su dinero.  
Con los humildes y pobres  
yo me quité mi sombrero.  
Ay, qué leyes tan injustas  
fue llamarme bandolero.

A Murrieta no le gusta  
lo que hace no es desmentir.

I am not an American  
but I understand English.  
I learned it with my brother  
forwards and backwards  
And any American  
I make tremble at my feet.

When I was barely a child  
I was left an orphan.  
No one gave me any love,  
they killed my brother,  
And my wife Carmelita,  
the cowards assassinated her.

I came from Hermosillo  
in search of gold and riches.  
The Indian poor and simple  
I defended with fierceness  
And a good price the sheriffs  
would pay for my head.

From the greedy rich,  
I took away their money.  
With the humble and poor  
I took off my hat.  
Oh, what laws so unjust  
to call me a highwayman.

Murrieta does not like  
to be falsely accused.

Vengo a vengar a mi esposa,  
y lo vuelvo a repetir,  
Carmelita tan hermosa,  
como la hicieron sufrir.

Por cantinas me metí,  
castigando americanos.  
—Tú serás el capitán  
que mataste a mi hermano.  
Lo *agarrastes* indefenso,  
orgulloso americano.—

**JOAQUÍN MURRIETA – Part II:**

Mi carrera comenzó  
por una escena terrible.  
Cuando llegué a setecientos  
ya mi nombre era temible.  
Cuando llegué a mil doscientos  
ya mi nombre era terrible.

Yo soy aquel que domino  
hasta leones africanos.  
Por eso salgo al camino  
a matar americanos.  
Ya no es otro mi destino  
¡pon cuidado, parroquianos!

Las pistolas y las dagas  
son juguetes para mí.  
Balazos y puñaladas,  
carcajadas para mí.

I come to avenge my wife,  
and again I repeat it,  
Carmelita so lovely  
how they made her suffer.

Through bars I went  
punishing Americans.  
“You must be the captain  
who killed my brother  
You grabbed him defenseless  
you stuck up American.”

My career began  
because of a terrible scene.  
When I got to seven hundred (killed)  
then my name was feared.  
When I got to twelve hundred  
Then my name was (really) feared.

I am the one who dominates  
even African lions.  
That’s why I go out on the road  
to kill Americans.  
Now my destiny is no other,  
watch out, you people!

Pistols and daggers  
are playthings for me.  
Bullets and stabbings  
big laughs for me.



Ahora con medios cortadas  
ya se asustan por aquí.

No soy chileno ni extraño  
en este suelo que piso.  
De México es California,  
porque Dios así lo quizo,  
Y en mi sarape cosida  
traigo mi fe de bautismo.

Que bonito es California  
con sus calles alineadas,  
donde paseaba Murrieta  
con su tropa bien formada,  
con su pistola repleta, y su montura plateada.

Me he paseado en California  
por el año del cincuenta,  
Con mi montura plateada,  
y mi pistola repleta,  
Yo soy ese mexicano  
de nombre Joaquín Murrieta.

### EL DEPORTADO (The Deportee)

**Disc I: #3. Parts 1 & 2. Los Hermanos Bañuelos:** David N. and Luis M. Bañuelos -  
vocal duet with guitars. (Vo 8287) Los Angeles, Ca. 1929.

Ballads are frequently the products of an individual's experiences and aspirations. And certainly no experience can be more frightening than tearing up one's roots to make a new

With their means cut off  
they're afraid around here.

I'm neither a Chilean nor a stranger  
on this soil which I tread.  
California is part of Mexico  
because God wanted it that way,  
And in my stitched serape,  
I carry my baptismal certificate.

How pretty is California  
with her well-laid-out streets;  
where Murrieta passed by with his troops,  
with his loaded pistol,  
and his silver-plated saddle.

I've had a good time in California  
through the year of '50 [1850]  
With my silver-plated saddle  
and my pistol loaded  
I am that Mexican  
by the name of Joaquín Murrieta.

life in a new land. America's experience is the migrant experience and each immigrating group has gone through its own set of experiences. Clearly no group has felt rejection more

than have our neighbors to the south. In rejecting the Mexican, all too frequently the Anglo has never stopped to consider the feelings and emotions of the man (or woman) who was the object of his derision. Writers such as Paul S. Taylor ("Songs of the Mexican Migration" in *Puro Mexicano*) have recognized the importance of this type of ballad as providing valuable documentation into the problems of migration. This widely sung *corrido* is slightly unusual in form in that the first and third lines are repeated twice, a technique that serves to add certain emphasis. There are also a number of elements that are worth observing, among them the reference to the train in the second verse with its "lonesome whistle," and the following two verses which speak of leaving one's mother. As in the US, a marvelous body of folklore and folksong surround the "iron horse" and its contribution to the building of the United States as well as Mexico. And significantly, one never seems to have one's father at the station, it is invariably one's girl friend—or one's mother. The sixth verse (if part of the original *corrido*) as well as the seventh and eighth, are significant as these verses permit us to trace the route of travel and therefore

suggest that the individual either came from southern Jalisco or Colima. Part one concludes with a reference to the confusion of Mexican customs inspection.

And where the first part of the *corrido* might well be called "the migration," the second can only be called "the indignation." To avoid the problems of (and not infrequently the indignation and ultimate rejection by) immigration and public health officials as expressed in the second part of the *corrido*, many Mexicans have been forced to choose "the illegal route" into this country. Our subject, despite his suffering, was more fortunate than many of his countrymen and women although he too is finally deported. He protests that "we are not bandits, we came to work." At least the Mexican Revolution is now over and he can return to his country and again find his place in his beautiful nation.

"El Deportado" is sung here by Los Hermanos Bañuelos. They are one of the early groups to record. To this listener, their approach is more melodic—there is more of a trained quality in their voices in this version of this *corrido*—a trained voice quality somehow reminiscent of Vernon Dahlhart or Carson Robison in early American country music.



**EL DEPORTADO - Part I:**

Voy a contarles señores, (2X)  
todo lo que yo sufrí,  
Desde que dejé mi patria, (2X)  
por venir a este país.

Serían las diez de la noche, (2X)  
comenzó un tren a silbar.  
Oí que dijo mi madre,  
—Ahí viene ese tren ingrato  
que a mi hijo se va a llevar.—

—Adiós mi madre querida, (2X)  
échame su bendición.  
Yo me voy al extranjero, (2X)  
donde no hay revolución.—

Corre, corre maquinita, (2X)  
vámonos de la estación.  
No *quero* ver a mi madre  
llorar por su hijo querido,  
por su hijo del corazón.

Al fin sonó la campana, (2X)  
dos silbidos pegó el tren.  
—No lloren mis compañeros, (2X)  
que me hacen llorar también.—

Pasamos pronto Jalisco, (2X)  
ay qué *juerte* corría el tren.  
La Piedad, luego Irapuato,

I'm going to tell you, gentlemen, (2X)  
all about my sufferings.  
Since I left my country, (2X)  
to come to this nation.

It must have been about ten at night, (2X)  
the train began to whistle.  
I heard my mother say,  
"There comes that ungrateful train  
that is going to take my son."

Good-bye my beloved mother, (2X)  
give me your blessings.  
I am going abroad, (2X)  
where there is no revolution."

Run, run little train, (2X)  
let's leave the station.  
I don't want to see my mother  
cry for her beloved son,  
for the son of her heart.

Finally the bell rang, (2X)  
the train whistled twice.  
"Don't cry my friends, (2X)  
for you'll make me cry as well."

Right away we passed Jalisco, (2X)  
my, how fast the train ran.  
La Piedad, then Irapuato,

Silado luego La Chona,  
y Aguascalientes también.

Al recordar estas horas, (2X)  
me palpita el corazón.  
Cuando devisé a lo lejos, (2X)  
a ese mentado Torreón.

Cuando Chihuahua pasamos, (2X)  
se notó gran confusión,  
Los empleados de la aduana, (2X)  
que pasaban revisión.

**EL DEPORTADO - Part II:**

Llegamos por fin a Juárez,  
llegamos por fin a Juárez,  
y allí fue mi apuración.  
—¿Que 'ónde vas que de 'ónde vienes?  
¿Que cuánto dinero tienes  
para entrar a esta nación?—

—Señores traigo dinero, (2X)  
para poder emigrar.—  
—Tu dinero nada vale, tu dinero nada vale,  
te tenemos que bañar.— (2X)

Ay, mis paisanos queridos, (2X)  
yo les platico nomás.  
Que me estaban dando ganas, (2X)  
de volverme para atrás.

Silado, then La Chona,  
and Aguascalientes as well.

When I remember these hours, (2X)  
my heart beats.  
When I saw from afar, (2X)  
that infamous city of Torreón.

When we passed Chihuahua, (2X)  
we noticed great confusion.  
The employees from the customhouse, (2X)  
who were checking things out.

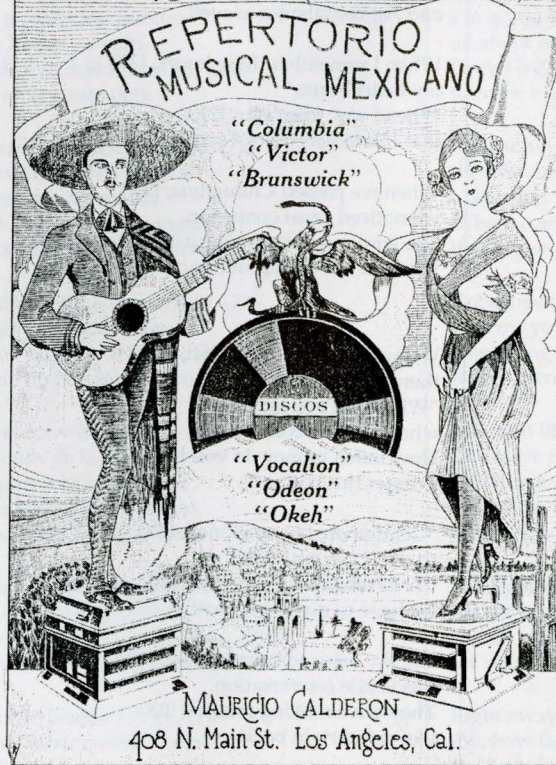
We arrived at Juarez at last, (2X)  
there I ran into trouble.  
"Where are you going,  
where do you come from?  
How much money do you have  
to enter this nation?"

"Gentlemen, I have money, (2X)  
so that I can emigrate."  
"Your money isn't worth anything, (2X)  
we have to give you a bath."

Oh, my beloved countrymen, (2X)  
this is idle conversation.  
They were making me feel, (2X)  
like going right back.



DISCOS a 75 Centavos (Moneda Americana)



Left: Cover page of 130-page catalog printed by Mauricio Calderón's music shop (located at 408 N. Main Street, Los Angeles) ca. late 1928. Most of the catalog listed all available Mexican records on all major labels by label and alphabetically by song title. Catalog also included a number of song texts (as seen at right) as well as about a dozen pages of instruments and guitar chord diagrams. (Catalog courtesy George Roblin)

# REPERTORIO MUSICAL MEXICANO

M. CALDERON, Prop.

::

408 N. MAIN ST.

::

LOS ANGELES, Calif.

DISCOS COLUMBIA

Jesús Cadenas. Corrido. Cancioneros Acosta.—Morena. Canción .... 3085-X

## JESUS CADENAS

Andaba Jesús Cadenas  
por las orillas de Guato  
diciéndole a sus amigos  
a esa güera yo la mato.

Decía Jesús Cadenas  
abrochándose una espuela,  
cuando yo llegue a ese baile  
he de bailar con Chabela.

Llegó Jesús a la puerta  
con ganas de echar balazos,  
sale Chabela y le dice:  
venga mi prieto a mis brazos.

Contesta Jesús Cadenas  
quitate de aquí Chabela,  
estás tratando con hombres  
no con muchachos de escuela.

Les dijo Jesús Cadenas  
en esta prenda yo mando,  
y si alguno no le gusta  
aquí lo estoy esperando.

Decía la comadre Antonia  
Isabel no andes bailando,  
mira que hay anda Cadenas  
y no mas te anda tanteando.

Chabela le contestó  
con una fuerte risada,  
no tenga miedo Comadre  
son bueyes de mi manada.

Se metió Jesús Cadenas  
y gritó "Manos arriba"  
luego sacó su pistola  
para quitarle la vida.

Decía la comadre Antonia:  
Cadenas pasa p' dentro,  
a tomarte una cervza,  
que se te borre ese intento.

No quiso condescender,  
pues por ninguna razón,  
cinco balazos le dió  
al lado del corazón.

Decía Chabela al morir;  
aconsejo a mis amigas  
no comprometan los hombres  
por que les cuesta la vida.

Salió su Papá de adentro  
como queriendo llorar,  
Isabel que te ha pasado,  
parece que oigo quejar.

No llores Padre de mi alma  
que me atormenta tu voz,  
ruega por tu hija querida  
que sea feliz ante Dios.

Ya con esta me despidió  
porque estoy en tierra ajena  
aquí se acaban los versos  
de ese Jesús Cadenas.

Jornalero, El. Rosales y Robinson.—El Pavo Real. Canción ..... 447-C  
Josefina. Vals. Banda.—Flores de Tentación ..... 4039-C  
Josefina. Fox. Orquesta.—Gloria Nacional ..... 4098-C  
Joaquinita en Chihuahua. Trío Nava.—Jesusita en Chihuahua ..... 4053-C



Crucé por fin la frontera, (2X)  
y en un renganche salí.  
Ay, mis queridos paisanos, (2X)  
fue mucho lo que sufrí.

Los güeros son muy maloras, (2X)  
se valen de la ocasión.  
Y a todos los mexicanos, (2X)  
nos tratan sin compasión.

Hoy traen la gran polvadera, (2X)  
y sin consideración.  
Mujeres, niños y ancianos  
los llevan a la frontera.  
Nos echan de esta nación.

Adiós paisanos queridos, (2X)  
ya nos van a deportar.  
Pero no somos bandidos, (2X)  
venimos a camellar.

Los espero allá en mi tierra, (2X)  
ya no hay más revolución.  
Vámonos cuates queridos,  
seremos bien recibidos  
de nuestra bella nación.

At last I crossed the Border, (2X)  
and left in a group.  
Oh my beloved countrymen, (2X)  
I suffered a lot.

The light skinned men are very wicked, (2X)  
they take advantage of the occasion.  
And all the Mexicans, (2X)  
are treated without compassion.

There comes a large cloud of dust, (2X)  
with no consideration.  
Women, children and old ones  
are being driven to the Border.  
We are being kicked out of this country.

Good-bye beloved countrymen, (2X)  
we are being deported.  
But we are not bandits, (2X)  
we came to work.

I will wait for you in my homeland, (2X)  
there is no more revolution.  
Let's leave my dear friends,  
we will be welcomed  
by our beautiful nation.

## LA ELENA (L. Hernández & L. Sifuentes)

**Disc I: #4.** Parts 1 & 2. **Luis Hernández & Leonardo Sifuentes** - vocal duet with guitars.  
(EP 8066 & 87, Br 41386) El Paso, Tx. September 9, 1931.

"La Elena" – also known as "La desdichada Elena," or the unfortunate Elena – deals with adultery. The text develops from a *romance* known as "La amiga de Bernal francés;" the tune from other *corridos*, "Arnulfo" being the most probable source. The indiscretion described in this *corrido* has always been far

### LA ELENA – Part I:

Estas son las mañanitas,  
que yo les voy a cantar,  
que dan razón de mi Elena  
que la vengo a saludar.

—Abreme la puerta, Elena,  
sin ninguna desconfianza,  
yo soy Fernando el francés  
que vengo desde la Francia.—

—¿Quién es ese caballero  
que mi puerta manda abrir?  
Mis puertas se hallan cerradas,  
¡muchacha encienda el candil!—

Al abrir la media puerta,  
se les apagó el candil,

more serious when the guilty party is a woman and for Elena to meet her demise at the barrel of a *pistola* is not only acceptable but traditionally accepted. With a man, on the other hand, the situation is entirely different. When the culprit is of the male gender, the songs are generally humorous in nature.

These are the verses  
that I am going to sing,  
they are about my Elena  
who I am going to see.

"Open the door for me, Elena,  
without any concern,  
I am don Fernando, the Frenchman,  
who has just come from France.

"Who is this gentleman  
who bids me open my door?  
My doors are closed so  
light up a candle, young lady."

In opening the door  
the candle went out,



se tomaron de la mano,  
se fueron para el jardín.

En una cama de flores  
se acostaron a dormir,  
como a las once de la noche,  
Elena empezó a decir:

—¿Qué tienes Fernando mío,  
que no te acercas aquí,  
Tendrás amores en Francia  
a que los quieres más que a mí?—

—No tengo amores en Francia,  
ni los quiero más que a ti  
lo que siento es tu marido  
que vaya a andar por aquí.—

—No temas a mi marido,  
que lejos tierras fue a andar,—  
se tomaron de la mano,  
se fueron a transitar.

Andando en Plan de Barrancas,  
sin saber cómo ni cuándo,  
cuando encontró don Benito  
a Elena con don Fernando.

Vuela, vuela palomita,  
párate en aquel ciprés,  
anda a ver cómo le fue  
a don Fernando el francés.

They took each other's hand  
and went out into the garden.

On a bed of flowers  
they lay down to sleep,  
Around eleven o'clock at night  
Elena spoke up:

"What is the matter, my Fernando,  
why won't you come closer,  
you must have lovers in France  
whom you love more than me?"

"I don't have any lovers in France  
and there is no one I love more than you,  
I am just nervous that your husband  
might just be coming by here."

"Don't worry about my husband  
he is off travelling far away,"  
They took each other's hands  
and continued on.

While riding in Plan de Barrancas  
without knowing exactly how,  
Don Benito came upon  
Elena and don Fernando.

Fly, fly little dove,  
alight over on that cypress tree,  
Go and see what happened  
to Don Fernando, the Frenchman.

#### LA ELENA – Part II:

Metió mano a su pistola  
y a su rifle diez y seis,  
para darle de balazos  
a don Fernando el francés.

—No me tire don Benito  
por la gloria que usted goza.  
Son falsos que me levantan,  
yo no conozco a su esposa.

—No le tiro don Fernando,  
y dirá que soy tirano,  
¿Cómo si no la conoce  
allí no la traes de la mano?—

—Perdóname esposo mío,  
por la grande sensatura,  
pues ya no lo hagas por mí,  
hazlo por esta criatura.—

—De mí no alcanzas perdón,  
de mí no alcanzas ni gloria,  
de mí lo único que alcanzas,  
tres tiros de mi pistola.—

La pobrecita de Elena,  
con qué lástima murió,  
con tres tiros de pistola  
que su marido le dio.

He reached for his pistol,  
and his sixteen caliber rifle,  
ready to shoot  
Don Fernando, the Frenchman.

"Don't shoot me, don Benito,  
for the love of God,  
It is false what you are thinking,  
I don't know your wife."

"I won't shoot you, don Fernando,  
so don't call me a tyrant,  
How is it that you don't know her  
if you are standing there holding her hand?"

"Forgive me, my husband,  
for my lacking good judgement,  
If not for my sake,  
then for this child.

"You won't get any forgiveness from me  
you won't get anything of the kind,  
The only thing you'll get from me are  
three shots from my pistol."

Poor Elena,  
the agony with which she died,  
With three shots from the pistol  
which came from her husband.



—Toma, que lleva esa criatura,  
y llévasela a mis padres.  
Si te preguntan por mí,  
tú les digás que no sabes.

—Tú les dirás que no sabes,  
yo quedaré por aquí,  
y las mujeres casadas  
que agarren ejemplo en mí.—

Vuela, vuela palomita,  
dale vuelo a tu volido,  
anda a ver cómo le fue  
a Elena con su marido.

Vuela, vuela palomita,  
párate en aquella higuera,  
anda a ver cómo le fue  
a Elena por traicionera.

### LA CIUDAD DE JAUJA (The City of Jauja)

*Disc I: #5. Parts 1 & 2. Pantaleón Ramos & Manuel Treviño - vocal duet with bajo sexto acc.*  
(W 404109 & 10, Ok 16733) San Antonio, Tx. June 9, 1930.

“La Ciudad de Jauja,” writes Américo Paredes in *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero*, “is related to American songs such as ‘Oleana’ and ‘The Big Rock Candy Mountain.’” All of them go back to French medieval poems called *fabliaux*, about a wondrous land (Cockayne,

“Come, take this child  
and take her to my parents,  
If they ask about me  
tell them that you know nothing.

“Tell them you know nothing  
and I will remain here,  
So that married women  
will take an example from me.

Fly, fly little dove,  
Go make your rounds,  
Go and see how it went  
for Elena and her husband

Fly, fly little dove,  
Alight in that fig tree,  
Go and see how it went  
for Elena who cheated on her husband

Cake-land, Cucaña) where everything is good to eat. The Valley of Xauxa or Jauja in Peru was incorporated into humorous Spanish *romances* which spoke of this marvelous area of the new world as Cucaña. Frequently, Jauja is pictured as an island with an idyllic quality of life and

more than plenty to eat. This particular version, while maintaining the illusion, speaks of Jauja as a city. Paredes notes that although it is a comic song, the humor became “a bit pointed” during hard times on the Border. He adds that

### LA CIUDAD DE JAUJA – Part I:

Desde la *suidad* de Jauja  
me mandan solicitar  
Que me vaya y que me vaya  
de un tesoro a disfrutar.  
(se repite)

—¿Qué dices amigo, vamos  
a ver si dicen la verdad  
Si es verdad de lo que dicen  
nos quedamos por allá.—

Es una *suidad* muy buena,  
una *suidad* sin igual,  
porque allí le dan de palos  
al que quiera trabajar.

Las calles no son como estas,  
son de muy finos metales,  
Las muchachas que hay allí  
son aceitunas cordiales.

Hay pilas llenas de aceite  
llenas sí, sin derramar,  
Vuelan los patos asados  
con su pimienta y su sal.

“for many generations, Border Mexicans have gone north in search of jobs and better living conditions. In a tongue-in-cheek way, they sometimes have described their journeys as a quest for the mythical land of Jauja.”

The city of Jauja  
is calling me to come  
I must go, I must go  
and enjoy the treasure there.  
(repeat)

“What do you say, my friend, shall we go  
to see if what they say is true?  
If it is true what they say  
we should remain there.”

It is a very good city,  
a city beyond compare,  
Because there they give a beating  
to anyone who wants to work.

The streets are not like ours,  
they are made of precious metals,  
And the girls that one finds there  
are (like) cordial olives.

There are tubs filled with oil,  
filled without spilling over.  
Roasted ducks fly over  
replete with pepper and salt.



—¿Qué dices amigo, vamos,  
a ver si dicen verdad?  
Si es verdad de lo que dicen  
nos quedamos por allá—.

#### LA CIUDAD DE JUAJA – Part II:

Hay árboles de tortillas,  
ramos con jarros de atole,  
Hay barricas de menudo  
bien surtidas de pozole.  
(se repite)

—¿Qué dices amigo, vamos  
a ver si dicen la verdad?  
Si es verdad de lo que dicen  
nos quedamos por allá—.

Válgame la cruz de queso  
con sus piañas de tortilla,  
los brazos de requesón,  
y el cuerpo de mantequilla.

Con tlaco compran zapatos,  
con cuartilla pantalón,  
con medio compran corvete  
y chaleco de baibazón.

No hay ni un hombre de huaraches  
ni tampoco de huichol,  
Porque allí todo es barrato  
y con tan de lo mejor.

"What do you say, my friend, shall we go,  
to see if what they say is true?  
If it is true what they say,  
we should remain there."

There are tortilla trees  
their branches loaded with cups of *atole*,  
(a corn-flour drink)  
There are barrels of *menudo* (a tripe stew)  
and good quantities of *pozole*. (hominy soup)  
(repeat)

"What do you say, my friend, shall we go  
to see if what they say is true?  
If it is true what they say  
we should remain there.

My goodness, the cross is made of cheese,  
with its base of tortillas,  
The arms are of cottage cheese,  
and the body is made of butter.

One can buy shoes for a penny,  
with a quarter, trousers,  
for a half, one buys a tie  
and a vest of *baibazón*

No one there wears sandals,  
nor *güichol*, (straw hat)  
Because there everything is inexpensive  
and of the best quality.

En todo puse cuidado,  
en todo lo que yo vi,  
No andan de tal honragado  
como las de por aquí.

With everything I was careful  
in everything that I saw,  
People there are not dishonest  
As they are here.

### EL CORRIDO DE TEXAS (Ignacio M. Valle)

*Disc I: #6.* Silvano Ramos & Daniel Ramírez - vocal duet with guitar; (111296, Co 3905x) Chicago, Ill. 11/1929.

Probably the oldest Border *corrido* to come down to us in complete form is "El corrido de Kiansis" which documents the first cattle drives to Kansas in the late 1860s and early 1870s. The theme is the hardships of the trail; thirty Mexicans to keep five hundred wild steers herded. The foreman is given the ungrateful task of explaining to one boy's mother that a steer killed her son on the gate of a corral. "Thirty pesos were left over," the foreman continues, "but it was all owed. And I put in three hundred to have him buried."

Fifty years later the migration of men moved from the trail to the railroad. The railroad to many of us represents a tie with a romantic past. To the *mexicano* in the thirties, it represented the great hope, the escape from the poverty, the prejudice, and the backbreaking field work which was his life in Texas.

Of the many *corridos* composed about the men who headed north, none are more famous than "El Corrido de Texas" and "Corrido Pensilvanio." Both were widely sung in their time and remain classics in the genre.

#### EL CORRIDO DE TEXAS

My chinita me decía  
—Ya me voy para esa agencia,  
pa' pasearme por el norte  
y pa' hacerle su asistencia.

My little china doll told me,  
"I'm going to that agency,  
so that I can travel north  
and take care of you.



—De la parte donde estás  
me escribes no seas ingrato,  
y en contestación te mando  
de recuerdos mi retrato.—

Adiós estado de Texas  
con toda tu plantación,  
Me retiro de tus tierras  
por no pisar algodón.

Esos trenes del T.P.  
que cruzan por la Louisiana,  
Se llevan los mexicanos  
para el estado de Indiana.

El día veintidós de abril  
a las dos de la mañana,  
Salimos en un renganche  
al estado de Louisiana.

#### EL CORRIDO DE TEXAS – Part II:

Adiós estado de Texas  
con toda tu plantación,  
Me despido de tus tierras  
por no pisar algodón.

Adiós Fort Worth y Dallas,  
Poblaciones en un lado  
Nos veremos cuando vuelva  
de por Indiana y Chicago.

“Wherever you are  
write to me; don’t be ungrateful,  
and in reply I’ll send you  
my picture as a remembrance.”

Good-bye state of Texas  
with all of your fields,  
I leave your land  
so I won’t have to pick cotton.

Those trains of the Texas and Pacific Railroad  
which cross Louisiana,  
They take the Mexicans  
to the state of Indiana.

The twenty-second of April  
at two o’clock in the morning  
We left in a work gang  
to the state of Louisiana.

Good-bye state of Texas  
with all of your fields,  
I leave your land  
so I won’t have to pick cotton.

Good-bye Fort Worth and Dallas,  
towns that are side-by-side,  
I’ll see you when I get back  
from Indiana and Chicago.



*Loading baskets of spinach  
onto truck in fields near  
La Pryor, Tx, March 1939.  
(FSA photo by Russell Lee.  
Courtesy Library of Congress)*



El renganchista nos dice  
que no llevemos mujer,  
Para no pasar trabajos  
y poder pronto volver.

Adiós estado de Texas,  
con toda tú plantación.  
Me retiro de tus tierras  
por no pizcar algodón.

Esos trenes del T.P.  
que cruzan por la Louisiana,  
Se llevan los mexicanos  
para el estado de Indiana.

The recruiter tells us  
not to take women  
So we won't have any trouble  
and can return soon.

Good-bye state of Texas  
with all of your fields,  
I leave your land  
so I won't have to pick cotton.

Those trains of the Texas and Pacific  
which cross Louisiana,  
They take the Mexicans  
to the state of Indiana.

## CORRIDO PENNSILVANIA

*Disc I: #7. Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez - vocal duet with guitar; (C 3653, Vo 8278) Chicago, Ill. 6/19/1929.*

In "Corrido Pensilvanio," our friend also  
says a sad farewell to his lady love. She is  
apparently more than willing to go along  
but the contractor has the final say. It is a  
lonely life and in this *corrido*, as in the

previous one, entreaties are made to write.  
Letters and pictures become very precious  
under such circumstances. However, *las*  
*italianas* may help ease the burden on the  
heart.

## CORRIDO PENNSILVANIA

El día 28 de abril  
a las seis de la mañana,  
Salimos en un enganche  
pa'l estado de Pensilvania.

The 28th day of April  
At six o'clock in the morning,  
We left under contract  
For the state of Pennsylvania.

Mi chinita me decía,  
—Yo me voy en esa agencia,  
para lavarle su ropa  
para darle su asistencia.—

El enganchista me dijo,  
—No lleves a tu familia  
para no pasar trabajos  
en el estado de West Virginia.—

—Pa' que sepas que te quiero  
me dejas en Fort Worth,  
Cuando ya estés trabajando  
me escribes de donde estés.

—Cuando ya estés por allá  
me escribes, no seas ingrato,  
En contestación te mando  
de recuerdo mi retrato.—

Adiós estado de Texas  
con toda tu plantación,  
Ya me voy pa' Pennsylvania  
por no pisar algodón.

Adiós, Fort Worth y Dallas,  
pueblos de mucha importancia,  
Ya me voy pa' Pensilvania  
por no andar en la vagancia.

Al llegar a ese Milwaukee  
cambiamos locomotora,

My little china doll said to me,  
"I'm going to that company  
to wash your clothes  
and take care of you."

The contractor said to me,  
"Don't take your family  
so as not to pass up any jobs  
in the state of West Virginia."

"So that you'll know I love you  
when you leave me in Fort Worth,  
When you're already working  
write me from where you are.

"When you get there  
write me, don't be ungrateful,  
In reply, I'll send you  
my picture as a remembrance."

Good-bye, state of Texas  
with all of your fields,  
I'm going to Pennsylvania  
to keep from picking cotton."

Good-bye, Fort Worth and Dallas,  
towns of much importance,  
Now I'm going to Pennsylvania  
to avoid becoming a vagrant."

On arriving in Milwaukee  
we changed locomotives,





"Casa de Enganches" (Contract Labor Office)

De allí salimos corriendo  
ochenta millas por hora.

Cuando llegamos allá  
que del tren ya nos bajamos,  
preguntan las italianas  
—¿De dónde vienen mexicanos?—

Responden los mexicanos  
los que ya hablan inglés,  
—Venimos en un enganche  
del pueblo de Fort Worth.—

Estos versos son compuestos  
cuando yo venía en camino,  
Son poesías de un mexicano  
nombrado por Concestino.

Ya con ésta me despido  
con mi sombrero en la mano,  
Y mis fieles compañeros  
son trescientos mexicanos.

Then sped out of the city  
at eighty miles an hour.

When we got there  
and got off the train,  
the Italian women asked us,  
"Where are you Mexicans from?"

The Mexicans responded,  
those who already spoke English,  
"We come on a contract  
From the town of Fort Worth."

These verses were composed  
when I was on the road,  
They are poems of a Mexican  
by the name of Concestino.

Now with this I take my leave  
with my hat in my hand,  
And my faithful companions  
are three hundred Mexicans.

### CORRIDO DE LOS HERMANOS HERNÁNDEZ (Alonzo)

**Disc I: #8. Parts 1 & 2. Los Madrugadores:** Los Hermanos Sánchez & Linares - vocal duet with guitars;  
(DLA 34 & 35, De 10018) Los Angeles, Ca. September 11, 1934.

"Casa Grande, Arizona, January 22, 1933:  
Two eager bloodhounds, one sandy and the other  
black, tonight are seeking two killers in an attempt  
to unravel the remainder of a story of wanton and

cruel murder committed in the desert near here  
last night, the first chapters of which are inscribed  
in mud and blood."

So reported the *Arizona Daily Star*. The



victim was Charles P. Washburn, variously reported as a sixty-five or a seventy-two year old prospector who had described his home as nowhere in particular. According to the *Arizona Republic*, the only means of identification was a Christmas card addressed to Washburn.

The victim had been living alone in a "rude shelter erected by himself just south of the Tucson highway three miles east of Casa Grande" (near Camp Sahuaru). Washburn had apparently been struck over the head with an automobile spindle bolt, dragged about seventy-five feet, shot twice with a twelve gauge shotgun, and then dragged another three hundred feet to a fifteen-foot well where the body was thrown and covered with dirt. It was assumed that the assailants apparently had been after the prospector's car and what cash he may have had.

During the next two weeks a number of suspects were arrested and released. On February 2nd, Sheriff Walter E. Laveen reported that two brothers, Manuel (age 17) and Fred (real name Fernando, age 19) Hernández, had confessed planning the murder for the purpose of robbing Washburn of a large sum

of money they thought he carried. The robbery netted \$35.00. A shotgun found near the scene of the slaying was traced to the boys resulting in their arrest.

They were tried separately in Pinal County, Judge E. L. Green presiding. The trial of Fred Hernández, the older boy, began May 8, 1933, with the verdict returned May 16, 1933. His brother Manuel's trial began May 18, 1933, the verdict returned May 22, 1933. Both were found guilty and sentenced to "Death by Hanging." Date set for execution was August 11, 1933. On July 18, 1933, however, a stay of execution was granted for each of the two young men. Nine months later, on April 28, 1934, a new trial date was set, July 6, 1934. At their respective trials, both said while Manuel had engaged Washburn in conversation, Fred struck the first blow after which Manuel fatally shot their victim.

Shortly before the sentence was to be carried out, Manuel presented a statement to H. G. Richardson, the attorney representing the two brothers, in which Manuel claimed full responsibility for the death of Washburn maintaining that his brother was not even present at the time of the murder. In his statement, Manuel asserted that both had been drinking

and that he had emptied the remains of a bottle of bootleg liquor just before the crime was committed. The brother's use of liquor had not been mentioned previously.

However, the appeal was to no avail. For his part, the prison warden, A. G. Walker "went to extremes," the *Arizona Daily Star* reported, in easing the strain on the boys and their family. A generous meal was spread for the entire family as they gathered in death row. "Fred ate heartily but Manuel ate little. With fervid zeal he expressed his coming death as a warning to others."

After the meal the family assembled in the visitors' quarters of the prison. Manuel then produced a confession "dictated in his faltering English" and written for him by another condemned young man, George Shaughnessy, whose death sentence was scheduled to be carried out a week later. The message in part read:

*"I am giving this warning to the outside world, as I sit in my cell awaiting my turn to come, and hoping that Jesus Christ, our Savior, will spare me from death.*

*"I, Manuel, am guilty of a crime but my brother Fred is not, but still the laws of Arizona say we have to pay with our lives.*

*"Anybody who reads this warning please do not drink or steal or do anything bad. Do God's work instead of Satan's work. I am about to meet God at 5 o'clock this morning with His word on my lips."*

The boys' older sister, Dolores, then attempted to translate the note into Spanish for the benefit of their mother, Alexandra López, but the ordeal was to much for the distraught woman and she broke down, weeping. The *Daily Star* continued the report.

*"Manuel arose and exhorted them not to repine his death. He was guilty and not afraid to die, having made his peace with God, but he was sad on account of his brother whom he declared to be innocent. With his arms and face raised to the sky, he led them in prayer. Afterward a wheelbarrow full of watermelons and a big container of lemonade was brought in. Spirits rose and the boys went among their relatives kissing and hugging them and saying the final 'good-bye.' They waved their hands as they passed through the gate."*

That night the family, the mother, stepfather, nine brothers, four sisters, and two aunts, lay upon the grass in front of the prison under a starlit sky. As dawn appeared, the family realized the end was near. They gathered in a circle on their knees and with their arms and



faces raised out in grief-stricken anguish, they said their final prayers.

At 4:55 the morning of Friday, July 6, 1934, Manuel and Fred Hernández marched the few steps from their cells to the iron stairway and mounted the thirteen steps to the gas chamber. Previously these thirteen steps had led to the gallows, but death by lethal gas became effective, by law in Arizona, on October 28, 1933.

When the boys reached the top of the iron stairway, Manuel stopped to confess his guilt to Father Patrick Murphy, his family's parish priest, and to say his final prayers. He was led to his seat in the gas chamber, a small room about six by six feet. Fred followed and was seated beside his brother. Fred was asked if he had anything to say. In reply he stated flatly, "You are killing an innocent man. I did not do it."

Attendants then strapped the boys' arms and legs to the chairs, blindfolded them with gauze bandages, and attached stethoscopes to their chests. At 5:09 AM, after the door had been sealed, the cord was cut to sacks containing fifteen cyanide eggs. As the eggs dropped gently into an acid solution a grayish gas arose. Within a few seconds the heads of the

boys fell forward. The attending physicians pronounced Manuel dead at 5:16; Fred one-half minute later. The two brothers were the first to be executed by this method in the state of Arizona and the first double execution by lethal gas in the history of the United States.

After some time, two plain pine boxes were brought to the prison gates where the waiting family followed the funeral car to services at the Catholic church in Casa Grande. Warden Walker's instructions were for immediate burial after the 9:00 church ceremony. The family disregarded the instructions. Instead the family issued a community-wide invitation with the result that "a large part of the Mexican population of Casa Grande" joined the family and "made all-day lamentations and recited incantations before putting them (Manuel and Fred) into a double grave in the Casa Grande cemetery as the sun sank to the horizon. It was an unusual ritual for executed criminals."

The following day the *Arizona Daily Star* reported that Mexican newspapers (July 7th) expressed indignation over the lethal gas execution of the two Hernández brothers. Two editorials suggested the Mexicans had been chosen deliberately to test the new form of

execution in Arizona, "although gunmen and others are awaiting the death penalty." A headline in *Excelsior* stated the youths had been executed for a crime "they possibly did not commit" while *El Universal Gráfico* said

the execution of the brothers, "minors who committed a crime while drunk," proves the necessity for more Mexican consulates in the western part of the United States "to defend the interest of Mexicans."

### CORRIDO DE LOS HERMANOS HERNÁNDEZ – Part I:

Estos eran dos hermanos,  
pero hermanos de verdad,  
Que cogidos de las manos  
los mataron sin piedad.

Esto fue en el mes de enero  
del año del treinta y tres,  
Marchaban por un sendero,  
cazando liebres tal vez.

Los Hernández les decían  
a Federico y Manuel,  
Ninguno de ellos sabía  
lo que había de suceder.

Con una escopeta al hombro,  
iban los dos caminando,  
A un anciano con asombro  
lo encontraron descansando.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
quizás sería su destino,  
Pues con un golpe mataron  
al anciano gambucino.

These were two brothers,  
but true brothers  
Who with their hands clasped  
were killed without pity.

This was in the month of January  
of the year (19) thirty-three,  
They were walking on a path  
perhaps hunting rabbits.

The Hernándezes, they were called,  
Federico and Manuel,  
Neither one of them knew  
what was about to happen.

With a shotgun on their shoulder  
they both went walking,  
Astonished, they found  
an old man resting.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
perhaps it was their destiny,  
That with one blow they killed  
the old man.



Tal vez sería por robarlo,  
un arranque de locura.  
Lo arrastraron para darle  
en un hoyo sepultura.

Para no ser aprehendidos  
la escopeta abandonaron,  
Y como estaban perdidos  
distintos rumbos tomaron.

Federico a Casa Grande  
y a Chandler se fue Manuel,  
Aunque el peligro era grande  
creyeron estar sin él.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
pajarito vé volando,  
Anda y dile a los Hernández  
que ya los andan buscando.

Ya los llevan muy bien presos,  
no se puede remediar,  
Les pusieron grillos gruesos  
por si tratan de escapar.

A la pena capital  
los sentenció el gran jurado.  
En la horca del penal  
por haber asesinado.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
la madre pide piedad,

Perhaps it was to rob him,  
or maybe in an outburst of anger,  
They dragged him to a hole  
to bury him.

So that they wouldn't get caught  
they left the shotgun behind,  
And since they were lost,  
they each took a different course.

Federico to Casa Grande  
and to Chandler went Manuel,  
Even though they were in great danger  
they thought they were safe.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
fly little bird,  
Go and tell the Hernandezes  
that they are being sought.

They are now prisoners,  
it cannot be helped,  
Heavy chains have been put on them  
in case they try to escape.

Capital punishment  
was the grand jury's decision,  
They would be hung on the gallows  
for having done the killing.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
their mother asks for pity,

Al comité de perdones  
que existe en la capital.

### CORRIDO DE LOS HERMANOS HERNÁNDEZ – Part II:

La pobre madre afanosa  
le pide a toda su raza,  
Sus firmas pues que otra cosa  
y así va de casa en casa.

—De rodillas, excelencia,  
te pido, gobernador,  
Para mis hijos clemencia  
que es muy grande mi dolor.—

—Señora ya todo escucho  
ya te puedes levantar,  
Pero yo lo siento mucho  
yo no puedo perdonar.

—Ya no los pueden colgar  
ya no hay horca en la prisión,  
Pero tendrán que estrenar  
el gas los dos en unión.—

—Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
ya no llores mamacita,—  
Y también ellos lloraban  
al ir a la campondrita.

Dicen que habían de probar  
el gas con los mexicanos,

From the board of pardons  
in the capital city.

The poor mother arduously  
asks all her people  
for their signature,  
as she goes from house to house.

"On my knees, your excellency,  
I ask you, governor,  
Grant clemency to my sons  
for my sadness is so great."

"Madam, I've heard everything,  
now you may get up,  
But I am sorry  
I cannot pardon them.

"They cannot be hung,  
there are no more gallows in the prison,  
They will be the first to use  
gas in a double execution."

"Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
don't cry dear mother,"  
And they also cried  
upon going to the gas chamber.

They say that they should try out  
using gas with the Mexicans'



Con gases tendrían que ahogar  
a los dos pobres hermanos.

En esta grande desgracia  
y para calmar su pena,  
Piden como última gracia  
para todos una cena.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
las cuatro quizás serían,  
Cuando por última vez  
piedad al cielo pedían.

Bello rato fraternal fue  
de Manuel el más chico,  
—¡Yo cometí todo el mal  
que se salve Federico!—

Los Hernández ya murieron  
ay, qué suerte tan fatal,  
Las vidas les suprimieron  
por medio del gas letal.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
pobre madre adolorida,  
Dos de sus hijos queridos  
que den hoy juntos la vida.

With gas they would be the first to kill  
the two poor brothers.

In this big misfortune  
in order to calm their grief,  
They ask a last favor,  
a big supper for all.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
about four o'clock it must have been,  
When for the last time  
they begged heaven for mercy.

In a moment of brotherly compassion  
by Manuel the younger one,  
"I committed the crime,  
let Federico go!"

The Hernándezes are dead,  
oh, what fatal luck,  
Their lives were suppressed  
with lethal gas.

Ay, ay, ay, ay,  
poor grieved mother,  
Two of her beloved sons  
today died together.

## JESÚS CADENA (Chavela)

*Disc I: #9. Parts 1 & 2. Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez-* vocal duet with guitar.  
(SA 271 & 272, Vo 8284); San Antonio, Tx. ca. October 1929.

"El deportado" (the third selection on this CD) deserves our understanding as a document of the problems of thousands of individuals who suffered the humiliation and the degradation of being an unwanted individual. With "Jesús Cadena," often known as "Chavela", on the other hand, we have an individual unwanted for an entirely different reason—the spurned lover. This *corrido*, still very popular to this day, has been widely

sung and recorded.

In this tale, Chavela shows she is clearly her own woman and is not about to assume the role of the subjugated woman. As a result, she pays with her life. To this male observer, Chavela (and perhaps by extension women like her) represents a challenge to men who would try and dominate her. Jesús tried and failed, his failure underscored by his "solution."

### JESÚS CADENA – Part I:

Señores, voy a cantar  
de versos una veintena,  
Para recordar de un hombre  
llamado Jesús Cadena.

Jesús le dice a José,  
—Vamos al baile a La Parra,  
a cantar una canción  
al compás de una guitarra.—

Salieron de San Antonio  
llegaron a San Andrés,  
Se tomaron unos tragos  
y volvieron otra vez.

Gentlemen, I will sing for you  
twenty verses,  
To recall a man  
named Jesús Cadena.

Jesús says to José,  
"Let's go to the dance at La Parra  
to sing a song  
accompanied by a guitar."

They left San Antonio  
and arrived in San Andres,  
They had a few drinks  
and returned again.



Llegaron a San Andrés  
y se fueron acercando,  
A ese baile de La Parra  
que se estaba principiando.

Por toda esta calle arriba  
corre una piedra linterna,  
Y esta noche voy al baile  
a bailar con mi Chavela.

Jesús le dice a José,  
—Pues hombre yo aquí me quedo,  
Son las doce de la noche  
y la verdad yo tengo miedo.—

Decía doña Manuelita  
—Comadre, no andes bailando,  
Por aquí pasó Jesús  
dice que te anda tanteando.—

Y le contestó Chavela  
con una fuerte risada,  
—No tengas miedo comadre  
que al cabo no me hace nada.—

Un baile se celebraba  
de mucho pompa y corrido,  
Chavela andaba en los brazos  
de un hombre desconocido.

Cuando Jesús llegó al baile  
a Chavela se dirigió,

They arrived in San Andres  
and they got closer,  
To that dance at La Parra,  
which was just beginning.

Along this uphill road  
runs a firefly stone,  
Tonight I am going to the dance ,  
to dance with my Chavela.

Jesús says to José  
“Well, man, I’m staying here  
it’s twelve o’clock,  
and truthfully, I’m scared.”

Doña Manuelita said,  
“Intimate friend, don’t run around dancing,  
Jesús is around  
and he says he’s spying on you.”

Chavela answered  
with a strong laugh,  
“Don’t be afraid my intimate friend,  
he won’t harm me.”

A dance was celebrated  
with much pomp and festivity,  
Chavela was in the arms  
of a stranger.

When Jesús got to the dance  
he went straight to Chavela,



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Como era la más bonita  
Chavela lo *desaigró*.

Yo *desaigrado* no quedo  
porque ni nunca he quedado,  
Pues que pensaría Chavela,  
¿que yo soy un desdichado?

**JESÚS CADENA – Part II:**

Jesús le dice a Chavela,  
—Tú no vayas a bailar.  
Si sigues en tus caprichos,  
te puedes perjudicar.—

Cuando anunciaron la pieza  
Chavela ya estaba en ansia,  
Como a nadie le temía  
todo lo tiraba en chanza.

Jesús sacó su pistola  
para darse de balazos,  
Chavela le respondió  
—Véngase prieto a mis brazos.—

Y le contestó Jesús,  
—Quítate de aquí, Chavela,  
No creas que tú estás tratando  
con un muchacho de escuela.—

Chavela lo agarró el brazo  
metiéndole para adentro,

Since she was the prettiest one,  
she neglected him.

I am not disgraced,  
nor have I ever been  
Well, what would Chavela think,  
that I am a miserable one?

Jesús says to Chavela  
“You’d better not dance,  
If you continue with your flirting,  
you can get yourself in trouble.”

When they announced the next piece  
Chavela was most anxious,  
Since she feared no one  
and tossed everything to chance.

Jesús took out his pistol  
prepared for a shootout,  
Chavela answered him ,  
“Come to my arms you swarthy one.”

Jesús replied,  
“Get out of here, Chavela,  
Don’t think that you’re dealing  
with a schoolboy.”

Chavela grabbed his arm  
and took him inside,

Brindándole una cerveza  
para borrarle el intento.

Jesús sacó su pistola  
tres tiros le disparó,  
Dos se fueron por el viento  
y uno fue el que le pegó.

Decía la güera Chavela  
cuando estaba malherida,  
—Esto de querer a dos  
comadre cuesta la vida.—

Decía la güera Chavela,  
cuando estaba agonizando,  
—Mucho cuidado muchachas  
con andarlos mancornando.—

Un balazo lo tenía  
al lado del corazón,  
Y entre todas sus amigas  
la llevaron al panteón.

Ya con ésta me despido  
abrochándome una espuela,  
ya les canté los versitos  
de la traidora Chavela.

Ranchito de San José,  
estado de Nuevo León,  
Murió la güera Chavela,  
por jugar una traición.

Toasting him with a beer  
to erase his intentions.

Jesús took out his pistol  
and fired three shots,  
Two went into the air  
And one hit her.

Said the fair Chavela,  
when she was badly wounded,  
“This business of loving two,  
my intimate , can cost your life.”

Said the fair Chavela,  
when she was in agony,  
“Be very careful,  
girls, when you two-time them.”

One bullet she had  
at the side of her heart,  
And by all her friends  
she was carried to the graveyard.

Now with this I take my leave  
fastening my spur,  
I’ve already sung to you the little verses  
of the fickle Chavela.

Little ranch of San José,  
state of Nuevo León,  
The fair Chavela is dead  
for playing a deception.





Chili stand on Haymarket Plaza, San Antonio, 1930s  
(Photo courtesy The San Antonio Light Collection, The Institute of Texan Culture)

## EL HUÉRFANO (The Orphan)

**Disc I: #10.** Parts 1 & 2. **Trío Matamoros:** Nuñez, José Romero, & Gilberto Guerra - vocal trio with *bajo sexto* and guitar (W 402674 & 75, Ok 16382); San Antonio, Tx. June 18, 1929.

Of the stories of men, perhaps none is so sad or has greater effect on the emotions than the story of the lost, the abandoned, the rejected, or the forgotten child. The orphan was

a particularly important theme in English as well as in Spanish ballad literature and "El Huérfano" continues to be a popular *corrido* to this day.

### EL HUÉRFANO – Part I:

Estos versos me confundo  
que es muy cierto y muy notable,  
Es gran desdicha en el mundo  
no tener uno a sus padres.

Como la pluma en el aire  
anda el hijo ya perdido,  
El huérfano y desvalido  
pierde el honor y el decoro.

Estas lágrimas que lloro  
me recuerdan de mi madre,  
Que en cada paso que doy  
hoy que reflejo ya es tarde.

Malos ratos y sonrojos  
mi madre por mi lloraba,  
Con lágrimas en sus ojos  
muchos consejos me daba.

Recuerdo que me decía  
cuando me salía a pasear,

These verses confuse me  
which are very true and very notable,  
It is a great misfortune in this world  
if you don't have your parents.

Like a feather in the air  
goes the son, already lost,  
Orphan and helpless  
he loses honor and decorum.

The tears that I shed  
remind me of my mother,  
With each step I take  
I reflect it is already too late.

In bad times and in worse  
my mother cried for me,  
With tears in her eyes  
she gave me much advice.

I remember her telling me  
when I went out,



—No te vayas a tardar,  
no acortés la vida mía.—

Se ha de llegar el día  
que te acuerdes de tu madre,  
Y tu pecho se taladre  
de dolor y sentimiento.

No te cubras de contento,  
Dios mío, tú bien lo sabes,  
Causa mucho sentimiento  
no tener uno a sus padres.

Varias veces de soldado,  
otras veces en prisiones,  
Mi madre ya tribulada  
me llenaba de oraciones.

Para el huérfano no hay sol,  
no hay frío tampoco nieve,  
De tu pérdida y tu honor  
todos se muestran tiranos.

Tíos, parientes, hermanos,  
lo avergüenzan en la calle,  
Dice aprietando sus manos  
—Ay, si viviera mi madre.—

**EL HUÉRFANO – Part II:**  
Las madres en este mundo  
es faro de la existencia,

“Don’t stay out too long,  
don’t shorten my life.”

The day will come  
when you’ll remember your mother,  
Your heart will ache  
of pain and sentiment.

Don’t be so content,  
my God, you know well,  
It causes much grief  
when you don’t have your parents.

Sometimes as a soldier,  
other times in prison,  
My mother already troubled  
prayed for me.

For the orphan there is no sunshine,  
there is no cold or snow.  
Once he loses his honor  
everyone treats him like dirt.

Uncles, relatives, brothers,  
shame him in the streets,  
(He) says, wringing his hands,  
“Oh, if only my mother lived.”

The mothers in this world  
are the lanterns for existence,

Del hijo que con paciencia  
le ama con amor profundo.

Los hijos que estén presentes  
pongan bastante atención,  
En estos tristes lamentos  
que dirijo en la ocasión.

Mi madre era mi consuelo,  
era toda mi alegría,  
Era mi encanto y mi anhelo,  
—¿Adónde estás madre mía? —

Cuando mi madre vivía  
me daba muchos consejos,  
Con cariño me decía  
—¡No me hagas tantos desprecios! —

—Ay, madre, madre querida  
tu hijo llora amargo llanto,  
Te fuiste y me dejaste  
en tan amargo quebranto.—

Cuando uno tiene a sus padres  
goza de dicha y placer,  
Mientras que cuando ellos faltan  
todo es puro padecer.

O Dios mío, no hallo qué hacer,  
Mi madre me ha abandonado  
y huérfano me ha dejado  
en el mundo a padecer.

And the son with patience  
is loved with profound love.

Those of you here present  
pay close attention,  
In this sad lament  
I address you on this occasion.

My mother was my consolation,  
she was my complete happiness,  
my charm and my longing,  
“Where are you my mother? “

When my mother lived  
she gave me lots of advice,  
With affection she told me  
“Don’t be so disrespectful! “

Oh, my beloved mother,  
your son cries bitterly.  
You went and left me  
in such bitter grief.

Some have their parents  
and enjoy happiness and are pleased,  
But when they are missing  
all is pure suffering.

Oh, my God, I don’t know what to do.  
My mother has abandoned me.  
I have been left an orphan,  
left to suffer in this world.



A llorar mi soledad  
junto de su sepultura,  
O Dios ten de mi piedad,  
Mira mi triste amargura.

Aquella hermosa criatura  
no se borra de mi mente,  
Madre mía aquí estoy presente  
llorando en tu sepultura.

En fin, madre de mi vida,  
ruégale al creador por mí,  
Para que en la eterna gloria  
me lleve cerca de tí.

To cry my loneliness  
by her sepulchre,  
Oh God, pity me,  
look at my sad bitterness.

That beautiful child  
I will always remember,  
"Mother I am here  
crying at your tomb."

Finally, mother of my life,  
pray to the Creator for me,  
so that in eternal glory  
I will be close to thee.

### LA CRISIS (The Crisis) (F. Miranda)

*Disc I: #11. Dúo Latino:* C. Mendoza & F. Miranda - vocal duet with guitars;  
(BRC 72219, Vi 30664); New York, N.Y. March 31, 1932.

By March 31, 1932, when "La Crisis" was recorded by Dúo Latino in New York, the depression was in full swing and was being severely felt throughout the nation. Work was extremely difficult to find by US citizens; virtually impossible by foreign nationals. The composer clearly sympathized with the plight of his Mexican countrymen.

In this *corrido*, the subject has crossed the Border intending to find work in San Antonio, Texas. What few things he has with him are rapidly being depleted and he is clearly worried. In part, he attributes his employment problems to the fact that he is constantly moving around.

But in "the Crisis, Sir the Crisis" he doesn't want to hear about the depression;

he doesn't want to even think about it. All he really wants is a full belly. Interestingly, the number of weddings has dropped off, simply because a man cannot support a wife. The *corridista* concludes by noting that the only ones who have any money are

### LA CRISIS

Señores voy a cantar  
unos versitos que tengo,  
de lo que nos va a pasar  
y lo que está sucediendo.

Pues me vine de me tierra  
intentando trabajar,  
y en San Antonio, Tejas,  
y no me pude quedar.

Los fierros que yo traía  
se empezaron a acabar,  
y por mas que me movía,  
no me pude colocar.

La Crisis, Señor, La Crisis,  
todos dicen al pasar,  
ya a mí asustan con eso  
ni los quisiera escuchar.

Lo que quiero es trabajar  
última hora en lo que vengan,

John D. Rockefeller, Jr. and Henry Ford.

There are a number of variants of "La Crisis." All are concerned with the economic conditions resulting from the Depression to which is added the worry of deportation back to Mexico.

Gentlemen, I am going to sing  
Some small verses that I have,  
Of that which is going to happen  
And of that which will follow.

Well, I came from my homeland  
Intending to work,  
In San Antonio, Texas,  
And I could not stay.

The money that I brought with me  
Began to be used up,  
And because of my movements,  
I couldn't get a job.

The Crisis, Sir, the Crisis,  
Everyone says as they go by,  
Now I am frightened,  
And I don't want to hear anything more.

What I want is to work  
At whatever comes along.



y no me importa La Crisis  
si tengo la tripa llena.

Ya no hay muchos matrimonios  
pues La Crisis no los deja,  
en el trabajo hay dinero  
para mantener la vieja.

Yo digo con los demás  
¿pues qué será bueno hacer?  
y mientras estamos pensando  
no dejamos de comer.

No se asusten camaradas  
por las tinieblas eternas,  
que yo toco mi guitarra  
aunque me tiemblen las piernas.

Todos buscamos dinero  
y le tenemos amor,  
pero el dinero lo tiene  
Rockefeller y Henry Ford.

Ya con ésta me despido  
todos han de despensar,  
pues con eso de La Crisis  
la vamos a terminar.

The Crisis is of no importance to me  
If I have a full belly.

Now there aren't many weddings  
Because the Crisis won't permit it,  
In working there is money  
To maintain the old lady.

Now I tell you with the others  
Well, it is good to do,  
And meanwhile we are thinking  
We have nothing to eat.

Don't be frightened my companions  
Because of the eternal darkness,  
That I play my guitar  
Although my legs are shaking.

We all look for money  
And we all love money,  
But the money belongs to  
Rockefeller and Henry Ford.

Now with this I leave you,  
Everyone will excuse me,  
Because of the Crisis  
We have to finish our song.

## LA CRISIS ACTUAL (The Present Crisis) (C. Cuevas)

**Disc I: #12.** Parts 1 & 2. **Los Cancioneros Alegres** - vocal duet with guitars; (LA 964 & 965, Vo 8401);  
Los Angeles, Ca. March 11, 1931.

Another view of the problems for Mexicans during the Great Depression, was "La Crisis Actual," recorded one year earlier, on March 11, 1931, in Los Angeles by Los Cancioneros Alegres. Here the writer, C. Cuevas, points out that even though they didn't necessarily speak English, Mexicans could make good money. But now, with the depression, everything has changed and the jobs are being taken away and

given to US citizens. Sr. Cuevas, speaking on behalf of his countrymen, is concerned about returning to Mexico without being deported because even in the pool halls they have started holding court and taking to jail anyone without a passport. Cuevas also commends the Mexican consul as well as other distinguished individuals who have given brotherly help with food and provisions.

### LA CRISIS ACTUAL- Part I:

Señores pon atención,  
aquí les voy a cantar,  
de la triste situación  
que nomás he venido a encontrar.

Crisis y deportación  
nos trae con mucho cuidado,  
a todos los mexicanos  
que aquí nos hemos quedado.

Mas antes pa' este lado  
se venía uno a trabajar,  
y al término de seis meses  
se podía bien regresar.

Listen up everybody,  
I'm going to sing to you  
about the sad reality  
with which we are faced.

Crisis and deportation  
have us all worried,  
All of us Mexicans  
that now live here.

Before, on this side,  
one could come and work  
and after a period of six months  
one could easily return.



Y ahora no digo mentira  
pues esto a todos nos pasa,  
que aquí estamos sin salida  
porque el trabajo nos falta.

Aquí antes en los talleres  
mexicanos ocupaban,  
sin que supieran inglés  
muy buenos sueldos ganaban.

Pero ahora todo ha cambiado  
con todos estos paisanos,  
que les quitan el lugar  
pa' poner ciudadanos.

Por dondequiera que he andado,  
por dondequiera he perdido,  
Pues por no ser ciudadano  
buen trabajo no he tenido.

A todos los extranjeros,  
excepto a los mexicanos,  
aquí les dan protección  
porque se hacen ciudadanos.

Uno que otro de la raza  
ese camino ha seguido,  
pero para más desgracia  
de nada les ha servido.

Mas los buenos mexicanos  
los hombres trabajadores,

And now I speak the truth,  
this happens to all of us,  
We're here with no way out  
because we don't have work.

Before, here in the shops,  
Mexicans could work,  
Even without knowing English  
they made good salaries.

But now everything has changed  
with all our countrymen,  
they take the jobs away  
and give them to US citizens instead.

Where ever I have been  
I've always lost out.,  
I can't get decent work  
because I'm not a citizen.

All foreigners  
except Mexicans  
they protect by  
granting them citizenship.

A few of the raza  
have gone that route,  
But unfortunately,  
it hasn't done them any good.

And the good Mexicans,  
men who work hard

prefieren vivir de pobres  
y no a su patria traidoran.

### LA CRISIS ACTUAL – Part II:

A todos esta canción,  
como un recuerdo dejamos,  
Y también de corazón  
este consejo les damos.

El modo de repatriarnos  
y algún modo hay que buscar,  
Sin que como a otros hermanos  
nos vayan a deportar.

Siempre desaires aquí  
el mexicano ha sufrido,  
Pero nunca se había visto  
lo que ahorita ha sucedido.

Por toditos los billares  
ya empezaron a echar corte,  
Estan llevando a la cárcel  
al que no trae pasaporte.

La crisis es general  
ya lo empiezan a notar,  
Solo Dios sabe, señores,  
en qué esto venga a parar.

Muchos de los sin trabajo  
el gobierno no está asistiendo,

prefer to live poor,  
and not to betray their country.

We leave this song  
as a reminder to everyone,  
And we also give you  
this heartfelt advice.

We'll have to figure out  
how to get home again,  
without getting deported  
as has happened to our brothers.

Mexicans have always  
suffered indignities here,  
But never have things  
gotten this bad.

In all the pool halls  
they've started holding court,  
They are taking to jail  
anyone without a passport.

People are beginning to realize  
the crisis in general,  
God only knows, gentlemen,  
where all this will end.

Many of those without work  
receive no government help,



Por las esquinas se ven,  
están manzanas vendiendo.

Nuestro buen cónsul también  
con personas distinguidas,  
Los ayudan como hermanos  
con provisión y comida.

Adiós calle M. Mercada,  
adiós plaza concurrida,  
Por muchos que me esperan,  
encontrar pronto salida.

Esos tiempos han pasado,  
no se volverá a mirar,  
Los re-enganchistas buscando  
quién quisiera trabajar.

Ya con ésta me despido  
de toditos mis amigos,  
Vamos en deportación,  
¡Adiós Estados Unidos!

One can see them on street corners  
selling apples.

Our good consul, as well as  
other distinguished persons,  
Provide brotherly help  
with food and provisions.

Farewell M. Mercada street,  
good-by central plaza,  
For many who await me  
we'll find a way out soon.

Those times have passed,  
I can no longer think  
Of going to work for  
those recruiters.

So with this I bid farewell  
to all my friends,  
We're being deported,  
Good-by United States!

### CORRIDO DE JUAN REYNA

**Disc I: #13. Parts 1 & 2. Los Hermanos Bañuelos** (David & Luis Bañuelos) - vocal duet with guitars;  
(LAE 896 & 897, Vo 8383) Los Angeles, Ca. ca. November 1930.

Perhaps not many among the Spanish-speaking today remember the name of Juan Reyna—certainly he is not the transcendental hero we find in “Gregorio Cortéz” or “Joaquín

Murrieta”—but sixty-odd years ago Reyna was front page news in *La Opinión*, the Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles. Even the *Los Angeles Times* found space to tell some-

thing of the arrest and the two highly charged murder trials of this man. It is a tragic story, but one that deserves to be remembered and retold. As a measure of the importance of the event, at least six *corridos* were written about him two of which are presented here to conclude the first of this two CD set.

Conflicts between Mexican-Americans and “the law” have existed from the time Anglo Americans moved west and imposed their set of values, ethics, and morals on the existing population. To the Mexican-American, the Anglo has done this leaving his “own house” corrupt and in disorder. The case of Juan Reyna is apparently one of a man willing to cooperate initially, but finally was pushed too far.

The incident occurred toward evening on the eleventh of May, 1930. Juan Reyna and his brother-in-law, Jesse Fountain, apparently had “a couple of beers” at a house near the corner of Adams and Central near downtown Los Angeles. The two men got into Reyna’s car, started the engine, and proceeded to back up in order to allow room to make a “U” turn. As they were backing up, an unmarked police car with three detectives, Verne Alden Brindley, L. E. Williams, and Laurin L. Miller

(along with a police “operative,” Ansel Bartlett) struck the rear of Reyna’s car (or Reyna’s car, in backing up, struck the front bumper of the police car). Officer Miller explained the matter this way:

“... we had pulled on around the corner and he [Reyna] was driving a Chrysler coach. He was making a “U” turn about twenty-five feet east of Central on Adams, and he started up and would back up a couple of times and you could see that he could not handle the car so we got out of our car and went over and started talking to him and told him to get out of the car which he refused to do, and he acted very much like he had been drinking.”

When asked if he could smell liquor on Reyna’s breath, Miller replied that he could not. Reyna gave a slightly different version of the incident:

“Well, I was parked in a car by a house there where we had a couple of drinks of beer and we were just ready to pull out...me and my brother-in-law Jesse Fountain...And we were ready to turn to the left, see. I went forward and then went backwards and when I was going backward to get room enough to turn to the left, the officer’s car came around and bump [sic] into my car...car was on Adams...It was heading west, well it was heading west, but ready to turn east. I was going to turn



east to take Central. The officer's car was going west on Adams; they bump [sic] into my car and the only thing they could do was jerk me out by my neck. I was backing out and trying to turn to the left and never did they stop to ask where I was going but jerk me by the neck and drag me out of the car and push me into their car. I was trying to explain where I was going and they said shut up... and that's why when I tried to explain they called me a dirty son of a bitch of a Mexican."

The three officers were attached to the vice detail and had come to a house in the area with the "operative" Ansel Bartlett to arrest two women on morals charges (prostitution). One of the women, Mrs. Ethel Atkinson, offered this statement:

"The officers came around the corner of Adams and this fellow started backing up and I was standing downstairs at the time and he backed into this police car and then I went upstairs and was up there for five minutes and the officers came upstairs and got me and brought me back downstairs. When I came back downstairs my girlfriend was in his car."

Officer Miller told what happened next:

"We told him [Reyna] he was under arrest and we put him in the Buick [the police car]. He was in the back seat of the Buick. At that time he was

handcuffed to a colored boy named Anselle Marshall [sic. Ansel Bartlett]. He was on the left side of the car and Anselle was sitting next to him and there were two colored girls on the right side of the car. I got in the front seat on the right and Officer Williams got in behind the wheel on the left and Officer Brindley got in the back end and seated himself on this colored boy's knee and had driven a short ways."

Reyna's version adds more detail:

"...I never did try to argue with them and they called me a dirty son-of-a-bitch of a Mexican and push [sic] me into the car...I was handcuffed to a colored fellow and this officer was cussing me — everytime I turn around he was cussing me..."

Reyna finally lost his temper. Officer Brindley was seated on Reyna's right knee and Bartlett's left. His service revolver was protruding from his right hip pocket, and shortly after driving off toward the city jail, Reyna pulled the revolver from Brindley's pocket. He fired five shots. One shot killed Brindley; a second shot penetrated the left knee of Officer Williams who was driving the police car.

At the coroner's inquest an interrogating police officer, Frank E. Ryan offered this testimony:

"We took a statement from the defendant on Sunday [May 12] about 11:00 AM in the General Hospital, Ward 110 and he said ...the officers pulled him out of the car and put him in the police car and put two colored women on his right and Officer Brindley then got in the car and there were two other officers in the front of the car and he said that he was pretty mad. They called him a Mexican and some other names and this officer swung around and he saw that he had a gun in his right hip pocket and that he watched his chance and he said the officer turned again and he reached and grabbed the gun and stuck the gun up in the officer's face and told him to put his hands up and he was asked why he did that and he said that he guessed he wanted to get away and that the officer made a grab at him and he shot him and emptied the gun and kept pulling on the gun until the gun was taken out of his hand."

The transcript of that interrogation revealed that Reyna said considerably more:

"I didn't know they were officers and they came along and bump [sic] into the car and first thing they did when they got out they tried to get tough with me... Well, next thing I wanted to try and get away because they were cussing me every time he turn around he was keeping an eye and cussing me every chance he had...that's why I did

the shooting. I wouldn't have done any shooting if they didn't do any hitting...I don't know [how many times they hit me ] there were three of them...Every chance he had he hit me with the butt of the gun...the one I shot was always turning around and hitting me every chance he had...he was arguing with the other guy for just a second that's right when I got his gun. I don't claim I did any crooked business on that stuff...I told him to stick them up and he wouldn't do it and I shot him...Stick them up I hollared and at the same moment he jumped on me and I started shooting."

The wounded officer, L. E. Williams, was hospitalized and later released. Officer Brindley died at Georgia Street Hospital in Los Angeles later that night. He was given a funeral with full police honors and was buried on May 13th in Rosedale Cemetery. Reyna was charged with murder as well as assault with a deadly weapon with intent to commit murder (on Officer L. E. Williams).

The trial began August 18th. Originally scheduled to be tried by Superior Court Judge C. P. Vicine, the case was transferred to Superior Court Judge Charles S. Fricke. Because of the interest generated by the case, Judge Fricke's courtroom proved too small and the proceedings were transferred to the court of



Superior Court Judge Marshall F. McComb who had the largest courtroom on the eight floor of the Hall of Justice in Los Angeles. The prosecution was represented by Assistant District Attorney Eugene W. Blalock; the defense by attorneys C. V. Rude and Jerome O. Hughes. The defense attorney's fee was set at \$2,500 and immediately the Uniones Obreras Mexicanas began the collection of a defense fund to cover the fee.

After two days of questioning, the defense and prosecuting attorneys agreed on a jury of six men and six women, none of whom, incidentally, were of Spanish surname (one was questioned, but was excused). The Spanish language newspaper in Los Angeles, *La Opinión* followed the case meticulously, reporter L. F. Bustamante giving extremely detailed coverage of the trial, even to the questioning and response of the prospective jurors. (Limited coverage was given in the *Los Angeles Times*; none in the *Los Angeles Herald Examiner*.)

Beyond concern over the prospective jurors' impartiality, feelings regarding the death penalty, etc., the defense was very concerned with the attitude of the jurors towards race and ethnicity. Consistently the question was

asked, "Do you have any racial prejudice against Mexicans?" Assistant District Attorney Blalock was more concerned with any possible prejudice against the police.

The first prosecution witness was the slain officer's brother, F. D. Brindley who asked for a first degree murder conviction and the death penalty. Detective Miller testified that Reyna tried three times to get his car to go west in reverse and three times struck the bumper of the police car. Miller stated that the detectives asked Reyna to get out of the car which initially he refused to do. The detective also denied the allegation that any of the officers struck or insulted Reyna.

Defense attorney Rude took the position that Brindley's death was accidental. He contended that Reyna was repeatedly struck, a position supported, incidentally, by Ansel Bartlett (even though he was, according to *La Opinión*, a "stool pigeon" [sic] for the police).

Miss Mabel Brindley, a hospital secretary and Dr. Delbert Werden of the hospital staff testified that Reyna came to the hospital for treatment of the injuries. X-rays were taken, his wounds were dressed, and he was given an injection to calm his nerves. Attorney Hughes argued that the blows on Reyna's

LA OPINION  
DIARIO POPULAR INDEPENDIENTE

REYNA SE SALVO DE LA HORCA;  
QUEDA CONVICTO DE HOMICIDIO

El Veredicto  
LAS 12 DAMAS PIDIERON  
CLEMENTIA PARA EL REO AL  
ANUNCIAR SU FALLO AYER

Habla el reo  
REYNA SE MOSTRO AYER MUY  
AGRADECIDO HACIA EL JUEZ,  
EL JURADO Y LOS ABOGADOS

LA VANA DICTAN LA SENTENCIA

UN ESCANDALO: LOS MAESTROS  
EN LA CAPITAL, EXTRANJEROS  
POR LAS TOQUIS SERIO PELIGRO





Front page of  
*La Opinión*  
November 4, 1930.



head rendered the defendant temporarily insane. Rude declared the homicide to be clearly justifiable and demanded a complete and absolute pardon. He further maintained the case showed a lack of discipline and organization in the police force.

Assistant district attorney Blalock, on the other hand, declared the death of Officer Brindley to be murder in cold blood, to be pre-meditated, and he asked for the death penalty. Character witnesses were called to the stand. They declared Reyna to be a hard worker who never had trouble with the law and who never used drugs.

Meanwhile, the defense fund continued to grow. A bakery donated three large cakes to be raffled off, an ice cream vendor gave ten percent of his sales one day, and every day *La Opinión* listed the names of hundreds of individuals who contributed what they could. Most contributions were under one dollar—ten cents, fifteen cents—and each individual was listed by name and the amount he or she contributed. *La Opinión* reported that by September 7th, some three weeks after the defense fund was initiated, \$2,736.79 had been collected. Meanwhile, on the third of September, a second fund was started to see to the

needs of Reyna's four children: Sara, Raquel, Ismael, and Edna. The eldest was eleven at the time; the youngest only four. (Reyna was a widower, his wife, María having been killed in an automobile accident on September 2, 1928) In addition to his children, Reyna lived with, and supported, his mother, Sra. Petra V. Reyna.

On Friday, September 5th after almost three weeks of testimony, the case went to the jury. They were sequestered at the Rosslyn Hotel. Concerned individuals from all over the city were constantly asking for information. *La Opinión* reported their telephones rang incessantly.

Reyna, serene and composed, made the following statement to *La Opinión*: (in Spanish and translated here)

*"No matter what the verdict of the jury, I would like to make clear my most profound gratitude to the Mexican people who so spontaneously have contributed to the fund of the intelligent defense attorneys Mr. Jerome S. Hughes and Mr. Charles E. Rude, whom I esteem highly for all they have done in my behalf. At the same time I would like to express my gratitude to the Mexican press for the fairness with which they have treated me; to the Mexican consulate for their valuable efforts in*

*my behalf, and to Mr. Judge McComb for his absolute impartiality and his criterion of justice during the arguments."*

On Sunday, September 7th, the jury had deliberated more than thirty hours, reportedly concerned over the legality of the apprehension. By Monday the 8th, they had deliberated over sixty hours. Finally at 9:00 P.M., Tuesday, September 9th, Judge McComb dissolved the jury. He felt a reasonable amount of time had passed. The jury was split. Six felt Reyna was guilty; six had reservations, and one lone juror, Mrs. J. H. Courtright, held out for acquittal.

A second jury was impaneled. On Thursday, October 23rd, Reyna, along with defense attorneys Jerome S. Hughes and Nathan Freedman, appeared before Judge McComb. Hughes was held over from the previous trial, but Freedman was newly appointed. *La Opinión's* headline for October 23rd read "Golpe a La Defensa de Reyna" (Blow to Reyna's Defense). It added, "It is possible that this lawyer is as competent as Rude, but he does not have the preparation." (The law firm of Andriani, Fisher, and Carrey had moved attorney Rude to Chicago and turned the defense over to attorney Freedman.) Freed-

man declared, "I have read all of the transcript of the arguments of the first trial of Juan Reyna and I am ready for the new trial absolutely confident that my client will be absolved." District Attorney, Buron Fitts, on the other hand, said he would continue to press for the death penalty.

On October 27th, the case was transferred to Superior Court Judge Charles S. Hardy who presided over the second trial. By October 28th the jury was selected, a jury composed of twelve women (again, no Spanish surnamed individuals were on the jury). Perhaps some of the initial spirit had faded away; perhaps the trial was simply a "rehash" of the first; at any rate, the trial took only a few days. At 4:00 P.M. on October 31st, the case went to the jury. At 9:30 that evening the jury announced that it could not reach a verdict. At 5:00 the following day the jury announced it still could not reach a decision. At 3:30 P.M., Sunday, November 2nd, with still no verdict in sight, the jurors were taken by bus to the beach to "refresh their minds."

*La Opinión* reported that it appeared that the second jury probably would not be able to reach a verdict. The newspaper also noted that although there was no time limit on how



long a jury might deliberate, the vote spread of the first jury, 6-5-1, suggested that the second jury should also be dissolved. It also reported that if a third jury had to be impaneled and it could not reach a decision, the accused would be set free.

Finally, after seventy-one hours of deliberation, the jury reached a verdict. At 2:50 P.M., Monday, November 3rd, the jury foreman, Mrs. Marjory Schmid, announced:

"We the jury find the defendant guilty of manslaughter, and of assault with a deadly weapon."

On both counts the jury recommended clemency. It was reported by *La Opinión* that five of the twelve jurors had held out for

#### **CORRIDO DE JUAN REYNA—Part I:**

Voy a cantar un corrido  
aunque con bastante pena,  
Es todo lo sucedido  
al compatriota Juan Reyna.

Dicen que el once de mayo  
apenas obscurecía,  
cuando en el carro de Reyna  
chocó el de la policía.

Un fuerte llegó le dieron  
enchuecando las defensas,

acquittal until the very end.

On November 5th at 10:00 A.M., Judge Hardy sentenced the defendant from 1-10 years, the two sentences to run jointly, and on good behavior, Reyna could be considered for parole after one year. He was committed to the California State Penitentiary at San Quentin where he began his sentence on November 22, 1930.

It should be noted that during the course of the two trials, over \$4,000.00 was collected, according to the November 2, 1930, edition of *La Opinión*. Of this amount, \$2,500.00 covered defense attorney fees while the balance served to assist Reyna's mother and his four children.

I will sing a ballad  
although it pains me much,  
About all that happened  
to my countryman Juan Reyna.

They say that on the 11th of May  
it was just getting dark  
when Reyna's car  
collided with the car of the police.

It was a head-on collision  
the bumpers were dented,

Luego dos chotas bajaron  
diciendo a Reyna insolencias.

Querían bajarlo del coche  
y allí empezó la alegata,  
Y luego uno de las chotas  
lo estiró de la corbata.

—¿Díganme quién son ustedes?—  
les dijo ya estando en tierra,  
Le respondieron con golpes,  
llamándolo "hijo de perra."

Como iban sin uniformes  
y haciendo mil tonterías,  
Reyna no estaba seguro  
de que fueran policías.

Querían subirlo por fuerza  
al carro en que lo llevaron,  
Como Reyna se opusiera  
entonces más lo golpearon.

Eran cuatro los gendarmes  
que al mexicano estrujaron,  
Y al subirlo al otro carro  
con un negro lo esposaron.

Luego el detective Brindley  
buscando cosa sencilla,  
Le dio una fuerte patada  
sangrándole la espina.

Then two cops got out of the car  
saying insolences to Reyna.

They wanted to get him out of the car  
and that's when the flap started,  
And then one of the cops  
pulled him out by his tie.

"Tell me who are you? "  
he asked them being on firm ground,  
They answered him with blows,  
calling him a "son of a bitch."

Since they were without uniforms  
and they were just fooling around,  
Reyna was not sure  
if they were policemen.

By force they wanted to put him  
inside the car that would take him.  
Since Reyna opposed them,  
they gave him more blows.

There were four policemen  
who mistreated the Mexican,  
And as they put him in the other car  
he was handcuffed to a Negro.

Then detective [Vernon] Brindley  
looking for a simple thing [to do],  
Gave him [Juan Reyna] a bloody kick  
which connected with his shin.



Y como en esos momento  
el auto empezaba a andar,  
Sobre el pobre mexicano,  
Brindley se vino a sentar.

Entonces el mexicano  
con valor y con destreza,  
Le arrebató la pistola  
y le *clavió* la cabeza.

Pero el detective Miller  
y el negro lo sujetaron,  
Disparándole otros tiros  
mientras que lo desarmaron.

#### **CORRIDO DE JUAN REYNA – Part II:**

Patadas, palos, moquetes,  
le dieron a granizar.  
Por lo que tuvo Juan Reyna,  
que ir a dar al hospital.

El cónsul de la colinda  
y el vice-cónsul Quiñones  
Hablaron luego por radio  
mostrando sus opiniones.

Explicaron bien el caso  
y la colonia atendió,  
Porque al insultar a Reyna,  
a México se insultó.

Since at about this time  
the car began to move,  
Brindley got in and seated  
himself next to the Mexican.

Then the Mexican  
with bravery and agility,  
Snatched away the gun  
and hit him on the head.

But Detective [Laurin L.] Miller  
and the Negro caught him.  
Other shots were fired  
while trying to disarm him.

Kicks, blows, and more blows,  
they gave him like a hailstorm,  
And because of what Juan Reyna received,  
he had to go to the hospital.

The consul from the area  
and vice-consul [Joel] Quinones  
Spoke over the radio  
expressing their opinions.

The case was carefully explained  
and the colony paid attention,  
Because in insulting Reyna,  
Mexico was insulted.

Mandaron toda su ayuda  
como buenos mexicanos,  
Probando lo que nos duele,  
el maltrato a los paisanos.

Muy pronto juntó dinero  
el consul digno y argente,  
Y a la defensa de Reyna  
puso a un hombre competente.

Ya lo que el fiscal pedía  
que ahorcaran al delincuente,  
Y el defensor le decía:  
—Yo pruebo que es inocente.—

Tuvieron muchos testigos,  
agentes de policías,  
Y el defensor luego dijo:  
—Abranse que ahí va la mía.—

Algo dijo Mr. Rude,  
con que al fiscal le dio tos,  
Y dicen por ahí las gentes  
que hubo un encuentro de voz.

Se le hicieron dos jurados  
y con toda claridad,  
Unos pedían su castigo  
los otros su libertad.

Por fin fallaron las damas,  
las del segundo jurado,

They sent all their help  
like good fellow Mexicans,  
Demonstrating that mistreatment of  
our countrymen, mistreats us all.

Right away money was collected  
by the worthy consul,  
And to defend Reyna  
a competent man was selected.

The prosecutor was asking  
that the delinquent be hanged.,  
And the defense attorney said,  
“I’ll prove that he is innocent.”

They had many witnesses  
who were police agents,  
And the defense attorney said  
“It is now my turn.”

Mr. Rude said something,  
the prosecutor coughed,  
And now the people are saying  
that their voices were raised.

Two juries were picked  
and with all clarity,  
Some asked for his punishment  
and others for his freedom.

At last the ladies decided,  
the ones on the second jury,



Por homicidio de culpa  
Juan Reyna fue sentenciado,

De un año a diez,  
el juez Hardy a Reyna le sentenció,  
Salvándolo de la horca,  
que el Mr. Blalocks pidió.

Adiós Juan Reyna, supiste  
defender tu dignidad,  
Y hasta tu vida expusiste  
por tu nacionalidad.

For intentional homicide  
Juan Reyna was sentenced.

One year to ten,  
Judge Hardy sentenced Reyna,  
Saving him from hanging,  
which was what Mr. Blalocks wanted.

Good-bye Juan Reyna, you knew  
how to defend your dignity,  
You even risked your life  
because of your nationality.

## SUICIDIO DE JUAN REYNA (Juan Reyna's Suicide) (Flores Galindo)

*Disc I: #14. Parts 1 & 2. Nacho & Justino:* vocal duet with guitars;  
(LA 1052 & 1053, Vo 8425); Los Angeles, Ca. July 1, 1931

Monday, May 4, 1931. 11:00 A.M. Señora Petra V. Reyna, mother of Juan Reyna, received a telegram this morning from James B. Holohan, Director of San Quentin prison stating that her son had committed suicide. Date of death was given as May 3rd, five months before he was scheduled to be released on parole. United Press placed the time of death at 1:30 A.M.

*"When the guards had finished their watch, Reyna stabbed himself in the heart with a knife that he had made. He was taken to the prison*

*hospital where he died."*

*"I was waiting for my son in five months and instead I receive his body,"* Mrs. Reyna told Sr. Rafael de la Colima, Consul of Mexico who telegraphed the Secretary of Foreign Relations in Mexico and the Mexican ambassador in Washington. An investigation was immediately requested.

In an interview with *La Opinión*, May 5th, Reyna's sister, María Trinidad, said:

*"Never a week went by that my mother or another member of the family did not receive a*

*letter from him. His cards indicated he was doing well; they had put him to work as a mechanic and he liked it just fine. In every one of his letters he indicated a concern for his children and that he was anxious to return to see to the education of his children."*

Two days later, Reyna's mother expressed similar feelings to *La Opinión*.

*"Never did I think my son could commit suicide... In all of his cards he expressed the thought that he was well and contented and he always waited, with God's help, for his return to Los Angeles to attend to the education of his children.*

*"He always appreciated everything that people did for him and their funds for his defense. He also appreciated the help of Consul Rafael de la Colima and Vice Consul Joel Quiñones. On the tenth of April he wrote a letter that he wished he could be with his family for his daughter Sarita's birthday. With only five months left, I don't know why he killed himself. My daughter-in-law died just a little before Juan killed the detective. I am an old grandmother. What will happen to these children when I go? Only God knows!"*

The body of Juan Reyna arrived in Los

Angeles, Wednesday morning, May 6th aboard a Southern Pacific Railroad car. The casket was taken to the assembly hall of the Mexican Liberal Party of Watts, 116th Street and Compton Avenue for the wake. (Reyna had been affiliated with the Mexican Liberal Party of Watts for many years.) *La Opinión* noted that "women in particular came to view the body." *"¡Era un buen mozo!"* they exclaimed, tears streaming down their cheeks.

On Saturday, May 9th at 2:00 in the afternoon, the funeral procession left the Mexican Liberal Party assembly hall for the Watts Methodist Church, Santa Ana Blvd. and 106th Street. Funeral services were conducted by the Reverend Francisco O. Quintanilla, pastor of the church, who read messages from Pascual Ortiz Rubio, president of Mexico and James Rolph, governor of California. Five thousand people attended the service, most of whom followed the procession to the cemetery. The funeral cortege was four miles long. Graveside services concluded at 6:30 P.M. Reyna is buried at Woodlawn Memorial Park, 1715 West Greenleaf Blvd., Compton.



## SUICIDIO DE JUAN REYNA –Part I:

Vuela, vuela palomita,  
vuela, vuela sin cesar,  
Ve y cuenta ya a mis paisanos  
lo que acaba de pasar.

Voy a contarles señores  
con el alma entristecida,  
Esta tremenda tragedia  
en San Quintín sucedida.

Faltándole cinco meses  
pa' salir en libertad,  
El mexicano Juan Reyna  
se acaba de suicidar.

A la una de la mañana  
un celador descubrió  
En la celda de Juan Reyna  
algo grave aconteció.

Era un cuadro doloroso  
todo lo que estaba viendo,  
Juanito en su propia sangre  
se estaba allí debatiendo.

Con arma pulso cortante  
se trozó la jugular,  
Estando Reyna en la celda  
pensando en su libertad.

Fly, fly little dove,  
fly, fly without ceasing,  
Go and tell my countrymen  
what has just happened.

I will tell you, gentlemen,  
with my saddened soul,  
This tremendous tragedy  
that happened in San Quentin.

Lacking only five months  
to leave a free man,  
The Mexican Juan Reyna  
has just committed suicide.

At one in the morning  
the jailer discovered  
That something grave had  
happened in Juan Reyna's cell.

It was a painful scene  
everything that was seen,  
Juanito in his own blood  
was fighting for his life.

With a pulsing blade  
he sliced his jugular vein  
While he was in his cell  
thinking of his freedom.

Pa' el hospital lo llevaron  
tratando de darle auxilio,  
Pero a los pocos momentos  
ya Reyna había fallecido.

Como a las once del día  
un mensajero llegó,  
En la casa de Juan Reyna  
un telegrama dejó.

Con lágrimas en los ojos,  
la madre de él se enteró,  
Viendo que su hijo querido  
una herida se injirió.

En el segundo mensaje  
que el alcalde le mandó,  
Se daba cuenta que su hijo  
en el hospital falleció.

## SUICIDIO DE JUAN REYNA – Part II:

Con la rapidez del rayo,  
por la ciudad se esparció,  
El triste acontecimiento  
que en San Quintín sucedió.

Toda la gente de Watts  
andaba muy afligida,  
Diciendo que ya Juan Reyna  
se había quitado la vida.

They took him to the hospital  
trying to give him some help,  
But in a very short while  
Reyna had passed away.

At about eleven o'clock during  
the day, a messenger arrived  
And left a telegram  
at Juan Reyna's house.

With tears in her eyes  
his mother learned  
That her beloved son  
had self-inflicted a wound.

In the second message  
sent by the mayor  
She learned that her son  
had passed away in the hospital.

With the speed of light, the  
news spread throughout the city  
Of the sad happening  
that took place at San Quentin.

All of the people of Watts  
were very grieved,  
They were saying that now Juan  
Reyna had committed suicide.



Con su conducta intachable  
se granjó la simpatía  
De todos sus compañeros  
en la penitenciaría.

Las puertas de la prisión  
se abrieron un día temprano  
Para sacar el cadáver  
del querido mexicano.

—Ah, hijito de mi vida,—  
decía la mamá de Juan,  
—Yo te esperaba con vida  
y hoy tu cadáver me traen.—

Esto es muy triste señores,  
hay que ponerse a pensar,  
¿Qué harán los hijos de Reyna  
en su terrible orfandad?

Siempre que Juan escribía,  
a su madre le encargaba  
De la instrucción de sus hijos  
que no los fanatizara.

Hoy las confederaciones  
piden investigación  
Como se mató Juan Reyna  
adentro de la prisión.

Vuela, vuela palomita,  
vuela, vuela sin cesar,

With his blameless conduct  
he gained the sympathy  
Of all his comrades  
in the penitentiary.

The prison doors  
opened up early one day  
To take out the corpse  
of one beloved Mexican.

"Oh, little son of my life,"  
Juan's mother would say,  
"I waited for you alive and  
today they bring me your corpse."

This is very sad, gentlemen,  
we should start thinking of what  
will become of Reyna's children  
now so terribly orphaned.

Everytime Juan wrote,  
he would entrust his mother  
With the instruction of his children  
to not let them become superstitious.

Now the confederations  
ask for an investigation  
On how Juan Reyna killed himself  
inside the prison.

Fly, fly little dove,  
fly, fly without ceasing,

Ya contaste a mis paisanos  
lo que acaba de pasar.

Ya me despido señores,  
y les pido una oración,  
Pa' el valiente mexicano  
que se mató en la prisión.

You already sang to my fellow  
countrymen of what just happened.

Now I take my leave, gentlemen,  
and I ask you for a prayer,  
For that brave Mexican  
who killed himself in prison.



*Mexican lettuce harvesters in California's Imperial Valley, 1928.*

*Photo by Paul S. Taylor, Professor of Economics at UC-Berkeley, who in the late 1920s studied Mexican labor in the United States. On a trip from San Antonio to Chicago, Mr. Taylor, who spoke Spanish, made the acquaintance of two Mexican troubadours on their way to record "El Corrido de Pensilvania" among other songs. The two men turned out to be Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez.*



## Corridos y Tragedias de la Frontera, Disc II:

### EL CONTRABANDO DEL PASO (The Contraband of El Paso)

*Disc II: #1. Parts 1 & 2. Dúo El Arte Mexicano:* Angel Soto & Salomé González - vocal duet with guitars and orquesta de S. Atilano. (C 2618 & 19, Vo 8181) Chicago, II 12/3/28.

Brownie McNeil, a student of Border folklore and for a time an agent with the United States Immigration Service, pointed out in his 1946 monograph on "Corridos of the Mexican Border," that "Of the thousands of miles of border between the United States and its two neighbors, probably no spot gave as much trouble to the officials of the United States government during Prohibition as El Paso, Texas."

The risks and rewards of smuggling provide wonderful grist for the ballad maker's pen. In the case of "El Contrabando de El Paso," we have one of the great, classic *corridos* of the Texas-Mexican Border. Here, the youthful smuggler, forsaken by both his beloved mother and his wife, finds himself chained to a number of other men and taken aboard a Southern Pacific Railway coach for the lonely ride to the federal penitentiary at Leavenworth, Kansas. But our young man's concern is more than just his train ride and an

extended period behind bars. As the dean of Border scholars, Américo Paredes has observed in *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero*, "one of the best-known Texas-Mexican *corridos* [it] has been in oral currency on the Lower Border since the 1920s. Its theme is more universal than smuggling along the Rio Grande; it is that of the wrongdoer who is caught and repents his past transgressions while he is on his way to prison."

Prohibition was established in 1918 with the passage of the eighteenth amendment to the Constitution of the United States. The decade of the twenties provided innumerable opportunities for bootlegging on both the Canadian and Mexican borders, opportunities which essentially disappeared with the passage of the twenty-first amendment to the Constitution, passed in 1933, which repealed Prohibition.

There are numerous variants of the *corrido*, but the various versions are largely con-

sistent with the first recordings of which this version is one of the first. The differences are largely transposed verses and minor internal verse changes resulting from the vagaries of human memory. The possibility also exists that this *corrido* was composed in response to the enormous popularity of similar prison

### EL CONTRABANDO DEL PASO— Part I:

En el día siete de agosto,  
estábamos desesperados,  
que nos sacaran de El Paso  
para Kiansis mancornados.

Yo dirijo mi mirada  
por todita la estación,  
a mi madre idolatrada  
que me dé su bendición.

Nos sacaron de la corte  
a las ocho de la noche,  
nos llevaron para el depot  
nos montaron en un coche.

Ni mi madre me esperaba,  
ni siquiera mi mujer,  
adiós todos mis amigos,  
¿Cuándo los volveré a ver?

Allí viene silbando el tren  
ya no tardará en llegar,

songs in the field of American music (note: "The Prisoner's Song" by Vernon Dalhart). It could well be one of the first *corridos* to have entered popular folklore as the result of several successful and popular recordings as the origins of this descriptive ballad are not at all clear or documented.

On the seventh day of August,  
we were feeling desperate,  
They took us from El Paso  
towards Kansas, chained together.

I direct my glances  
all around the station,  
Looking for my beloved mother  
that she may give me her blessing.

They took us from the courthouse  
[jail] at eight o'clock at night,  
They took us to the depot  
and put us on a coach.

But my mother was not there  
waiting, not even my wife,  
Good-bye to all of my friends,  
When will I see you again?

There comes the train whistling  
it will arrive shortly,



les dije a mis compañeros  
que no fueran a llorar.

Ya voy a tomar el tren  
me encomiendo a un Santo Fuerte,  
ya no vuelvo al contrabando  
porque tengo mala suerte.

Ya comienza a andar el tren,  
ya repica la compaña,  
le pregunto a Mister Hill  
que si vamos a Louisiana?

Mister Hill con su risita  
me contesta: —No señor,  
pasaremos de Louisiana  
derechito a Leavenworth.—

Corre, corre, maquinita,  
suéltale todo el vapor,  
anda deja a los convictos  
hasta el plan de Leavenworth.

Yo les digo a mis amigos  
que salgan a *exprimentar*,  
que le entren al contrabando  
a ver donde van a dar.

#### EL CONTRABANDO DEL PASO – Part II:

Les encargo a mis paisanos  
que brincan el charco y cerco,

I said to my companions  
not to cry.

Now I am going to take the train  
I commend myself to the Strong Saint,  
I shall never go back to smuggling  
because I have bad luck.

Now the train begins to move,  
and the bell is ringing,  
I ask Mister Hill  
if we are going to Louisiana.

Mister Hill, with his little smile  
replies, "No sir,  
we go through Louisiana  
straight to Leavenworth."

Run, run little locomotive,  
with a full head of steam,  
And let the convicts run  
until we reach Leavenworth.

I say to my friends  
that want to experiment,  
That they get involved in contraband  
and see where it gets them.

I recommend to my countrymen  
that when crossing the river and the fence

no se crean de los amigos  
que son cabezas de puerco.

Que por cumplir la palabra  
amigos de realidad,  
cuando uno se halla en la corte  
se olvidan de la amistad.

Yo les digo con razón  
porque algunos compañeros,  
en la calle son amigos  
porque son convenencieros.

Pero de esto no hay cuidado  
ya lo que pasó voló,  
algún día se han de encontrar  
donde me encontraba yo.

Es bonito el contrabando  
se gana mucho dinero,  
pero lo que más me puede  
condenar un prisionero.

Vísperas de San Lorenzo  
como a las once del día,  
visitamos los umbrales  
de la penitenciaría.

Unos vienen con un año,  
otros con un año y un día,

Do not trust your friends  
who are self-serving hypocrites.

I lived up to the word  
truly we were friends,  
But when you land in jail  
the friendship is forgotten.

I say with good reason  
because some of my companions,  
On the streets they are your friends  
because it suits their interests.

But let us forget the past  
that which happened is behind us,  
One day they will find themselves  
in the same position I am in now.

Contraband is very nice  
one can make a lot of money,  
But what happens is  
a prisoner is condemned.

Vespers of Saint Lawrence  
at about eleven o'clock in the morning,  
We stepped on the threshold  
of the penitentiary.

Some come with one year,  
others with a year and a day,



otros con dieciocho meses,  
a la penitenciaría.

El que hizo estas mañanitas  
le han de otorgar el perdón,  
si no están bien corregidos  
pues ésa fue su opinión.

Ahí te mando mamacita  
un suspiro y un abrazo,  
aquí dan fin las mañanas  
del Contrabando de El Paso.

others with eighteen months,  
to the penitentiary.

The person who wrote these verses  
they should grant him a pardon,  
If they are not incorrigibles,  
well, they have their opinion.

My little mother I am sending you  
a sigh and an embrace,  
Here we finish with the verses  
of the Contraband of El Paso.

## CONTRABANDISTAS TEQUILEROS (Tequila Smugglers)

**Disc II: #2. Parts 1 & 2. Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez:** vocal duet with guitar; (SA 7044/45, Vo 8430)  
San Antonio, Tx. December 8, 1930.

We now move down-river, down the Rio Grande from El Paso to Del Rio, Texas. Where the previous *corrido* focused on the train ride from El Paso to Leavenworth and admonishing one's countrymen to find a less risky profession, "Contrabandistas Tequileros" tends to focus more on the situation in Del Rio prior to boarding the train to the federal penitentiary in Kansas. The admonitions are still present; however, the writer advising his friends specifically to watch out for the informers that tend to profit by reporting on those who cross the Rio Grande. Moreover,

where the nature of *el contrabando* was not specified in "El Contrabando de El Paso," in this ballad, the contraband is tequila, the most common liquor smuggled across the Border from Mexico. Américo Paredes notes that *Tequileros* used many ingenious ways to bring their goods over, including the spare tires of cars crossing the Border. "Most often," he writes, "they operated in bands of three or four, crossing the river at night by means of homemade boats, or swimming the river and pushing their cargo ahead of them in galvanized metal tubs or inflated

skins. Sometimes they were surprised by U.S. Border patrolmen when they made it to the American side of the river. Many would surrender, ending up in the federal penitentiary. Others came prepared to fight, and they either shot their way out of ambush or died in the attempt." In the case of our *contrabandistas* in this and in the previous

## CONTRABANDISTAS TEQUILEROS –Part I:

En mil *nuevecientos* treinta,  
señores pon atención,  
En la cárcel de Del Río  
fue trovada esta canción.

De la cárcel de Del Río  
ni me quisiera acordar,  
Que el diecisiete de marzo  
nos iban a sentenciar.

Nos sacaron de la cárcel  
derecho a la Calle Real,  
Y nos dice el Colorado  
ya los voy a retratar.

Luego que nos retrataron  
a la cárcel nos llevaron,  
Sin saber nuestra sentencia  
porque no nos la explicaron.

*corrido*, our subjects accept their fate stoically and are prepared to serve their time in Leavenworth. Incidentally, the version of "Contrabandistas Tequileros" which appears here, performed by Pedro Rocha and Lupe Martínez, is entirely different from "Los Tequileros" which appears in Paredes' classic work, *A Texas-Mexican Cancionero*.

In 1930, gentlemen,  
your attention please,  
In the jail of Del Rio  
this song was made into poetry.

I would just as soon not remember  
the jail of Del Rio  
Where on the 17th of March  
they were going to sentence us.

They took us out of the jail  
straight to the Calle Real  
And the Colorado told us  
that he was going to take our pictures.

After they had taken our pictures  
they took us to the jail,  
And we didn't know our sentence  
because they didn't explain it to us.



Bonita cárcel en Del Río  
pero a mí no me consuela,  
Porque dan puros frijoles  
y un platito de avena.

Bonita cárcel en Del Río  
pero aún no se puede creer,  
Son contados los amigos  
que te quieren ir a ver.

Yo les digo a mis amigos  
cuando vayan a pasar,  
Fíjense en los denunciantes,  
no los vayan a entregar.

Yo les digo a mis amigos  
cuando estén al otro lado,  
Fíjense en las veredas  
por donde va el Colorado.

Quizá ya en el Naqueví  
aprehende a un compañero,  
Que vendió a un denunciante  
el día treinta de enero

Fíjate bien denunciante  
porque lo estoy diciendo,  
Que por amor al dinero  
nos *estuvistes* vendiendo.

Pero de eso no hay cuidado,  
ni tampoco hay que pensar,

A pretty jail in Del Rio,  
but it doesn't console me  
Because they just give us beans  
and a little plate of oatmeal.

A pretty jail in Del Rio,  
but it's still unbelievable,  
You can count the friends  
that want to go see you.

I tell my friends  
when they are going to cross [the river],  
Watch out for the informers,  
that they don't turn you in.

I tell my friends  
when they're on the other side,  
Be careful on the trails  
where the Colorado passes.

Perhaps in Naqueví  
they have already caught a comrade  
Who sold liquor to an informer  
on the 30th day of January.

Watch it, informer,  
because I am telling it,  
That for love of money  
you were selling us.

But of that there is no danger  
neither must one think,

Vamos a tomar cerveza  
y en seguida a vacilar.

### CONTRABANDISTAS TEQUILEROS – Part II:

Pero de eso no hay cuidado,  
ya lo que pasó voló,  
Por causa de un denunciante,  
preso aquí me encuentro yo.

Yo anduve en muchas parrandas  
con amigos en buen carros,  
Y hoy me llevan prisionero  
ni quien me traiga un cigarro.

Ya no llores mamacita,  
te llevo en mi corazón,  
Por entrarle al contrabando  
me lleva la prohibición.

Entiéndanlo amigos míos  
y pongan mucha atención,  
Por andar vendiendo el trago  
nos llevan a Leavenworth.

La máquina del S.P.  
corre con mucha violencia,  
Y se lleva los convictos  
derecho a la penitencia.

Estos versos son compuestos  
por toditos en reunión,

We're going to drink some beer  
and later mess around.

But of that there is no danger,  
what has happened is over,  
Because of an informer  
I find myself a prisoner here.

I went on many sprees  
with friends in good cars  
And today they take me prisoner  
with no one to bring me a cigarette.

Don't cry, little mother,  
I carry you in my heart,  
For bringing in contraband,  
Prohibition agents have taken me.

Understand it my friends  
and take much care,  
For going around selling drink,  
they're taking us to Leavenworth.

The Southern Pacific engine  
runs with much violence,  
And it takes the convicts  
straight to the penitentiary.

These verses are made by everyone  
in a get-together,





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# LA VOZ DE LA RAZA

El Programa del Anuncio Selecto

Todas las noches a las 10

Por la Estación KABC

— 1420 Kilocyclos —

Para todos los asuntos relacionados con "La Voz de la Raza"  
llame al teléfono Mission 18 J, de 9 a 10 de la mañana.





Unos por el contrabando  
y otros por la inmigración.

Adiós mi madre querida,  
solo tú lloras mis penas,  
Ya nos llevan prisioneros  
mancornados con cadena.

Adiós mi madre querida,  
me voy a la penitencia,  
Cuando salga nos veremos,  
si el Señor me da licencia.

Adiós cárcel de Del Río,  
adiós torres y campanas,  
Adiós todos mis amigos,  
adiós lindas mexicanas.

Los que viven en Del Río  
gozan de tranquilidad,  
Porque ellos toman tequila  
con mucha facilidad.

Ya con ésta me despido,  
porque siento mucho frío,  
Aquí se acaba cantando,  
del contrabando Del Río.

Some because of contraband  
and others because of immigration.

Good-bye my dear mother,  
only you cry for my sorrows,  
They are taking us prisoners  
joined together with a chain.

Good-bye my dear mother,  
I'm going to the penitentiary,  
When I get out,  
we'll see each other God willing.

Good-bye Del Rio jail,  
good-bye towers and bells,  
Good-bye all my friends,  
good-bye beautiful Mexican girls.

Those who live in Del Rio  
enjoy tranquility,  
Because they drink  
tequila with great ease.

Now with the time I say good-bye  
because I'm feeling very cold,  
And here we finish singing  
of the Contraband of Del Rio.

## CORRIDO DE LOS BOOTLEGGERS

*Disc II: #3. Parts 1 & 2. Francisco Montalvo and Andrés Berlanga - vocal duet with guitars;*  
(BS 94577 & 78, Bb 2381) Texas Hotel, San Antonio, Tx. August 15, 1935.

Bootlegging, by definition, is the unlawful transportation or distribution of any article, but particularly alcohol. The term goes back to colonial days in the United States when the sale of liquor to Indians was outlawed. Smugglers hid liquor-filled flasks in the legs of their boots and sold the alcohol to the Indians, hence the terms "bootlegger" and "bootlegging."

In the mid 1800s, bootlegging again became popular and profitable when state and local prohibition was adopted in parts of the country.

The temperance movement, an organized effort against the sale and use of alcohol, began in the United States as early as 1789 when two hundred farmers formed a temperance society in Litchfield, Connecticut, pledging not to give strong liquors to their workmen. In the nineteenth century many church groups formed temperance societies, at first committed to moderation and eventually total abstinence.

In the mid 1800s, state and local Prohibi-

tion was again adopted in parts of the country, however the real impetus for abstinence and prohibition was the W.C.T.U.—the Women's Christian Temperance Union. This organization grew out of the Woman's Temperance Crusade of 1873-74. The National W.C.T.U. was founded in 1874 and from this the World W.C.T.U. was founded in 1883 by Frances E. Willard. Miss Willard then broadened the scope of activity through participation in the Prohibition party, organized in Chicago in 1869.

The temperance movement led to the adoption of prohibition laws by thirteen states before the Civil War, but by the end of the war the laws remained in effect in only four states. In large cities, brewers, distillers, and vintners were financially able to obtain special favors from corrupt officials; elections could be won with free drinks. It was widely proclaimed that family life was being ruined by men's drinking and rural churchgoers declared that the saloon was responsible for all the evils of the city. The W.C.T.U. and several



Protestant denominations were campaigning for the abolition of saloons when the national Anti-Saloon League was formed in 1895. The league became one of the most powerful political forces of the era. Many states were persuaded to permit local-option elections by which counties and towns could vote to be "dry." Eleven states were completely dry by 1915; the rest had local-option prohibition.

National Prohibition was established with the passage of the eighteenth constitutional amendment which took effect January 1920. Enforcement was difficult; speakeasies and bootleggers thrived. Perhaps most significant, an organization operating on various levels known as the "underworld" developed. This group dealt not only in illegal alcohol, but also in gambling, narcotics, and prostitution. In addition, many individuals felt the law was an infringement on their personal liberties and wine, "homebrew" (malt liquor), and "bathtub gin" (just about everything else) were commonly produced in "respectable" homes.

Finally, in 1929, President Herbert Hoover

appointed a commission to study the American observance of the law and its enforcement. The commission reported that Prohibition was unenforceable, but should be retained. Hoover, who called Prohibition an "experiment, noble in motive and far-reaching in purpose," did not favor repeal. The Democratic National Convention of 1932 demanded repeal and by February 1933, Congress had enacted the twenty-first amendment repealing the eighteenth. Ratification took effect on December 5th of that same year.

In "El Corrido de los Bootleggers," our *burlega* apparently got into the smuggling business because work was scarce, the crops were not good, and he had to make a living. He points out that those who cook the liquor wish evil on no one and that as long as the bars (speakeasies and the like) remain open, the poor will be in jail while the rich are enjoying themselves. After all, in San Antonio, it was said, they never catch the bootleggers, just the runners. To this day little has changed except the goods smuggled by *los contrabandistas* are no longer in liquid form!

## CORRIDO DE LOS BOOTLEGGERS – Part I:

Pongan cuidado señores,  
lo que aquí voy a cantarles,  
Me puse a rifar mi suerte  
con catorce federales.

Me puse a pensar señores  
que trabajo ya no había,  
Tenía que buscar mi vida  
si el Señor me concedía.

Ya la siembra no da nada  
no me queda que decirles,  
Ahora la mejor cosecha  
es la que dan los barriles.

Toda la gente que siembra  
hasta el año venidero,  
Ahora no son los barriles  
todo es que salga el primero.

Los que están cociendo el trago,  
a nadie les piden mal,  
Pero van y los denuncian  
y le traen la federal.

Cuando iban a entregar el trago  
con peligro y muy barato,  
No más me echo dos o tres tragos  
y el miedo es no más un rato.

Be careful, gentlemen,  
what I will sing for you here,  
I raffled my luck  
with fourteen federal men.

I began thinking, gentlemen,  
that there was no more work,  
I had to make a living,  
if it was the will of Jesus.

The crops are not productive,  
I have nothing else to say,  
Now the best crop  
is the one from the barrels.

All the people who sow  
must wait until next year.  
Now is it not the barrels,  
once the first one comes out.

Those who cook the liquor  
to no one do they wish evil,  
But they are turned in  
and they bring the federal agents.

When delivering the liquor,  
with danger although it is cheap,  
I just take two or three drinks  
and my fear doesn't last long.



Mientras sigan las cantinas  
así seguirá pasando,  
Porque el pobre esté en la cárcel  
y el rico se ande gozando.

Pero el hijo no hace caso,  
antes que lo haigan pescado,  
La madre es la que sufre  
cuando el hijo está encerrado.

#### **CORRIDO DE LOS BOOTLEGGERS – Part II:**

Mi madre se encuentra triste,  
mi padre con más razón,  
De ver a su hijo encerrado  
en esta triste prisión.

Pobrecita de mi madre,  
a qué suerte le ha tocado,  
En las puertas de esta cárcel  
lágrimas se le han rodado.

Mi madre muy afanada  
hablando con el abogado,  
A ver si me saca en fiance  
de la cárcel del condado.

Yo era *bootlegga* de marca  
porque no me habían pescado,  
Porque todos mis entriegos  
los hacía con cuidado.

As long as the bars remain  
it will always be like this,  
So that the poor are in jail  
the rich are having a good time.

But the son never understands,  
before he has been caught,  
The mother is the one who suffers  
when her son is locked up.

My mother, you will find her sad,  
and my father with more reason,  
To see their son locked up  
in this sad prison.

Oh, my poor mother,  
what luck she has had,  
In the doors of this jail  
she has shed her tears.

My mother very eagerly  
talks with the lawyer,  
To see if she can obtain my bail  
from the county jail.

I was a successful bootlegger  
because I had never been caught,  
Because all of my deliveries  
were done carefully.

Aquí en este San Antonio,  
todos los alrededores,  
Nunca pescan los *bootlegga*  
nomás los trabajadores.

Cuando llegamos allá  
me decían muy seguidito,  
—Aquí en esta penitencia  
los sentencian sin delito.—

El que compuso estos versos  
no es compositor de marca,  
En el centro de este disco,  
su nombre cómo se llama.

Ahí les va la despedida  
no me lo tengan a mal,  
Cuidado con los barriles  
porque cae la federal.

Here in San Antonio  
and its surroundings,  
they never catch the bootleggers,  
only those who work for them.

When we arrived there  
they told me right away,  
“Here in this penitentiary  
you are sentenced even if not guilty.”

He who made these verses  
is not a noteworthy composer,  
In the center of this record [is]  
the name by which he is known.

This is the farewell,  
don't get me wrong.  
Be careful with the barrels because  
the federal officials might get you.

### **CAPITÁN CHARLES STEVENS**

*Disc II: #4. Parts 1 & 2. Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez-* vocal duet with guitar;  
(SA 277 & 278, Vo 8280); San Antonio, Tx. ca. October 1929.

“We’ve lost one of the ablest, if not the  
ablest enforcement man in the service. He  
was well acquainted with conditions in this  
territory and had a world of friends.” So  
commented Carl Jackson of Fort Worth, Pro-  
hibition administrator for the State of Texas

on hearing of the death of Prohibition agent  
Charles Stevens.

Texas Rangers, deputy sheriffs, police,  
Prohibition agents and other “peace offic-  
ers,” as they were commonly known forty-  
five years ago, were generally not the most



popular individuals to those in the Mexican community. Yet to read through the text of the following *corrido* it becomes clear that Stevens was not of the ordinary mold. He was not only "brave" but, one gathers, fair.

Stevens was critically wounded in a gun battle early the morning of Wednesday, September 25, 1929, six miles from San Antonio. He died later that day at 12:35 P.M. in the Santa Rosa Infirmary. The *corrido's* composer implies that had Stevens survived, he would have cleared the names of the two Mexicans in the group involved in the ambush, Pedro and Luisa Guajardo. Pedro died at 7:00 P.M., Thursday, September 26th, maintaining to the end that he and his wife (who was also among those charged with Stevens's murder) were merely with the gang on an invitation to join them in a practical joke.

As Stevens lay on his death bed, the *San Antonio Express* reported "hundreds of persons crowded the corridors of the infirmary seeking an opportunity to visit his bedside or to inquire as to his condition." The *Express* continued:

*"Ollie Stevens, the brother, described a pathetic incident that occurred Wednesday morning when an aged Mexican couple applied at the*

*infirmary for permission to see the patient. When told they could not see him, the aged man and his wife broke into tears and pleaded with the infirmary attaches for what they believed would be the last chance to see him alive...The aged couple told him that Captain Stevens had been their friend in time of need and pleaded with him to let them visit the bedside. Moved with compassion by the sorrow of this old man and his wife the brother said he ushered them into the room and when they saw the still form of their benefactor both broke into sobs."*

Charles Stevens gave the year of his birth as 1870; his birthplace being San Antonio, Texas. He began his career as a police officer at the age of 18, serving as a jailer under his father, E. A. Stevens, sheriff of Bexar County at the time, and who like his son, also died from gunshot wounds. He was mortally wounded in 1885 while arresting Mexican outlaws about eighteen miles east of San Antonio. At twenty-three, Charles Stevens was elected a constable, an office he held for three consecutive terms of two years each. In 1898 he became a deputy sheriff and then ran for sheriff in 1908, but was defeated. After again serving a period as deputy sheriff, he became a captain in the Texas Rangers and two years later became police captain in San Antonio.

National Personnel Records Center information indicates that Stevens began government service as a Prohibition agent on March 26, 1920, for the Treasury Department, Internal Revenue Service in San Antonio. His annual salary was \$1,800. Two years later he resigned to accept the position of Supervisor of Mounted Inspectors (at \$2,800. annually) for the Treasury Department Customs Service in San Antonio. Three years later he was transferred back to the Internal Revenue Service (later the Bureau of Prohibition) and served as Prohibition agent in Fort Worth and New Orleans. He was with the Fort Worth division when he died.

The fatal shooting occurred early on the morning of September 25th, 1929. Stevens and two other Prohibition agents, J. P. "Pat" Murphy and R. H. Hirschel, were returning to San Antonio from a raid on a still in Atascosa County. According to the story given by agents Murphy and Hirschel, about eight miles from San Antonio on the Pleasanton Highway, they found a woman in an automobile blocking the road and apparently signalling someone with a spotlight. After questioning, Hirschel got into the woman's car and started for San Antonio with Stevens and

Murphy close behind. The two cars had gone about seventy yards and after Hirschel and the woman had gotten a good distance beyond them, the agents' car approached a Mexican woman who was picking up cabbages spilled from two bushel baskets on the road. As Stevens slowed his speed, he and Murphy were ambushed by rifle and shotgun fire from both sides of the car. The officers returned the fire. Stevens was mortally wounded by shotgun slugs in his body. On hearing gunfire, Hirschel turned the woman's car around and rushed to Stevens' aid, but the men involved in the ambush had escaped. Murphy and Hirschel put Stevens in the woman's car and hurried him to the hospital.

"Revenge" was the motive in the shooting, according to Sheriff Alfonzo Newton, Jr., who believed the murder of the veteran Prohibition enforcement officer was intended as payment for the Prohibition raids he had made during recent months when he had broken up several distilleries.

Four persons were under arrest that night: Joe Hobrecht, Alice Smith (in whose car Stevens was taken to the hospital) along with Pedro and Louisa Guajardo (the woman who had spilled the two baskets of cabbage along



the roadside). Before his death, Pedro Guajardo said he and his wife were driving to town with a load of vegetables when he was stopped on the road by four men who gave him a 30-30 rifle. They told him that some friends of theirs were coming along and asked him to hold them up with the rifle as a practical joke.

Louisa Guajardo's written statement explained that she and her husband had gone to the scene of the shooting early Wednesday night where they met a gang of men who gave Pedro a rifle and told Louisa to stand in the roadway (in effect as a decoy) pretending to pick up cabbages when Stevens' car approached. As the vehicle slowed, the men, concealed in ambush shouted: "Federal officers " and opened fire. Her husband was felled by the first shot returned from the officers' car.

On September 26th, Lee Cottle, alias Louis Copeland, and Lynn Stephens were charged with the Stevens murder and two days later, on September 28th, McCullen "Red" Shank was also charged.

The previous afternoon, federal Prohibition men raided the home of Lynn Stephens to serve a murder warrant. They failed to find

Stephens but did discover 4,700 gallons of whiskey which they destroyed. Fire broke out, believed to have been a cigarette stub left burning after the raid. The liquor was stored in forty-three 55-gallon kegs in the attic along with hundreds of jars and quart and pint bottles in every room in the house. All of the liquor was labeled, wrapped and packed in boxes for shipment; the *San Antonio Express* noted:

*"The fire chief said that the dry agents should have taken more precautions in handling the highly inflammable material and expressed the opinion that the police officials should prohibit the promiscuous dumping of seized liquor on the premises where nearby property is endangered."*

The raids continued. By Friday of that week, nearly 10,000 gallons of liquor with an estimated market value of \$100,000 had been destroyed, the *Express* reported, and by Saturday the total was up to 12,000 gallons. County officers believed one of the largest bootlegging rings in Texas was brought to light with the killing of Stevens.

Agent Stevens was killed September 25, 1929. He died only two years short of repeal of Prohibition.

#### CAPITAN CHARLES STEVENS— Part I:

Oigan señores los que les voy a cantar,  
estos sucesos yo los canto y no lo olviden,  
Pues ya murió el jefe prohibicionista  
y que en vida se nombraba Charles Stevens.

Este que tiene de "águila los ojos"  
y que dio medida en dondequiera,  
Es el retrato mismo los despojos  
de el que en vida le nombraban "la pantera."

El no por eso perderá su alma,  
no maldijo jamás su ingrata suerte,  
Como hombre soportó con toda calma  
en el horrible campo de la muerte.

Mas debido al valor que éste tenía,  
Charles Stevens el jefe que yo nombro,  
Cuando buscaba la cerveza hacía  
que todo el mundo le tuviera asombro.

Cayó herido y entonces con desnudo,  
siguió Murphy con igual valor,  
Pelió intrépido y sin miedo,  
sostuvo aquella lucha con honor.

Al lado siempre de su fiel amigo,  
el mismo lo llevó hasta el hospital,  
Debatío para hacer que otro enemigo  
moviera el auto en el Camino Real.

Listen, men, to what I am about to sing,  
these events, I sing about and don't forget them,  
Because the head prohibitionist is dead  
and who in life was named Charles Stevens.

He who has "eagle eyes"  
and who lived up to his name everywhere,  
It's the same picture as the despoilers,  
He who in life was known as "the panther."

Not for that will he lose his soul,  
nor will he ever curse his ungrateful luck,  
Like a man he withstood all calmly  
in the horrible camp of death.

Owing to the courage that he had,  
Charles Stevens, the man to whom I am referring,  
When looking for beer, he astonished  
everyone in the whole world.

He fell injured and then with boldness,  
followed Murphy with equal courage.  
Who fought gallantly and without fear,  
continuing that struggle with honor.

At his side, always his faithful friend,  
he took him to the hospital.  
He fought to make the enemy  
move the car out of the way.



Un mexicano, luego sin más cosa  
lo meten en un lío porque oyó  
como muere de pronto en Santa Rosa,  
En silencio el secreto se incognó.

#### **CAPITÁN CHARLES STEVENS – Part II:**

Ahora en confusión queda pendiente  
la esposa de Guajardo en el condado,  
Si es que compruebe así ser inocente,  
o la encuentra culpable el gran jurado.

Oír esta tragedia y triste historia,  
por Dios que esto huele ya muy mal,  
Si la falta de un padre es tan notoria  
la de una madre en prisión no tiene igual.

Lo de siempre sucedió, lector querido,  
los hechos a la historia ya pasaron,  
Solo un pobre mexicano se ha perdido  
y los otros matadores se han pelado.

La muerte del valiente Charles Stevens  
ha venido a descubrir que en San Antonio,  
No son los *bootleggers* los que solo viven,  
son de otra parte los que crían el demonio.

Y seguirá la ley haciendo esfuerzos  
para evitar las bebidas embriagantes,  
Y yo continuaré cantando versos  
aunque parezca mal a los pedantes.

A Mexican, then, without further ado  
got into a fix because he heard  
how suddenly he dies in Santa Rosa.  
In silence the secret was kept safe.

And now in confusion what is pending,  
Guajardo's wife in the county jail,  
Was waiting to see if proven innocent  
or if the grand jury will find her guilty.

Listen to this tragedy and sad story,  
for God's sake, this smells bad,  
If the lack of a father is so notorious,  
that of a mother in prison has no equal.

The usual thing happened, dear reader,  
these deeds have now become history.  
Only one poor Mexican has been lost  
while the other killers have gotten away.

The death of the brave Charles Stevens  
has made it known that in San Antonio,  
It's not just the bootleggers who live there,  
These trouble makers come from another place.

The law will continue to make efforts  
to prohibit intoxicating drinks,  
And I will continue singing verses,  
even though the pedants don't like it.

Aunque se quiebren todas las botellas  
por agentes de la ley que a todos pasos,  
Relucirán las ilusiones bellas  
a través de los vidrios y los vasos.

No olviden, por lo tanto estos alardes,  
no hay a quién no le duela su pellejo.  
Los mismos son valientes que cobardes  
y tal como el refrán lo dice un viejo.

Even if all the bottles are broken  
by the agents of the law, in any case,  
All the beautiful illusions will shine  
through the glassware and the glass.

Meanwhile, don't forget this display,  
there is no one whose own skin won't hurt.  
The same who are brave are cowards  
just as it's said by this old man.

### **LA TRAGEDIA DE OKLAHOMA (Valle & Oro)**

*Disc II: #5. Parts 1 & 2. Silvano Ramos & Ortega* - vocal duet with guitars; (W 113082 & 83, Co 4584x);  
Chicago, Ill. August 1931.

"La Tragedia de Oklahoma," perhaps more properly called "La Tragedia de Ardmore," reminds us of another tragic incident that occurred many years ago and yet has survived because of a recorded *corrido*. In 1973 historian Abraham Hoffman became intrigued with the incident and began his own investigation which he published under the title "The Ardmore Tragedy: Local history on an International Level in the Chronicles of Oklahoma." The following is based on his research:

Ardmore, Oklahoma, is a small city presently located just off Interstate 35, about half-way between Oklahoma City and Dallas,

Texas. In 1931 it was the scene of an international incident. Three Mexican students, Emilio Cortés Rubio, Salvador Cortés Rubio, and Manuel García Gómez, were driving home to Mexico from the colleges they were attending in the United States when they stopped on the outskirts of Ardmore. One of the students was standing in front of the car intending to urinate when two deputy sheriffs, in plain clothes, drove up and stopped. Deputy Cecil Crosby delivered a reprimand to the students and then walked up to the driver. Hoffman described the incident this way:

"...the first deputy [Cecil Crosby], spotted an



automatic pistol on the lap of the driver [Emilio Cortés Rubio] and, suspecting the students to be other than what they claimed to be, reached in and grabbed the gun. There was a struggle; the third youth [Manuel García Gómez] got out of his car; so did the other deputy. The second deputy [William E. Guess] coming up to the right side of the student's car, saw the student who had gotten out of the car raise an automatic. The deputy fired twice in rapid succession, killing the student almost instantly."

In the meantime, the first deputy had disarmed the driver and advanced toward the first student [Salvador Cortés Rubio] who was still standing in front of the car, prevented by the headlights from clearly seeing what was happening. The second deputy then noticed that the driver was in the act of producing another gun. The deputy fired his pistol for the third time.

A crowd quickly gathered. The county attorney, the sheriff, and an ambulance were called. Two of the Mexicans were students at St. Benedict's College in Kansas, the third a student at the Rolla School of Mines in Missouri. Two of them, including one of the slain students, were related to Pascual Ortiz Rubio, the president of Mexico.

The news traveled fast. The Mexican *charge d'affaires* delivered a note to Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson protesting the incident. Stimson wired the governor of Oklahoma, William H. Murray, requesting a detailed investigation. Murray in turn began applying pressure on Marvin Shilling, the county attorney in Carter County. The Mexican consulate general in San Antonio appointed an experienced young Mexican-American attorney, Manuel Gonzáles, to represent the Mexican government at the trial.

Governor Murray handled the incident personally. Having publicly declared his sorrow on behalf of the state as well as himself, he ordered the most expensive caskets available at state expense. He selected Charles Clowe, a personal friend and a colonel in the National Guard, along with Murray's oldest son, Massena, to be the official escort for the slain students on the train trip back to Mexico. It was Murray's view, according to Hoffman, that he "considered the deputies to be murderers who had shot the students down in cold blood."

The preliminary hearing began immediately after the funeral. On the basis of the testimony presented, the judge ordered the



Top, left to right:  
Emilio Cortés Rubio,  
Salvador Cortés Rubio,  
Manuel García Gómez.

Bottom, left to right:  
William Guess,  
Cecil Crosby.



deputies held for trial on the charge of murder.

The funeral train left Ardmore for Morelia, Michoacán the day following the initial hearing. In addition to Colonel Clowe and Massena Murray, the slain students were accompanied by attorney Manuel González and the lone surviving student, Salvador Cortés Rubio among others.

Governor Murray's "Memoirs" mentioned one interesting incident:

*"At one stop Massena and Salvador walked down the platform and in front of a large crowd of Mexicans, Massena put his arm around Salvador in a friendly manner. This won the approval of the crowd, and Massena repeated the gesture at subsequent stops."*

When Murray — a veteran of the Bolivian colony he had tried to establish in the 1920s — learned of his son's actions, he credited the incident to his own ability to understand what he called "the peculiarities of the Spanish mind."

The trial was set for Wednesday, June 24, 1931. Five attorneys represented the prosecution; five the defense. The courtroom was filled to capacity. Extensive newspaper coverage was provided for readers in Mexico as

well as the United States. Of the two deputies, only William Guess was tried, charged with the murder of Emilio Cortés Rubio, the young man seated behind the wheel of the car. Hoffman, drawing from the *Daily Ardmoreite* (June 24-25, 1931) and the *Daily Oklahoman* (June 25, 1931), noted that County Attorney Marvin Shilling, serving as chief prosecutor, "...had hoped to prove that Emilio had not actually drawn the second pistol; that Guess in firing had acted hastily and with poor judgment. Throughout the trial the prosecution was handicapped by the fact that the students had in their possession a large quantity of weapons and ammunition. The third student, Manuel García Gómez, had purchased the firearms with the intention of selling them in Mexico. Salvador Cortés Rubio, the surviving student, could offer little to aid the prosecution's case since his view had been obstructed by the glare of the headlights. Another factor working against the prosecution was difficult to measure. This was the atmosphere that came from the death of three Carter County peace officers in the preceding six months. At least one of the three had been killed in a situation similar to the one in which Guess and Crosby had found themselves—approaching an unknown car at night."

The case went to the jury on Friday evening, June 26th, 1931. Twenty-two hours later the jury returned a verdict of "not guilty."

Considerable negative reaction resulted: the Mexican government, newspapers, government spokesmen, and students all protested as did Governor Murray.

A second trial was scheduled for November 20th. Once sequestered, the jury took only three hours to return a verdict of acquittal.

Again, Mexico responded with indignation. Secretary of State Stimson submitted a recommendation to President Herbert Hoover proposing that the United States pay an indemnity of \$15,000 per victim as "an act of grace" without admitting responsibility for the incident. The House Committee on Foreign Affairs took the matter up late in 1932 and the bill came up for debate in the House on December 9th. Historian Hoffman noted,

#### LA TRAGEDIA DE OKLAHOMA – Part I:

Noche del ocho de junio  
del año del treinta y uno,  
Mataron dos estudiantes  
por delito cual ninguno.

Llenos de gozo y contento  
iban pa' la capital,

"The discussion that took place over this issue is interesting, since the congressmen who spoke possessed little firsthand information. Indemnity payments for both victims were approved by the House; Senate approval followed several weeks later.

In May of 1933, the United States delivered a check to the Mexican Embassy for \$30,000 as payment to the families of the two victims. Almost two years had elapsed and the payment gathered little press attention.

This, essentially, is the story of the Ardmore tragedy. With this in view, it is interesting to note the somewhat one-sided approach taken by the writer of this *corrido*. However, one rather suspects that the writer was not only reflecting his own views but the views of indignant Mexicans and Mexican-Americans who followed the incident and the trial with considerable interest.

Night of the eighth of June,  
of the year nineteen thirty-one,  
Two students were killed  
for no crime at all.

Full of joy and contentment  
they headed for the capital [México],



A pasar sus vacaciones  
en nuestra tierra natal.

Por Oklahoma pasaron,  
un día de hermosa mañana,  
Ansiosos de regresar  
a la tierra michoacana.

En su carro iban corriendo  
con rapidez moderada,  
Sin imaginar siquiera  
que les tendían la emboscada.

En un pueblo de Oklahoma  
pararon pa' descansar,  
Se acercaron dos *sherifes*  
con intención de matar.

Ese Ardmore, pueblo chiquito,  
de triste recordación.  
Allí perdieron la vida,  
los mataron a traición.

A Cortéz, Rubio, y García,  
los *sherifes* se acercaron,  
Sin decirles —¿A qué va?—  
Allí los asesinaron.

En México la noticia  
causó gran indignación,  
Se levantaron protestas  
en toda nuestra nación.

To spend their vacation  
in our native land.

They passed through Oklahoma  
on a beautiful morning,  
Anxious to return  
to the land of Michoacán.

In their car they were going  
at a very moderate speed,  
Without even imagining  
that they would be ambushed.

In a town in Oklahoma  
they stopped to rest,  
Two sheriffs approached them  
with the intention of killing them.

The small town of Ardmore,  
it is sad to remember,  
There they lost their lives,  
they were killed as traitors.

Cortéz, Rubio, and García,  
were approached by the sheriffs,  
And without saying, "What are you doing?"  
Right there they murdered them.

In Mexico, the news  
caused great indignation,  
They raised protests  
throughout our entire nation.

*La Prensa* de San Antonio,  
la gran noticia nos daba,  
Que en Ardmore, a los bolillos,  
el jurado los juzgaba.

#### LA TRAGEDIA DE OKLAHOMA – Part II:

Los *sherifes* del condado,  
el día que fueron juzgados,  
Como un premio de su crimen  
después fueron libertados.

Uno de los estudiantes  
que murió como valiente,  
Era sobrino carnal  
de nuestro gran presidente.

Los jueces y los jurados  
de México se burlaron,  
Y a sus paisanos *sherifes*  
luego, luego libertaron.

A México los llevaron  
con grandes pompas y honores,  
Luego allí los sepultaron  
en la tierra de las flores.

Los familiares de Rubio  
estaban muy disgustados,  
Pues los *sherifes* matones  
nunca serán castigados.

*La Prensa* of San Antonio  
made us big news,  
That in Ardmore, the gringos,  
would be judged by the jury.

The county sheriffs,  
on the day they were judged,  
Were later freed  
as a prize for their crime.

One of the students  
who died bravely  
Was a kindred nephew  
of our great president.

The judges and the jury  
mocked México,  
And their fellow sheriffs  
were freed in due course.

They were taken to Mexico  
with great pomp and honor,  
Then they were buried  
in the land of the flowers.

The family of Rubio  
were very much disgusted,  
For the sheriffs, the killers,  
will never be punished.



Con la nación indignada  
nuestro presidente Ortiz,  
Ordenó que sus dos hijos  
salieran de este país.

Los mismos de Michoacán  
no se querían conformar,  
Y esperan Hoover castigue  
este sistema de obrar.

Los estudiantes mandaban  
sin dilación cual ninguna,  
Sus protestas al tío Sam  
por el caso de Oklahoma.

Ya termina este corrido  
de la tragedia de Ardmore,  
Esperando que algún día  
vengaremos nuestro honor.

## CORRIDO DE LA NIÑA JUNE ROBLES (Trinidad & María López)

*Disc II: #6. Parts 1 & 2. Pareja López:* Trinidad & María López - vocal duet with guitars;  
(DLA 38 & 39, De 10019); Los Angeles, September 11, 1934.

One of the most memorable incidents in Tucson history occurred the afternoon of April 25, 1934, when six-year-old June Robles was kidnapped while walking home from school. She was accompanied by her cousin, Barney Kengla - also six years of age - who said he was walking a few steps ahead of June when

With an indignant nation  
our President Ortiz [Rubio],  
Ordered his two sons to be  
removed from this country [US].

The same from Michoacán  
they were not satisfied,  
As they waited for Hoover to punish  
the way the system works.

The students sent  
without any delay,  
Their protests to Uncle Sam  
because of the case of Oklahoma.

This is the end of the ballad  
of the tragedy of Ardmore,  
Hoping that one day  
we will avenge our honor.

he heard someone call out her name. She walked over to a car and got in. Barney described the driver as "someone he did not know, of dark complexion, medium height and of Mexican nationality." June's father, Fernando Robles, did not learn of his daughter's disappearance until about two

hours later when a newsboy ran into the Robles Electrical Shop on North Church Street and delivered a ransom note. The boy explained that a tall thin man in a gray suit had given him a quarter to deliver the note.

The note demanded \$15,000 in small bills for return of the child. The kidnapper made it clear that if his instructions regarding delivery of the money were not obeyed, the child would be murdered.

The Governor of Arizona, B.B. Moeur, offered a \$500 reward for the arrest of the kidnapper(s), later visiting the Robles' home, where he offered to place the resources of the state at the family's disposal. The Pima County Board of Supervisors added another \$500 to the reward money as did the Morgan-McDermott American Legion post. For its part, the Tucson city council offered to raise the total to \$2,000 but discovered the city statutes made no provision for making such expenditures.

When word got out of June's disappearance, according to *La Opinión*, some 2,000 men assembled to block roads and to search the surrounding desert. The *Arizona Daily Star* in Tucson placed the number at 500 armed volunteers "who combed the city in a house-to-

house search." It was reported that "American Legion women set up soup kitchens" to feed the hungry volunteers. Sheriff John Belton and Police Chief Gus Wollard were joined by special agents of the United States Department of Justice as the search intensified.

For five days there was no word. Finally, a very distraught father placed the following notice in the *Arizona Daily Star*, which the newspaper printed on its front page:

*"I do not wish to discredit the officers. God knows they have done all they could. But only one thing is left now. I must get in touch with the kidnappers. I cannot wait any longer. I want my baby back."*

The child's grandfather, Don Bernabe Robles, owner of the Robles Electrical Shop and a rancher of considerable means, offered to talk with the kidnappers without police intervention. He offered \$10,000 in small bills.

For days nothing was heard. There was much speculation as to who the kidnappers might be and the motive. Many suspects were brought in and interrogated. Some suggested the child was dead.

Don Bernabe wanted reassurance. He drove to Pitiquito, Sonora, to consult with a highly respected and well-known *adivina* (a



psychic and a medium), Manuel Gamboa. Known as "the Prophet," Gamboa stated flatly: "The girl is surviving and will be found shortly." His words did indeed prove prophetic. On May 14th, nineteen days after she was abducted, Herbert H. Hotchkiss, secretary to Governor Moeur, opened a letter addressed to the governor. It read:

*"Her body will be found in a buried box. Go out Broadway to Wilmot Road. Turn south to Rincon Way. Go one mile, then walk 150 steps into the desert."*

Carlos Robles, Chief Deputy County Attorney, and June's uncle, was notified immediately. He, in turn, advised the County Attorney, Clarence Houston, and together the two men sped to the area as instructed in the note. Apparently they searched for some time before Houston "stumbled across the top of a cruelly-contrived cage, buried in the ground and concealed by cactus and prickly pear." A tall Sahuaro is said to have marked the spot.

"Houston threw open the lid and found the tiny girl alive," reported Chris Cole writing in an article published in the *Arizona Daily Star* on October 25, 1953, some nineteen years after the event. "She was chained in the box with a tire chain manacled to her leg and

welded to a steel rod driven into the ground." A key to the lock on the chain was found on top of the cage.

Robles and Houston found a frightened, exhausted little girl. Covered with insect bites as well as open sores from the manacle on her leg, they rushed her back to Tucson. Once June's strength was restored and she could talk, she was asked about her kidnappers. She said she knew them only as "Will" and "Bill" and "became terrified at the mention of their names."

The following month, on June 8th, Alvaro Flores, a Papago Indian was found dead, close to the point where June was entombed. Authorities concluded that Flores, who lived on a small ranch nearby, knew too much.

Reporter Cole's investigation revealed that on August 16, 1937, a transcript was made of testimony given by a Phoenix woman "who admitted an intimate knowledge of the kidnapping. Her testimony was never made public," according to Cole, "because it could never be proved. Some of the people named in her confession are still alive. They cannot be named."

It was widely reported that the man responsible for the kidnapping was from

Nogales and was working with two friends from Phoenix (presumably "Will" and "Bill"). According to Cole, the Nogales man was "extremely frightened" by public and law enforcement reaction and "Acting on the advice of his attorney, the kidnapper wrote a bogus check for a small sum, succeeded in having himself arrested, and was placed safely in jail in another Arizona city. The following year he committed suicide by swallowing poison tablets used in wolf bait," according to the Phoenix woman's transcript.

In a brief telephone interview in early February 1994, June Robles (married and using her married name) confirmed that no ransom was ever paid and no definitive arrests were ever made. Beyond telling me that she had no memory of the kidnappers and that "the papers were tied up in Washington," she did say that there was a great deal of misinformation that had circulated about the case. It was also clear that she had no desire to

resurrect the memory of the incident and that over the years she had made a concerted effort to forget about the matter. I felt I should respect her wishes and we concluded our conversation.

An incident of the magnitude of the June Robles kidnapping—the abduction of the son of the American aviator Charles Lindbergh just two years earlier—generated the writing of a number of *corridos*, each with a different approach and interpretation, among them a *corrido* by the Tucson-born singer/composer, Lalo Guerrero. In an interview in February 1994, he mentioned having written his *corrido* about June Robles when he was a member of the Tucson-based vocal trio, Los Carlistas. Like many *corridos* of the period, it was never recorded and has long since been forgotten. It is through the recorded *corrido* that we remember certain events, (many of them tragic in nature) including this "Corrido de la Niña June Robles."

### CORRIDO DE LA NIÑA JUNE ROBLES – Part I:

Año de mil novecientos  
y treinta y cuatro presente,  
el veinticinco de abril  
plagiaron a una inocente.

In the year of nineteen hundred  
and thirty four,  
the twenty-fifth of April,  
an innocent girl was kidnapped.



En Tucson, Arizona,  
esto fue lo que pasó,  
a una niña de seis años  
un vil hombre la plagió.

June salió de la escuela  
hacia su hogar caminaba,  
la inocente no sabía  
que aquel hombre la esperaba.

El se la quiso engañar  
pero ella no lo creyó,  
valido de la ocasión  
el tonto se la llevó.

El hombre dice a la niña  
cuando comienza a llorar,  
si no paraba su ruido  
muy duro le iba a pegar.

Y con su preciosa carga  
aquel hombre iba contento,  
a muchas millas corría  
hasta que llegó al desierto.

Al pie de un alto saguaro  
de su automóvil bajó,  
en la tierra estaba un hoyo  
a la niña la metió.

En una jaula de hierro  
qué dura serían sus penas,

In Tucson, Arizona,  
this is what happened,  
A girl of six years  
was kidnapped by an evil man.

June left her school  
walking to her home,  
The innocent one did not know  
that a man was waiting for her.

He wanted to deceive her  
but she did not believe him,  
The stupid man saw his chance  
and took her away.

The man said to the girl  
when she began to cry,  
If you don't stop your noise  
I am going to hit you very hard.

With his precious cargo  
that man went contented,  
And many miles he drove  
until he reached the desert.

At the foot of a tall saguaro  
the man got down from his car,  
In the dirt was a hole  
where he put the girl.

In a steel cage  
her suffering must have been great,

al momento la agarró  
y le puso unas cadenas.

Allí la dejó solita  
ella dice la verdad,  
le cierra arriba la tumba  
y quedó en la obscuridad.

#### CORRIDO DE LA NIÑA JUNE ROBLES – Part II:

Arrastraban también los días  
para ella no estaba malo,  
porque los iba notando  
en la tierra con un palo.

Pasaron como seis días  
y allá *nadien* la fue a ver,  
pobrecita de la niña  
ya deben de comprender.

A noche recordó  
parece que algo sentía,  
y vio la luz de la luna  
en su cara le caía.

Los hombres la recordaron  
ella dice en dondequiera,  
al instante le dijeron  
que la sábana les diera.

A ninguno de los dos  
pudo ella reconocer.

At that moment he took her  
and put her in chains.

He left her alone,  
she tells the truth,  
He closed over the tomb  
and she was left in darkness.

The days dragged by slowly  
for her it was tolerable,  
Because she was marking them off  
in the dirt with a stick.

Six days went by  
and no one came to see her,  
The poor little girl  
they should understand.

At night she remembered  
it seems that she felt something,  
And she saw the light of the moon  
as it fell on her face.

The men remembered her,  
she said wherever she might be,  
At that instant they said  
that she give them the bedsheet.

Neither of the two  
did she recognize.



Les nombraba "Billy" y "Will,"  
pero no los pudo ver.

Dos pies y media de fondo  
y también dos pies de anchura,  
por ocho de longitud  
ésa fue su sepultura.

Ya no quiero recordar  
ya me duele el corazón,  
diecinueve días se estuvo  
la niña en esa prisión.

Cuando a rescatarla fueron  
de aquella cueva maldita,  
su reporte de la escuela  
reclamaba la niña.

Ya me voy, ya me despido  
les digo a ricos y a pobres,  
aquí termina el corrido  
de la niña June Robles.

## INUNDACIÓN DE NOGALES (The Nogales Flood) (G. Guzmán)

**Disc II: #7. Parts 1 & 2.** Leonardo Sifuentes & Guadalupe Guzmán - vocal duet with guitar by Sifuentes and harp by H. Hernández; (BVE 67194 & 95, Vi 30381); Texas Hotel, San Antonio, Tx. January 28, 1931.

Nogales, Sonora, and its twin city across  
the Border, Nogales, Arizona, were inun-  
dated by a torrential rain the evening of Au-

Their names were "Billy" and "Will,"  
but she couldn't see them.

Two feet and a half deep,  
and also two feet in width,  
by eight in length,  
that was her sepulcher.

Now I don't want to remember  
now it hurts my heart,  
For nineteen days  
the girl was in that prison.

When they came to rescue her  
from that horrible cave,  
Her report from the school  
claimed the little girl.

Now I leave you and say farewell,  
I say this to the rich and the poor,  
Now I end this *corrido*  
of the girl June Robles.

gust 7, 1930. The next morning, *La Opinión*  
announced the tragedy to its Spanish lan-  
guage readers in the Los Angeles area. "A

furious tempest filled the arroyos that cross  
Nogales; the streets turned to rivers and tele-  
graph offices, autos, animals, trees and homes  
were swept along in the currents." The catas-  
trophe was said to be without precedent.

This *corrido*, recorded in January 1931, fea-  
tures the distinctive sound of the diatonic  
harp, played by H. Hernández. The com-  
poser of the verses, G. Guzmán, presumably  
the same Guzmán listed as one of the singers,  
focused his text on Nogales, Sonora, where  
seven people died and some one hundred  
homes were destroyed. Guzmán suggested  
that the situation was less severe in Nogales,  
Arizona, but the final tally showed that eight  
perished on the American side and 3,000

### INUNDACION DE NOGALES – Part I:

A mil y novecientos treinta  
pongan muy bien su atención,  
pues en Nogales, Sonora,  
había una inundación.

A la una de la tarde  
un jueves tengo presente,  
azotó una tempestad  
donde murió mucha gente.

Era de dar compasión  
en tan crítico momento,

were left homeless.

The reporter for *La Opinión* noted that  
"Nogales, Sonora, famous for its night life, is  
completely dark and patrolled by soldiers."  
Cited among those who lost their lives in the  
Mexican city were Rafael Jarero, a well-known  
music teacher and Ramón de la Puerta, a  
barber who is cited in the *corrido*. "El señor  
presidente" probably refers to the Governor  
of Sonora, Don Francisco Elías, who contrib-  
uted 6,000 pesos (just over \$1,000 at the rate of  
exchange prevailing at the time) which initi-  
ated a similar successful fund raising effort on  
the American side. The Nogales flood was a  
disaster that was long remembered by those  
affected on both sides of the Border.

In nineteen hundred and thirty  
with much attention,  
There in Nogales, Sonora,  
there was a flood.

At one in the afternoon  
it was a Thursday,  
We were lashed by a tempest  
where many people died.

It was to give compassion  
in that critical moment



hasta que vino el auxilio  
el cuerpo de salvamento.

Al momento pidió auxilio  
pues el señor presidente,  
para salvar las familias  
y que no muriera gente.

Y el José Valenzuela,  
es el cónsul mexicano,  
pidió auxilio a la Cruz Blanca  
que también les dio la mano.

La Cámara de Comercio,  
la Cruz Roja americana,  
también prestó sus servicios  
a las ciudades mexicanas.

A las cuatro de la tarde  
pues vuelve la tempestad,  
se prolongó por tres horas  
destruyendo la *siudad*.

De lados de Santa Rita  
esta tempestad azotó,  
en Nogales, Arizona,  
se cree que nadie murió.

Señora A. de Carrero  
con su esposo quedó muerta,  
y salen *adepurados*  
también Ramón de la Puerta.

until the rescue team arrived  
to give assistance.

Assistance was called for  
by the president (Gov. Elias?)  
to save the families  
in order that no people would die.

Also José Valenzuela,  
he is the Mexican consul,  
Asked for help from the White Cross  
that also gave us a hand.

The Chamber of Commerce,  
the American Red Cross,  
Also lent their services  
to the Mexican cities.

At four in the afternoon  
the tempest returns,  
It lasted for three hours  
destroying the city.

At the side of Santa Rita  
this tempest lashed out,  
In Nogales, Arizona,  
it is believed that no one died.

Mrs. A. de Carrero  
with her husband, was found dead,  
And many left there quickly  
and also Ramón de la Puerta

## INUNDACION DE NOGALES – Part II:

Empezaron a sacar  
a toditos los ahogados,  
muchos estaban heridos  
otros también desmayados.

Y también de muchas casas  
se salió toda la gente,  
porque se estaban cayendo  
y así ordenó el presidente.

La Cruz Roja y los soldados  
y también la autoridad,  
la legión americana  
registraba la *siudad*.

Para no cantar a ustedes  
les ha de dar compasión,  
de ver la gente en la calle  
corriendo sin dirección.

Hasta hoteles y tiendas  
muchas estaban destruidas,  
y también muchas personas  
allí perdieron sus vidas.

Aquel momento tan triste  
se presentó en la ocasión,  
de ver todos los ahogados  
era de dar compasión.

With the intent of removing  
all of the homeless,  
Many were wounded  
others had fainted.

And also from many homes  
the people came out,  
Because their homes were collapsing  
and because the president ordered them to go.

The Red Cross and the soldiers  
and also the authorities,  
The American Legion  
examined the city.

So not as to sing to you  
I want to offer compassion,  
To see the people in the streets  
running around in confusion.

Even hotels and stores  
many were destroyed,  
And also many people  
there they lost their lives.

That moment so sad  
the occasion presented itself,  
To see all of the homeless  
one wants to offer compassion.



Ayudó la Legión de Honor,  
la Cruz Roja americana,  
que fueron a dar auxilio  
a la *siudad* mexicana.

Adiós José Valenzuela  
y también el presidente,  
que pidieron el auxilio  
para salvar mucha gente.

Vuela, vuela palomita  
párate en estos rosales,  
Señores ya les canté  
La Inundación de Nogales.

The Legion of Honor helped, as did  
the American Red Cross,  
They came to the assistance  
Of the Mexican city.

Good-bye José Valenzuela  
and also the president,  
who called for the assistance  
to save many people.

Return, return little dove  
stand in the roses,  
Gentlemen, now I sing about  
The Nogales Flood.

## CORRIDO DE BONIFACIO TORRES (Luis M. Bañuelos)

*Disc II: #8. Parts 1 & 2. Hermanos Bañuelos* - vocal duet with guitars; (LAE 859 & 860, Vo 8369);  
Los Angeles, Ca. ca. August 15, 1930.

The story of Bonifacio Torres is that of a sixteen year old boy who, for one day March 1, 1930, managed to stir up the town of Jarales, New Mexico. In the process he killed one deputy sheriff, wounded the sheriff and another deputy, and held two hundred men at bay for several hours. It is a pathetic story of a youth who, as the *corridista* phrased it, "preferred to die rather than to see himself a slave." And when it was all over, Bonifacio Torres was dead.

Bonifacio, one gathers, never quite found his place in the scheme of things. Apparently, on the morning of March 1, 1930, the boy's mother, Mrs. Juan Torres, called officers for help. The *Santa Fe New Mexican*, of March 1, 1930, reported that deputies "...believed Torres to be drunk and disturbing the peace when they received the call." The *New Mexican's* issue of March 3rd, however, reported that they came "to take the youth to a reform school" (which, incidentally con-

forms to the *corrido*).

Three men came to the Torres home to arrest young Bonifacio: Sheriff Ignacio Aragón and two deputies, Charles Cunningham and Daniel Sánchez. According to the *Santa Fe* newspaper, Sánchez was shot as they arrived at the home. Aragón was then wounded in the back and Cunningham was shot as he broke into the house. The young Torres, concealed in the attic, fired through a hole in the ceiling, a shot which struck Cunningham. The deputy died the morning of March 3rd.

A posse was quickly recruited which headed directly to the Torres home. The men first tried tear gas but that failed to bring out the youth because of the open windows in the house. The posse then obtained dynamite to blow up the house (a rather desperate measure, to say the least). Finally, "It was not until two members of the posse, at the risk of their lives, threw gasoline torches into the house, igniting the structure that Torres was forced out." (Assuming Mrs. Torres did call the officers in the first place, one wonders how she felt watching two hundred rather desperate men attempt

to burn down her home?) The writer of the *corrido* called their efforts "an inhuman act." Suffice to say that Torres "...came screaming and running from the house and fired directly into the band of posse men. They returned the fire and Torres was fatally wounded with a shot in the heart."

It seems reasonable to assume that Torres was something of a problem before the incident (becoming a rather substantial problem as matters unfolded). The *corridista* who takes a rather sympathetic view, attributes Bonifacio's problems to being poor. Yet what is most significant, as far as the *corrido* is concerned, is the writer's admiration for the fortitude of this young Mexican-American. "In the historical records they'll have him as a brave man," reads (in part) the second verse. In the second part of the *corrido*, the writer observes that the deputies "were shooting against the young one and he gave them lessons in manliness." And in setting fire to the place they were "...proving that they were dealing with a man."

Bonifacio Torres has come and gone. He lived only sixteen years. This one *corrido* keeps his memory alive.



## CORRIDO DE BONIFACIO TORRES – Part I:

El día primero de marzo  
de mil novecientos treinta,  
murió Bonifacio Torres;  
no se les pierda la cuenta.

En el pueblo de Jarales,  
Nuevo México su nombre,  
de la historia en los anales  
lo tendrá como el de un hombre.

El quiso la libertad  
no la esclavitud sufrir,  
y por no verse de esclavo,  
prefirió mejor morir.

Muchacho que la pobreza  
lo llevó a portarse mal,  
y por esto lo llamaba  
la escuela correccional.

Y cuando Ignacio Aragón,  
el *sherife* de aquel lugar,  
lo fue aprehender Bonifacio,  
quiso su vida jugar.

Porque él nomás vio al *sherife*  
que lo iba a aprehender y luego,  
sobre él y los ayudantes  
con valor les hizo fuego.

The first day of March  
of nineteen hundred and thirty,  
Bonifacio Torres died;  
remember the story.

In the town of Jarales,  
New Mexico, its name,  
In the historical records  
they'll recall him as a brave man.

He wanted liberty  
and not to suffer slavery.  
He preferred to die  
rather than see himself a slave.

A boy who was led to evil  
on account of being poor,  
And for this they summoned him  
to the correctional school.

When Ignacio Aragón,  
the sheriff of that place,  
came to apprehend Bonifacio,  
he gambled for his life.

For when he saw the sheriff  
trying to apprehend him,  
Against him and his deputies  
He fired at them with bravery.

Y a los primeros disparos  
hizo blanco en Aragón,  
y desde aquellos momentos  
comenzó la confusión.

Y después cincuenta hombres  
allí se vieron reunidos,  
resultando de entre ellos  
también otros dos heridos.

Fueron Charles Cunningham,  
Rafael Sánchez, policía,  
que allí fueron por calientes  
y sólo encontraron frías.

Al ver de toditas partes  
tan tremenda balacera,  
al presenciar aquel pleito  
vinieron de dondequiera.

## CORRIDO DE BONIFACIO TORRES – Part II:

Luego doscientas personas  
que no viene al caso el nombre,  
disparaban contra el joven  
que les dio lecciones de hombre

Teméndole a un hombre solo  
por su defensa inaudita,  
pensaron cobardemente  
volarlo con dinamita.

In the first shots  
he wiped out Aragón,  
And from that moment on  
the confusion began.

Afterwards fifty men  
were united there,  
and as a result, among them,  
two men were wounded.

They were Charles Cunningham  
and Rafael Sánchez, a policeman,  
They went in hot to take him  
but came out wounded and empty handed.

Seeing from all parts  
such tremendous shooting,  
People from everywhere  
were witnessing that fight.

Then two hundred persons,  
no need to mention their names,  
Were shooting against the young one  
and he gave them lessons in manliness.

Fearing one lone man  
for his unprecedented defense,  
They made a cowardly decision  
to blow him up with dynamite.



Un cartucho le pusieron  
para causarle la muerte,  
pero el cartucho fue en vano  
y él siguió haciendose fuerte.

Luego pensaron rendirlo  
con los gases lacrimantes,  
pero el muchacho seguía  
haciendo fuego como antes.

Hasta que un hombre plomero  
y un *sub-sherif* del condado  
se prestaron para un acto  
de valor por lo arriesgado.

Y aunque era un acto inhumano  
lo que esos hombres hacían,  
allí se quedaron chatos  
todos los que lo veían.

Iban a prenderle fuego  
al lugar donde el muchacho,  
ya les estaba probando  
que trataban con un macho.

Por lo que el joven ya viendo  
que lo querían quemar,  
mirando cerca la muerte  
su vida quiso salvar.

Y no temiendo a las balas  
no le importó perecer,

They put up a cartridge  
to bring him to his death,  
But the cartridge was in vain  
and he just kept on getting stronger.

Then they thought to subdue him  
with tear gas,  
But you could see him  
firing like before.

Until a man who was a plumber  
and a deputy sheriff from the county,  
Volunteered for an act  
of daring courage.

Although it was an inhuman act  
what those men tried to do,  
Everyone there was surprised  
at what they were seeing.

They were going to set fire  
to the place where the boy  
was already proving  
that they were dealing with a man.

The boy was beginning to see  
that they wanted to burn him,  
Seeing death so close by,  
he wanted to save his life.

And not fearing the bullets  
he didn't care if he perished,

creyó el pobre libertarse  
hechando luego a correr.

Y el día primero de marzo  
del mil novecientos treinta  
murió Bonifacio Torres—  
no se les pierda la cuenta.

He thought of escaping  
by trying to run away.

The first day of March  
of nineteen hundred and thirty  
Bonifacio Torres died;  
don't forget the date.

## LUZ ARCOS

*Disc II: #9. Parts 1 & 2. Los Hermanos Chavarría:* Alfonso & Martín Echeverría - vocal duet with  
Martín - guitar and Alfonso - violin; (W 112920 & 21, Co 4555x); ca. April 1931.

"Luz Arcos" as sung by the Chavarría (Echeverría) brothers and recorded in San Antonio in April of 1931 was previously reissued on an album by Los Hermanos Chavarría (on Folklyric LP 9037). Prof. Jim Nicolopulos has adapted the text and translation from those done by Will Spires, printed in the pamphlet in the accompanying Folklyric LP. These notes are by Prof. Jim Nicolopulos.

This original version of "Luz Arcos" seems to have established this *corrido* in oral tradition throughout the Southwest. Numerous subsequent recordings have been made in a wide variety of styles and by many different groups. All of these later recordings seem to have been made in the post-WW II period, and all are abbreviated versions of that origi-

nally sung by the Chavarrías. The *corrido* concerns a shooting that occurred on the night of Christmas, 1928, in the little town of Hondo, Texas, about thirty miles west of San Antonio.

As Will Spires observed in the pamphlet accompanying the Chavarría Brothers' LP referred to above, the background of the feud that led to the shooting could not be determined from either the text of the *corrido* itself, the scholarly publication of a version collected in New Mexico or the articles concerning the case which were published in *La Opinión* (the major Spanish-language newspaper in Los Angeles). Further research, however, has disinterred from the dusty (literally), yellowed pages of San Antonio's *La Prensa* (August 24, 1930, pp.1, 11) Luz Arcos's







style") and then ran Arcos out at gunpoint. Luz Arcos went directly to the sheriff's house to make a complaint, but was told that nothing could be done until morning. He then went to his billiard parlor, but *no queriendo continuar con dificultades y animado de los mejores deseos para que todo terminara en una forma amistosa* ("not wanting to continue with problems and inspired by the best wishes that everything be brought to a friendly conclusion"), Arcos returned once again to the Barrientos' store. Luz Arcos had barely opened the screen door when he saw Don Luciano Barrientos and his two sons coming towards him in a menacing fashion. One of them pulled the trigger of his pistol several times, but the weapon misfired. The other brother leapt behind the counter and opened fire from there, putting a hole through Arcos' hat above the band. At the same time Luciano Barrientos (68 years old), the father, came at Arcos with a large knife. At this point Luz Arcos opened fire "in legitimate self-defense." Arcos drove directly to awake the sheriff and turn himself in, insisting that he had only fired to protect his own life. When the sheriff arrived at the Barrientos's store, however, *ya manos misteriosas habían quitado las armas de las*

*manos de mis agresores, borrando de esta manera toda prueba reveladora que sirviese de base para mi defensa* ("mysterious hands had already taken the weapons out of the hands of my attackers, erasing in this way all proof that might serve as a basis for my defense"). A jury in Hondo sentenced Luz Arcos to death for homicide after a brief trial, and it was only during the appeals process that Arcos' lawyers introduced the defense of hereditary insanity.

This account published in *La Prensa* betrays the obvious intervention of the journalist, Rojas, and should be taken as neither Arcos' exact words, nor as the last word on the circumstances of this lamentable shooting. Nonetheless, it agrees in most respects with the very first published account of the events which appeared in *La Prensa* (December 27, 1928, pg. 2), where it is further specified that the milk in question was a "bottle of a quarter gallon" (i.e. a quart). Moreover, Rojas' account is a valuable addition to the background of this historically accurate and durable Texas *corrido*, and provides the information with which the original audience would have been familiar; so much so that the *corridista* could go straight to the most

intense moment, leaving the preliminary circumstances out of his narration.

The case attracted a great deal of attention and dragged on for almost two years, due in part to widespread public support and a belated attempt to plead hereditary insanity after the initial conviction. This is clearly the *mucho debate y mucho deliberar* ("much debate and much deliberation") referred to in the *corrido*. Several socially prominent women, including Mrs. H. C. Carter and Mrs. Dora Bossman, organized benefits and lobbied the governor and legislature on Arcos' behalf (*La Prensa* September 7, 1930, p. 10 and November 4, 1930, p. 1). Luz Arcos was finally executed November 6, 1930, at Huntsville. *La Prensa* (Saturday, November 8, 1930, section 2, p. 5) carried a headline which spanned the entire page, declaring: *Valientemente murió Arcos en la Silla Eléctrica* ("Arcos died bravely in the Electric Chair"). Both of the articles that followed state that Arcos died *como un hombre* ("like a man"), as befits the hero of a *corrido*. Unlike most other condemned men, Arcos required no assistance entering the dark, little room and seated himself in the electric chair, calmly and coolly adjusting the cuffs of his pants to accommodate the electrodes. Ac-

cording to these accounts, Arcos had the sympathy of the prison staff (and apparently, the reading public, as well). One of his final requests was that the prison orchestra come to entertain him while he was awaiting the fateful hour. The *corrido* accurately reports that his very last request was "La Paloma." Los Hermanos Chavarría finish their recording of "Luz Arcos" with a few bars of "La Paloma" on violin and guitar. In fact, it is very probable that the *corrido* as sung by the Chavarrías was composed primarily from information obtained from the same newspaper accounts to which I have referred. The Chavarrías recorded "Luz Arcos" some six months after the execution, and almost all of the details in the *corrido* agree with those published in *La Prensa*. Of particular interest is the fact that an abbreviated version of this *corrido*, which is clearly descended from the Chavarría recording, was collected from oral tradition in New Mexico as "Luis Arcos" by the musicologist J. D. Robb in 1956 (*Hispanic Folk Music of New Mexico and the Southwest* [Norman: U of Oklahoma Press, 1980] 97-98). Although Robb appears to have been unaware of it, his find was an excellent indication of the seminal importance of the early recorded *corrido* in spread-



ing news of significant events through key songs and texts—a process known as “sec-

### LUZ ARCOS – Part I:

Luz Arcos fue ejecutado según era su sentencia, el día siete de noviembre de mil *novecientos* treinta.

Murió conforme a las leyes que gobiernan al estado; pagó con su propia vida tres vidas que había quitado.

Mil *novecientos* veinte y ocho, señores tengan presente, en ese pueblo del Hondo mataron a los Barrientes.

Luz Arcos les había dicho cuando ya se fue enojado: —En unos cuantos minutos todo quedará arreglado.

Se fue por su carabina y volvió inmediatamente, y al primero que asegura es a Luciano Barriente.

Cuando Ildefonso se vino a ver qué había sucedido,

ondary orality”—through phonograph recordings in Mexico and the Southwest US.

Luz Arcos was executed in accord with his sentence on the seventh of November of nineteen thirty.

He died in accordance with the laws that govern the state; he paid with his own life for the three lives he had taken.

Nineteen and twenty-eight, gentlemen, please keep in mind, in this town of Hondo they killed the Barrientes.

Luz Arcos had told them when he left in anger: “In just a few minutes everything will be taken care of.”

He went to get his carbine and he returned immediately, and the first one he made sure of was Luciano Barriente.

When Ildefonso came out to see what had happened,

con otra bala certera también lo dejó tendido.

Luego se vino José con su pistola en la mano y vino y encontró ya muertos a su padre y a su hermano.

José le dijo a Luz Arcos: —¡Así sí serás valiente, aquí cambiamos las vidas o no me llamo Barriente!

Se agarraron a balazos, y José fue el más ligero, disparó el primer balazo y le agujeró el sombrero.

### LUZ ARCOS – Part II:

Se siguieron disparando sobre los cuerpos tendidos; tuvo más suerte Luz Arcos; cayó José mal herido.

Dejando a los tres tirados Arcos se fue a presentar: —Yo he matado a tres hombres, váyanlos a levantar.

José estaba agonizando, le trajeron el doctor;

with another accurate bullet Arcos also laid him low.

Then José came in with his pistol in his hand and came and found already dead his father and his brother.

José told Luz Arcos: “So! You probably really are a tough guy! Here we will exchange our lives or my name isn’t Barriente!”

They started shooting at each other and José was the quickest, he fired the first shot and put a hole through Arcos’ hat.

They kept on shooting at each other across the stretched out bodies; Luz Arcos was luckier; José fell badly wounded.

Leaving the three bodies Arcos went to turn himself in: “I’ve killed three men, go and pick them up.”

José was in his last agony; they brought him a doctor;



dijo: —Me voy con mi padre,  
no me curen, por favor.

Sus pobrecitas familias  
daban mucha compasión;  
al ver a los tres tendidos  
enfermo es ya el corazón.

Fue así lo habría dispuesto  
la Divina Providencia:  
los tres fueron al sepulcro,  
y Arcos a la penitencia.

Después de mucho debate  
y mucho deliberar  
lo condenó el Gran Jurado  
a la pena capital.

No mostró Luz Arcos pena  
ni mostró arrepentimiento;  
se mantuvo muy sereno  
hasta el último momento.

Le preguntan qué desea  
en sus últimos momentos:  
—Que me toquen “La Paloma”  
para morir más contento.

he said: “I’m going with my father,  
don’t try to save me, please.”

Their wretched families  
aroused great pity;  
seeing the three bodies laid out  
sickened one’s heart.

That was how Divine Providence  
had probably decreed it:  
the three went to their graves,  
and Arcos to the penitentiary.

After much debate  
and much deliberation  
the Grand Jury condemned him  
to capital punishment.

Luz Arcos showed no sorrow  
nor did he show remorse;  
he remained extremely calm  
to the very end.

They ask him what he wishes  
in his last moments:  
“That they play me ‘La Paloma’  
so I’ll die more contentedly.”

## NUEVO CORRIDO DE LAREDO

*Disc II: #10. Parts 1 & 2. Salas & Mendoza:* vocal duet with guitars; (SA 7051 & 7052, Mel 16084);  
San Antonio, Tx. December 9, 1930.

Remembering the city or town of one’s  
birth and/or residence invariably gives rise  
to nostalgia, and I know of no country that has  
had more songs written about its *ciudades* and  
*pueblos* than Mexico. The city of Guadalajara  
(coupled with the state of Jalisco of which it  
serves as the capital) has probably inspired  
the greatest number of songs, but others—  
including the companion Border cities of  
Laredo (Texas) and Nuevo Laredo

(Tamaulipas)—have also served as a focal  
point for the song writer’s pen. Recorded in  
San Antonio in December of 1930, singers  
Salas and Mendoza touch on a number of  
issues in this “New Corrido of Laredo,” in-  
cluding smugglers, and the courage of Mexi-  
cans during World War I. The *corrido* con-  
cludes on a positive note by observing that  
the area offers many diversions, both night  
and day.

### NUEVO CORRIDO DE LAREDO – Part I:

Este es el mero corrido  
deese Laredo mentado,  
Cantando quiero decirles  
por lo que aquí hemos pasado.

Este puerto de Laredo  
es un puerto muy lucido,  
donde se encuentra la mata  
de esos hombres decididos.

Este pueblo de Laredo  
es un pueblo muy mentado.  
Los agentes de la ley  
andan siempre con cuidado.

This is the *corrido* about the  
celebrated town of Laredo.  
I want to sing to you  
about what goes on here.

This port of Laredo  
is a very brilliant port  
where you’ll find the cradle  
of those determined men.

This town of Laredo  
is a very well-known town.  
The officers of the law  
always watch their step.



En este rancho de Brune  
varias cosas han pasado,  
Contrabandistas y guardias  
sus vidas las han jugado.

Los malos ésos de Laredo  
nadie los puede negar,  
Se cambian bala por bala  
y no los hacen rajar.

Si va al juego yo le encargo,  
con tu dinero se trata,  
se tiene que poner chango  
porque el que pierde arrebatá.

Como dice cierto dicho:  
"El périco siempre es verde,  
gallo bucho nunca canta,  
y la raza nunca pierde."  
(se repite)

#### NUEVO CORRIDO DE LAREDO – Part II:

No solamente en hazañas  
porque será criminal  
decir que no se lucieron  
en esta guerra mundial.

Aquí hay muchos mexicanos  
que en esta guerra pelearon,  
Volvieron condecorados  
por el valor que mostraron.

On the Brune ranch,  
various incidents have occurred.  
Where smugglers and officers of the law  
have gambled with their lives.

The bad men, those from Laredo,  
no one can defy them,  
They exchange bullet for bullet  
and they don't give up.

If you go gambling, I warn you,  
it is with your money that they deal,  
One must be careful  
because he who loses may get dangerous.

According to a certain saying:  
"Parrots are always green,  
the rooster never crows,  
and the race never loses."  
(repeat)

It would be criminal  
were anyone to say  
that your sons didn't shine  
in the great world war.

There are many Mexicans here  
who fought in that war,  
They returned decorated  
for the courage they demonstrated.

Unos también gasados,  
otros les faltan las piernas,  
pos que otras cosas sacaban  
peleando causas ajenas.

No solamente en el frente  
demostraron ser ufanos,  
por eso en Laredo, Tejas,  
aprecian los mexicanos.

El que conoce a Laredo  
nunca lo puede negar  
que en el puerto Río Bravo  
hay mucho donde gozar.

El que le guste pasearse  
goza de toda alegría,  
que pase a Nuevo Laredo  
y gozará noche y día.

Ya con ésta me despido,  
meciéndome un anisado,  
aquí terminé el corrido  
de ese Laredo afamado.

Some of them were gassed,  
others are missing their legs,  
And many other things befell them  
fighting foreign causes.

Not only at the front  
did they demonstrate their valor,  
For that reason in Laredo, Texas,  
Mexicans are appreciated.

Anyone familiar with Laredo  
could never deny  
that in the port of Río Bravo  
there is much to enjoy.

One who appreciates going out  
will find much joy,  
So come to Nuevo Laredo  
and you'll find pleasure, night and day.

Now with this I take my leave,  
sifting a glass of anisette,  
For here ends the *corrido*  
of the celebrated town of Laredo.

#### EL MOSCO AMERICANO (The American Mosquito)

Disc II: #11. Cancioneros Picarescos: vocal duet (W 112215, Co 4371x) San Antonio, Tx. ca. June 1930.

"El Mosquito Americano" is a "patter"  
song with chorus, the original of which pre-  
dates this recorded version (San Antonio,

June 1930) by at least three decades. The  
famous Mexican artist, José Guadalupe  
Posada, did the illustration for the broadside



which memorialized what were probably the original verses, as printed by Antonio Vanegas Arroyo in Mexico City in 1902. Broadside (*hojas* or "leaves" in Spanish) provided an interested public with the text for the *corridos* they might hear at a *mercado* (open market), at the local *plaza* (town square) or at virtually any public gathering. These *corridos* were printed on cheap colored paper for sale to the average peasant in order that he might have an inexpensive *recuerdo* (remembrance) of the tale of a unique event or individual as told in story and song by a *corridista* (a wandering minstrel). The tradition of printed broadsides, even in this day and age of instant communications, still continues although on a more limited scale. Just a couple of years ago when a number of Mexican laborers were asphyxiated in a railroad car near El Paso, Texas, a couple from New York told Chris Strachwitz, the producer of this album, that they bought a broadside from a *corridista* singing about the event on the bridge between El Paso and Juárez. Significantly, this being the 1990s, the broadside was printed on a computer generated sheet!

Around the turn of the century, exterminating the "American" mosquito became a

major battle for the United States Medical Corps in Cuba with a second campaign getting underway in Panama in 1904 with the construction of the Panama Canal. Probably because of the insect's association with malaria and the efforts of the US medical teams to eradicate the disease-carrying pest, the "American" mosquito became associated with Americans in general, their culture, their innovations, and their life style, all of which were often felt to intrude on traditional Mexican values and way-of-life. Posada's drawing shows the "America" mosquito attacking all classes, the gentleman in the silk hat as well as the Mexican peasant in the straw *sombrero*. In that the term "*mosca*" was used at the time as slang for "money," Edward Laroque Tinker suggests that the term "American mosquito" may have also had reference to the American dollar.

Tinker has given us some wonderful reproductions of Posada's work in his *Corridos & Calaveras*, published by the University of Texas Press in 1961.

The version of "El Mosco Americano" sung here by Cancioneros Picaresos, retains the chorus printed on the Posada broadside, but the spoken portion, while retaining some-



## EL MOSQUITO AMERICANO

El mosquito americano  
Ahora acaba de llegar;  
Dicen se vino á pasear  
A este suelo mexicano.

Dizque el Domingo embarcó  
Allá en Laredo de Texas,  
Y que al Saltillo llegó  
Picándole las orejas.  
En la estación á unas viejas  
Qué bien las hizo marchar,  
Hasta las hizo sudar  
Este animal inhumano;  
Luego empiezan á gritar:  
*El Mosquito americano.*

A Guanjuato marchó;  
Esto es cosa de refr;  
El al centro no llegó,  
Pero si estuvo en Marfil:  
Ya no lo podían sufrir  
Tan malcriado y altanero,  
Pura le picó en el trasero  
A un militar veterano,  
Porque es mucho, muy grosero  
*El Mosquito americano.*

Tomó el rumbo de Irapuato  
Y por Pénjamo pasó;  
De allí luego regresó  
Por el pueblo de Uruapan.  
La hacienda de Villachato  
La dejó muy derrotada;  
Toda la gente asustada  
La encontró el vale Mariano,  
Nana Emeteria gritaba:  
*El Mosquito americano,*

Por la puerta de San Juan,  
Piedra Gorda y la Sandia,  
Una viejita decía:  
¡Jesús qué fiero animal!  
Dígame usted, Don Pascual  
¿No le ha llegado el mosquito?  
Dicen que es muy chiquito,  
Y también muy inhumano;  
¿Qué dice tata Pachito  
*El mosquito americano?*

Broadside of "El Mosquito Americano" which appeared in Mexico City in 1904, illustrated by José Guadalupe Posada and probably printed by Antonio Vanegas Arroyo.



thing of the structure of the original, is totally changed. Even the names of the communities visited by the mosquito on his travels are different.

The listener may find it difficult to grasp the humor of the spoken portion. The speaker was probably more after "effect" than actual meaning. Moreover, within the spoken portion, there are certain aspects to the "patter" which form a kind of prototype for Pachuco

### EL MOSCO AMERICANO

El mosquito americano  
que acaba de llegar,  
dicen me vine a pasear  
a este pueblo mexicano.

Dizque que el domingo embarcó  
allá en el Laredo de Tejas,  
dizque a Monterrey llegó  
mordiéndoles las orejas;  
en el Saltillo unas viejas  
las hizo andar de rodillas  
Y a muchas las hacía gritar  
este animal veterano  
y gritaban sin cesar.  
*Coro*

El rumbo de Aguascalientes  
este mosquito tomó,

*caló* (a dialect using Spanish and English words, modified words derived from both languages, and created words spoken with certain stylistic mannerisms) which began to emerge in the mid-1930s. The dialect flourished in the 1940s as a youthful Mexican-American Pachuco subculture developed some prominence (and notoriety) throughout the southwest, particularly in Los Angeles with the so-called "Zoot Suit" riots.

The American mosquito  
Has just arrived;  
They say he came for a visit  
To this Mexican soil.

They say that on Sunday he got started  
there in Laredo, Texas,  
It is rumored that he arrived in Monterrey  
biting the ears;  
In Saltillo, he made some women  
walk on their knees;  
He made many cry out,  
this veteran animal,  
they were screaming without ceasing.  
*Chorus*

In the direction of Aguascalientes  
went this mosquito,

a todos los dependientes  
tanto que los aporrió;  
mi burrito lo dejó  
sin orejas y sin cola,  
las muchachas de la bola  
y el rucito Donaciano  
les decían a Mama Lola.  
*Coro*

A Zacatecas quería  
este mosquito llegar,  
a la pobre de mi tía  
se le metió entre el jacal,  
le mordió hasta el paladar  
las piernas, las pantorrillas,  
la barriga, los costillas;  
este animal veterano  
y gritaba sin cesar.  
*Coro*

A El Lago se fue a pasear,  
Señores no crean que es broma  
a una niña del billar  
también la dejó pelona;  
se pasó para La Loma  
y sale para San Juan,  
por Celaya y Tematlán,  
este bravo animalito  
y todavía se fue el maldito;  
a la feria a zapatear  
a fiestas veracruzanas  
no se vayan a asustar.  
*Coro*

All of the clerks  
he made them run;  
He left my little burro  
without ears and without a tail,  
The crowd of girls  
and the donkey Donaciano  
they said to Mama Lola.  
*Chorus*

To Zacatecas  
This mosquito wanted to go,  
To my poor aunt  
It went into her hut;  
It bit her down to the soft palate  
her legs, her calves,  
her stomach, her ribs;  
this veteran animal  
And she was yelling without ceasing.  
*Chorus*

It went to El Lago for a visit,  
Gentlemen, do not think this is a joke,  
a little girl from the billiard parlor  
was also left bald;  
it then went to La Loma  
and left for San Juan,  
for Celaya and Tematlán,  
that fierce little animal;  
and the little devil even went  
To the fair to dance  
and to the *fiestas* [parties] of Veracruz;  
but don't let that scare you.  
*Chorus*



Por la Puerta de San Juan  
Piedra Gorda y La Sandía,  
una viejita decía:  
—Jesús, que fiero animal,  
oígame Ud., Don Pasqual,  
no le ha llegado el mosquito  
¿qué dice Ud. Don Pachito?—  
*Coro*

Luego remontó su vuelo  
a una rica capital,  
por San Luis, por El Parral,  
por Celaya y Chamacuero,  
por señas que hasta un arriero;  
que iba llegando a Paseo,  
dicen del susto “qué veo”:  
—¡válgame San Severiano,  
es my bravo a según creo!—  
*Coro*

En fin anduvo el mosquito  
por la ciudad por San Juan,  
luego en la gran capital  
a un muchacho papelero  
le entró por el agujero que  
en el pantalón trayía,  
declamó doña Lucía:  
—¡Qué animal tan fiero!—  
*Coro*

To Puerta de San Juan,  
Piedra Gorda and La Sandía,  
an old lady said:  
“Oh, Jesus, what a ferocious animal,  
Listen to me, Don Pasqual,  
The mosquito hasn't reached you yet,  
What do you say to that, Don Pachito?”  
*Chorus*

Later he soared in his flight  
to a rich capital,  
through San Luis, El Parral,  
Celaya and Chamacuero,  
Apparently even a mule driver  
who was arriving at Paseo,  
was said to cry out in surprise:  
“My goodness, save me Saint Severiano,  
I believe he's very fierce!”  
*Chorus*

Finally this mosquito passed  
into the city through San Juan,  
Then in the great capital city,  
it bit into a news boy  
through the hole  
in his pants;  
Doña Lucia cried out:  
“What ferocious animal!”  
*Chorus*

## ZENAIDA

**Disc II: #12. Parts 1 & 2. Los Madrugadores:** Los Hermanos Sánchez & Fernando Linares - vocal  
duet with guitars; (LA 1016 & 1017, Vo 8596); Hollywood, Ca. April 24, 1935.

Zenaida holds a special place in the hearts  
of Mexicans who remember the 1930s. Again,  
it is the train that takes us to far off places—in

this case the home of Zenaida, four hundred  
kilometers away.

### ZENAIDA – Part I:

Cuatrocientos kilometros tiene  
la ciudad donde vive Zenaida,  
voy a ver si yo puedo encontrarla,  
para ver si me da su palabra.

Al momento que vide a la joven,  
al momento yo la saludé,  
al momento me dijo la niña,  
—¿Oiga joven, de dónde, es usted? “

—Oiga niña, yo vengo de lejos,  
yo me vine en un tren pasajero,  
Un favor nomás vengo a pedirle,  
que acompañe a este pobre soltero.—

—Oiga joven si fuera soltero  
y si usted me quisiera también,  
A pasear con usted yo me fuera,  
si me diera hasta el porte pa'l tren.—

Allá viene ese tren pasajero,  
que sin duda lo estoy esperando,

It is four hundred kilometers away  
to the city where Zenaida lives,  
I am going to see if I can find her  
to see if she will give me her commitment.

When I saw the young girl,  
right away I greeted her,  
and right away she asked me,  
“Tell me, young man, where are you from?”

“Listen, young lady, I come from far,  
I came on a passenger train.  
I just came to ask you as a favor  
to accompany this humble bachelor.”

“Listen, young man, if you were a bachelor  
and if you wanted me, too,  
I would leave with you  
if you would buy my train fare.”

Here comes that passenger train,  
no doubt the one for which I'm waiting,



Ya se vienen quedando los pueblos  
ya parece que voy caminando.

Con las ganas que tenía de verla,  
estrecharla en mis brazos quería,  
Esperé que se hiciera de noche  
para verla mejor que de día.

#### ZENAIDA – Part II:

Cinco meses duré sin mirarla,  
trabajé con afán con esmero,  
Esperando volver a encontrarla,  
y ofrecerle todo mi dinero.

Cuando al fin tuve mucho dinero,  
otra vez en el tren me volvía,  
Hasta el pueblo en que vive Zenaida,  
y corriendo veloz por la vía.

Me bajé en la estación presuroso,  
y a su casa corrí a saludarla,  
Muy envuelta en su lindo rebozo,  
encontré a mi Zenaida del alma.

—Yo no quiero,— me dice Zenaida,  
—el dinero que usted me propone,  
Si le dije eso a usted en otro tiempo,  
se lo dije por ver si era hombre.—

—Ahora miro que usted sí me quiere  
y sí son sus amores formales,

The cities are being left behind,  
it seems as though we are moving.

Oh, how I wanted to see her,  
to hold her in my arms is what I wanted,  
I wished for the night,  
so that I could see her better than in the day.

I endured five months without seeing her,  
I worked with eagerness and care,  
Waiting to meet her again,  
and offer her all my money.

When at last I had plenty of money,  
again by train I returned,  
To the place where Zenaida lived,  
coming swiftly by train.

I got down at the station hurriedly,  
and to her house I ran to greet her.  
There, wrapped in her handsome shawl,  
I found the Zenaida of my soul.

"I do not want," Zenaida says,  
"the money that you offer me.  
If I told you that before,  
it was to see if you were a man."

"Now I see that you really love me  
and your love is really sincere,

Deberá de pasar a mi casa,  
y pedirle mi mano a mis padres.—

Ya me vuelvo en el tren pasajero,  
ya el permiso sus padres han dado,  
Para nada sirvió mi dinero,  
ya me llevo a Zenaida a mi lado.

You ought to go to my home  
and ask my parents for my hand."

I am leaving on that passenger train  
her parents have given their consent,  
My money was of no use,  
I am taking Zenaida with me at my side.

### LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIDA (Zenaida's Complaint)

*Disc II: #13. Parts 1 & 2. Antonio Flores & Manuel Valdéz: vocal duet with guitars;*  
(61700 & 701, De 10191); Dallas, Tx. February 8, 1937.

Where "Zenaida" tells the story of a young woman more than willing to leave home if only the young man interested in her will buy her train fare, "Las Quejas de Zenaida" tells the story of the results of what can happen to a relationship.

*Parodias* (parodies) or follow-up *canciones* and/or *corridos* are very popular in Mexican (and Mexican-American) tradition. Where Zenaida was taken to an unnamed *pueblo* somewhere in Mexico, Zenovio takes his bride

to San Antonio. There he shows no interest in working, preferring to be a gambler and a smuggler. Finally, after he comes home drunk, having had an affair, he tells Zenaida to go away. She ends up leaving the wicked town of San Antonio to return to her parents.

Since the original version of "Zenaida" became a hit, parodies continued to be written and recorded. In the 1970s we had "La Nueva Zenaida" and thus the theme and the tune live on!

#### LAS QUEJAS DE ZENAIDA – Part I:

Cuatro meses si no bien cabales  
de casada duré con Zenovio,  
porque dice que no me cumplía  
las promesas que me hizo de novio.

Four months exactly  
I was married to Zenovio,  
Because it was said that he did not fulfill  
the promises he gave me when we were engaged.



Por Zenovio arregló con mis padres  
y después que mi mano le dieron,  
me llevó pa' el estado de Tejas  
y mis padres de mí no supieron.

En el tren pasajero salimos  
tan veloz parecía el demonio,  
otro día llegamos de noche  
a su casa que está en San Antonio.

Veinte días pasaron volando,  
veinte días que fue buen marido,  
luego a poco resulta borracho  
jugador, paseador y perdido.

—Yo pensaba que Ud. trabajaba  
y por eso ganaba los pesos,—  
—Que trabajen los bueyes,— me dijo  
—porque yo la verdad no soy de eso.—

Y aguanté muchas veces sus ratos  
porque a un día la verdad no quería,  
y en las noches rezaba por él,  
y Zenovio no se componía.

#### LA QUEJAS DE ZENAIDA – Part II:

En la cárcel cayó muchas veces  
y hasta allí le llevé su comida,  
pero un día lo vide de brazo  
platicando con una querida.

Zenovio arranged with my parents  
and then they gave him my hand,  
He took me to the state of Texas  
of which my parents had no idea.

We left as passengers on the train  
so swiftly it was like the devil,  
The next day we arrived at night  
at his house in San Antonio.

Twenty days flew by,  
twenty days when we were happily married,  
Soon he turned out to be a drunk,  
a gambler, a smuggler, and dissolute.

"I thought that you worked [she said],  
and that is the way you made your money,"  
"Let the chumps work," he replied,  
"because to tell the truth, that's not for me."

I put up with his behavior,  
he refused to face the truth,  
And at night I prayed for him  
but Zenovio didn't change.

In the jail he fell many times  
and it was there that I took him his food,  
But one day I saw him arm-in-arm  
speaking with a lover.

Con coraje le dije a Zenovio  
—Era mucho los que haces conmigo,  
me haces menos por otra cualquiera  
y yo he sido muy buena contigo.—

Presurosa me fui pa' la casa  
y a mis padres les puse un correo,  
—Yo quisiera que manden por mí  
pues volver con ustedes deseo.—

Me decía, llorando mis penas,  
les pintaba mi cruel sufrimiento,  
cuando llega Zenovio borracho  
y diciéndome cosas sin cuento.

—Anda, vete Zenaida,— me dijo,  
—Ya me encuentro de ti fastidiado,  
ya gocé de tu amor las primicias  
ya no quiero vivir a tu lado.—

—Ya me voy de este pueblo maldito  
donde quedan mis sueños dorados.—  
Ya Zenaida se va pa' su tierra  
a vivir con sus padres amados.—

*(Phillip S. Sonnichson – 1974, with additional research and editing in 1994.)*

With anger I said to Zenovio  
"It's too much, what you do to me,  
you cast me aside for other women  
and I have been so good to you."

Promptly I went to the house  
and to my parents I wrote a letter,  
"I would ask that you send for me  
for to return to you is my desire."

I said, crying because of my penalty,  
I painted my cruel suffering,  
And when Zenovio arrived drunk  
he was talking crazy.

"Go ahead Zenaida, go away," he said,  
"I now find you annoying,  
I've already enjoyed the first flower of your love,  
Now I don't wish to live at your side."

"Now I am leaving this wicked town  
where my golden dreams are left behind."  
Now Zenaida is returning to her homeland  
to live with her beloved parents."



## A Selected Discography of some of the Corridos:

### Disc I #1. GREGORIO CORTEZ:

Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez, (SA 283A/284A),  
VO 8351, ARH CD 7019  
Hermanos Chavarría, CO 4266X  
Timoteo Cantú & Jesús Maya, IDEAL 294, ARH CD  
341  
Hermanos Banda, DEL VALLE 347, ARH CD 7001  
Hermanas Mendoza, SOMBRERO 2291

### Disc I #2. JOAQUIN MURRIETA:

Los Madrugadores (Hermanos Sánchez & Linares,  
(DLA 36B/37A), DE 10036, ARH CD 7019  
Los Madrugadores (Hermanos Sánchez & Linares),  
(LA 245/246), VO/OK 8580, CO (M) 1811-C, CO  
6643X  
Juan Montoya, DEL VALLE 651  
Lydia Mendoza, NORTEÑO 387

### Disc I #3. EL DEPORTADO:

Hermanos Bañuelos, VO 8287, ARH CD 7019  
Luna & Gallegos, CO 4041X  
as: *El Emigrado* by Hermanos Villa, TAXCO 220  
note: *El Deportado* by María & Memo, AZTECA 356,  
is a different song entirely.

### Disc I #6. CORRIDO DE TEXAS:

Silvano Ramos & Daniel Ramírez, CO 3905X, ARH CD  
7019

### Disc I #7. CORRIDO PENSILVANIA:

Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez, VO 8278, ARH 7019

Trovadores Mexicanos, (402623), OK 16383, ARH  
CD 7001  
Trovadores Mexicanos, (403230), OK 16383, CO  
4858X  
Duetto Hureta & González, DISCOS UNIVERSAL  
4077, GE 40293  
Hermanos Vásquez, DEL VALLE 542  
Los Cucarachos, SOMBRERO 2347

### Disc I #8. CORRIDO DE LOS HERMANOS HERNANDEZ:

Hermanos Sánchez & Linares (Los Madrugadores),  
(DLA 34/35), DE 10018, ARH CD 7019  
Cuarteto México, (LA 263/4), VO 8559

### Disc I #9. JESUS CADENA:

Pedro Rocha & Lupe Martínez, VO 8284, ARH CD  
7019  
Trovadores Mexicanos, (403037/8), OK 16367  
Guerra & Guerra, BR 40840  
Cancioneros "Acosta," CO 3085X  
as: *Chavela* by S. Rarnos & D. Ramírez, VI 46582  
as: *La Güera Chabela (Corrido de Jesús Cadena)* by Trío  
Los Aguillillas, CO 6349X  
Martín & Malena COAST 7041  
Los Conquistadores, RCA 23-1247  
as: *La Güera Chavela* by Conjunto Longoria,  
CORONA 1001  
Los Dos Rebeldes, BRONCO 147  
Los Tremendos Gavilanes, CAPRI 165  
Lydia Mendoza, NORTEÑO 387

### Disc I #10. EL HUERFANO:

Trío Matamoros: Núñez, Romero, & Guerra,  
(402674/5), OK 16382, ARH CD 7019  
Hernández & Sifuentes, VI 81240  
Dúo El Arte Mexicano, VO 8180  
M. Rodríguez, BR 40662  
Ibarra, Sambrano, Valles, & Fierro, CO 3048X  
Pepe & Juanita, BB 3377  
Trío Coahuilteco, (Mex-102), CO 1096-C  
Hermanos Mier w/ Los Montañeses del Alamo, ID 025  
Duetto Estrella, FALCON 809  
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### Disc I #13. CORRIDO DE JUAN REYNA:

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Roca & Amador, CO 4339X  
González & Hernández, (404415/6), OK 16759

### Disc I #14. SUICIDIO DE JUAN REYNA:

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Chihuahua, (112983/4), CO 4526X

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Trovadores Mexicanos (Rocha & Martínez),  
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