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Daniel Tyler

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*THE CARRIZAL ARCHIVES:
A SOURCE FOR THE MEXICAN PERIOD**

DANIEL TYLER

LOCATED IN THE Casa de Gobierno, Ciudad Chihuahua, awaiting a permanent home, are the municipal records of Carrizal, a small community just off the Camino Real between Chihuahua and Ciudad Juárez. As with other collections of Mexican documents, these records were in deplorable condition when they were accidentally discovered in the late 1960s by a Texan who had come to Carrizal to look for an old hacienda door. Noticing bundles of papers in a roofless adobe building, he pointed out to local authorities the importance of these official documents and then returned home.¹

Shortly thereafter, this same Texan was visited by a Mexican interested in selling a sack full of documents. He was directed to the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP). After identifying the material as the Carrizal municipal archives, the university agreed to make the purchase, encouraged by the seller's threat that he would destroy the documents if a sale could not be consummated. A second sack was purchased, and a third was offered, but as university officials recognized the dangers of purchasing Mexico's national patrimony, they discouraged additional sales. Instead, the university began looking for ways to return the documents to Mexico.

Mexican authorities were appreciative of this gesture. The Carrizal municipal archives were returned to the governor of Chihuahua cleaned, organized, and readied for archival storage. While UTEP officials were in possession of the documents, students worked to arrange them in approximate chronological order, and the university made a microfilm copy. That film, twenty-three reels, constitutes the Carrizal Archive now available for use through interlibrary

loan from the UTEP library, Department of Special Collections. Until the originals can be checked against the UTEP film, it is impossible to say whether the microfilm copy represents all of Carrizal's municipal records. The fate of the third sack of unpurchased documents remains unknown. But for the subject covered in this essay, the Mexican period, an abundance of documentation is already available, making this collection significant for research on a variety of frontier-related topics. Used in conjunction with civil and parochial records from other municipalities, the Carrizal records constitute an important source for Borderlands history in the post-colonial period.²

As Pedro Rivera noted in 1727, a few inhabitants lived in the area between Ciudad Chihuahua and El Paso, because the Indians in the area were not subdued.³ A few hardy souls, however, had established haciendas at Carrizal and Ojo Caliente. The Hacienda de San Fernando de Carrizal was located near the ford of the Río Carmen one hundred miles south of El Paso and ten miles north of Ojo Caliente.⁴ Although it was abandoned due to Apache depredations, the hacienda was "resettled in 1758 as a garrison town" and renamed the Presidio Militar de San Fernando de las Amarillas del Carrizal.⁵

During the remainder of the Spanish period, Carrizal played an important part in the Indian wars as a base of operations for Col. Hugo de O'Connor and as a principal stopping place on the Camino Real.⁶ In the 1760s, Carrizal was even considered "the southernmost outpost of the jurisdiction of New Mexico."⁷ Although in 1766 its "corporal and ten ragged soldiers . . . offered little protection to the wagon trains, or even to the 161 inhabitants of the hacienda," Carrizal became increasingly significant as one of the links in the chain of presidios recommended by the Marqués de Rubí and implemented by the Reglamento of 1772. This royal order, to be put into effect by Colonel O'Connor, commanded the presidial company of El Paso "to relocate at Carrizal on a spacious and level site which upon inspection proves to be very abundant in water and pasture."⁸ The place O'Connor chose was "on the east bank of the little spring-fed Carrizal River on the south edge of the almost abandoned town of Carrizal. . . ." ⁹ By 1775, Carrizal had become part of the new cordon of presidios with a complement of fifty-seven officers and men and eleven scouts.¹⁰

Towards the end of the eighteenth century, Apache pressures decreased. Settling many of them on reservations with the necessities of life had calmed the Mimbrenos, while military pursuit of other tribes reduced the number of violent attacks on defenseless civilians.¹¹ With the coming of independence, however, the Indians returned to the familiar pattern of robbery and pillage. Retaliation was nearly impossible owing to the shortage of armaments and the lack of direction from a new government trying to establish itself as a republic. Located in the middle of Apacheria, Carrizal suffered from these increased raids.

A law of 5 January 1826 divided Chihuahua into eleven *partidos*, each with a *cabecera*. Carrizal came under the political and military jurisdiction of Galeana (Presidio de San Buenaventura prior to 1832). Despite the new organization, Apache hostilities during the 1830s were so unrestricted that a group of citizens in Galeana proposed to overthrow the government,¹² and Carrizal was swept up in the conflict. State efforts to make peace with the marauders in August 1832 produced a truce that lasted only a few months.¹³

In addition to the need to defend themselves with very little government aid, Carrizal citizens faced forced contributions to finance new military campaigns. A change in political philosophy (centralism) divided the state into three districts, causing further confusion among those responsible for defense. As if these problems were not enough, Carrizal also experienced the effects of Manifest Destiny.

First came Lt. Zebulon Pike. He arrived at Carrizal ("Carracal") on 27 March 1807. Here, for the first time, he saw that "the gazettes of Mexico" were suggesting that he and his men were involved in a conspiracy with Aaron Burr to attach part of northern Mexico to the United States.¹⁴ Pike was followed fourteen years later by merchants from St. Louis passing through Carrizal in search of better markets farther south. One of them, Josiah Gregg, left a record of the North American view of Carrizal in the 1830s.¹⁵ Then came the captives from the Texan-Santa Fe Expedition in 1841; Col. Alexander W. Doniphan's troops followed in 1846 on their way to victory over the Mexicans at the Sacramento River; and finally, the soldiers of Col. Sterling Price arrived in 1848 with instructions "to reconnoitre the country [around Carrizal], cut off all communications . . . and make every effort to obtain information respecting the

designs and movements of the enemy."¹⁶ Although Mexican officials informed Colonel Price that the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo had already been signed, he pressured Mexican forces until shooting broke out at nearby Rosales.¹⁷ With some justification, therefore, Carrizaleños of the Mexican period harbored distasteful memories of their contacts with North Americans. In the twentieth century, their hostility would burst forth with a vengeance.¹⁸

Histories have all but ignored Carrizal even though it has been witness to significant borderlands events. Perhaps its past warrants a more thorough investigation. If so, the microfilm edition of the Carrizal Archives will prove useful for the Mexican period. Before using the microfilm edition, however, scholars should recognize certain limitations:

1. These records are official communications. Most reflect matters of concern involving the *juez de paz* (formerly *alcalde constitucional*) of Carrizal and the *subprefecto* (formerly *gefe político*) of Galeana. Trial records, military reports, and state and national circulars make up the balance.
2. Substantial gaps in the correspondence suggest the loss of many documents. However, given the propensity of Spanish and Mexican authorities to make multiple copies, missing materials may exist among the originals in Ciudad Chihuahua or in other municipalities. Galeana and El Paso would be the most obvious repositories.
3. Documents in the microfilm edition are, for the most part, clearly photographed and reasonably well organized. However, documents of 1835 and 1839 are badly mixed, apparently due to the difficulty experienced by the arrangers in distinguishing between the numerals "5" and "9." Some documents are incorrectly arranged by copy date, while others, especially those of February 1842, were filmed out of order and are chronologically out of sequence on Reel 5. Although the Mexican period supposedly ends with Reel 6, official documents for these years can also be found in the last four reels.
4. Large gaps in certain years, particularly 1848, suggest that entire legajos are missing. This and the absence of individual frame numbers make citation of these records most difficult.

All in all, the Carrizal materials constitute only a partial record of life in Apachería. To search for the remaining historical pieces, one must understand how documents passed through official channels and how the local political system functioned.

Chihuahua was divided into eleven partidos early in the Mexican period.¹⁹ Carrizal was the center of one of these partidos until it became a *municipalidad* under the control of Galeana (formerly Valle de San Buenaventura), one of the *cabeceras de partido*. Incoming correspondence from state and federal authorities passed first through Ciudad Chihuahua before arriving at Carrizal by way of Galeana. Outgoing mail was directed through Galeana by the alcalde constitucional. Within Carrizal, communications were exchanged between the alcalde constitucional and the *Compañía Permanente de Carrizal*. These were regular troops, referred to as the presidial company as late as 1846. A few letters were also exchanged between the alcalde constitucional and the junta municipal.

By the federal constitution of 30 December 1836, the state of Chihuahua was converted into a department, and its partidos were abandoned in favor of a three-district system.²⁰ As part of a nationwide centralization policy, the chain of command in Chihuahua changed slightly, orienting Carrizal toward the *prefecto* of the district of El Paso. Communications from state and national authorities now passed through El Paso and Galeana (a subprefectura) on their way to Carrizal. The change seems to have reflected Carrizal's preoccupation with Apaches and North Americans. State officials in Ciudad Chihuahua expressed frustration over the long delays in getting a response to their orders, which suggests that the new structure of government was possibly less efficient and less centralized than before. At the local level, however, very little changed.

Carrizal documents contain some useful socio-political sources. The role of the alcalde constitucional dominates in most matters of concern to the local citizenry. He made decisions concerning water management, tax collecting, census taking, approval of *guías* for traveling merchants, and raising militia forces. He sat with, and exerted great influence on, the *junta municipal*; he maintained law and order by naming a *juez de policía*; and he served as a court of first resort for citizens with grievances. He was elected by the *sala capitular*, a specially formed committee of the junta municipal,

after his nomination had been made and approved by superiors in the state chain of command.²¹ An *acta* of the junta municipal informed the public of his election and also named his assistant (*suplente*).

The Carrizal documents also provide numerous population surveys. For political reasons, the census was important. It determined how many electors should be sent to Galeana to vote for congressmen, senators, governor, and representatives in Mexico City. Laws made clear who was eligible to vote, and by means of the *padrones generales* (general census) a record was kept of every individual, his age, occupation, marital status, and literacy. Lists of citizens were used to record votes since secret balloting was unheard of. The formality of convening a *junta de elecciones primarias*, for the simple purpose of electing an elector, reveals the seriousness with which Carrizaleños took their political responsibilities.

Military matters were of even greater importance, and in these records the diligent researcher will find many treasures. Of particular interest are the service records of soldiers (*filiaciones*), which provide a physical description, age, and occupation of each individual. As war with the Apaches escalated after 1831, the state of Chihuahua began to demand more from local militia. Carrizal records reveal how this militia was organized (*cívica, urbana, rural*), what kind of arms and *montura* they possessed, and how much the *vecindario* contributed to its support.

Comments on the Apaches predominate because of their repeated incursions into the area. Occasionally, distinctions are made between Mimbrenos, Gileños, Jicarillas, and Mescaleros, but the most typical reference is to "*bárbaros*" or "*indios gentiles*." *Apaches de Paz* are also mentioned in reference to some groups settled on reservations near Carrizal.²¹ Mention of the Comanches and Kiowas is infrequent, suggesting that these tribes were far less menacing to Mexicans living along the Camino Real.

Official communications frequently allude to the role of North Americans in the Indian wars. Letters detail who is selling arms to the Apaches and the means to be employed for arresting these individuals. Official concern is not limited to foreigners. Correspondence involving the governor's office in 1834 makes clear that some Mexicans were taking advantage of the unsettled situation

around Carrizal by sounding false alarms and robbing their own people when the militia and regular troops sallied forth to engage the enemy.²³ After hearing reports that fifty Mexican soldiers had been chased off by five bárbaros at Namiquipa in 1847, state officials of Chihuahua expressed genuine concern about the valor and patriotism of their people who now faced the additional challenge of a North American invasion.²⁴

Lamentably, the municipal records for the years of the Mexican-American war are either badly damaged (August–September 1846), very skimpy, or missing entirely (December 1846–July 1847). A few scattered references to the battle at Rosales in 1848 constitute the major part of information relevant to the war.

Those interested in social history, however, will find a respectable quantity of useful material. Regular reports on the school in Carrizal mention the number of students in attendance, their levels of reading and writing, the teacher, his irregular salary, and the ever-present problem of inadequate supplies. An interesting state program, which may have involved young people in Carrizal, was aimed at sending twelve children to study in the United States in 1828. Quarterly reports on births, marriages, and deaths reflect population growth, while requests from the state of Chihuahua regarding disease control indicate the extent to which Carrizal suffered from measles and smallpox epidemics. Marital problems and squabbles between neighbors surface in the *sumarias* (verbal proceedings prior to a formal trial), while the property holdings of citizens, especially those who died intestate, appear in several *inventarios*.

One can also find some data on local farming and commerce. Agricultural products (corn, wheat, beans, chile, and peas) are described in detail along with prices and systems of weights and measures. *Efectos del país* (locally grown or manufactured products) are often mentioned because of their exemption from certain taxes, while merchandise *comerciantes* traded on the Camino Real appears in several lists. Municipal reports include taxes collected on alcoholic beverages, the number of animals slaughtered, and licenses issued to peddlers (*revendedores*) and others responsible for organizing public amusements.

In sum, the Carrizal documents may raise more questions than

they answer, but combined with the records of other partidos in Chihuahua and New Mexico, they should contribute significantly to a better understanding of a period that has not received sufficient attention from historians. The municipal records of Ciudad Juárez, Ciudad Chihuahua, and Durango form an additional part of the excellent Borderlands microfilm collection at UTEP. Every diligent researcher should learn a lesson from the serendipitous discovery of the Carrizal Archives. Each of us should be on the lookout for other pieces of the documentary puzzle that, like the records of Carrizal, might be weathering away in another roofless structure in northern Mexico.

<i>Reel Number</i>	<i>Dates</i>
1.	26 January 1827–9 February 1828
2.	11 February 1828–28 October 1830
3.	28 October 1830–29 September 1834
4.*	3 September 1834–26 April 1842
5.	1 January 1841–21 July 1847
6.	8 July 1847–27 July 1853
7.	5 August 1853–16 February 1861
8.	12 February 1861–30 April 1864
9.	15 April 1864–6 October 1867
10.	25 October 1867–14 November 1870
11.	16 December 1870–12 March 1874
12.	16 March 1874–7 February 1878
13.	7 February 1878–4 November 1880
14.	22 October 1880–8 September 1883
15.	8 September 1883–17 December 1886
16.	20 December 1886–30 September 1888
17.**	25 September 1888–1 May 1893
18.***	12 June 1893–28 January 1902
19.	16 January 1902–31 May 1913
20.****	31 May 1913–31 July 1934
21.*****	29 November 1869–miscellaneous
22.	16 May 1822–2 July 1840
23.*****	30 June 1840–26 July 1913

*In reel 4, February 1842 was photographed before January 1841. January 1841, therefore, appears on reel 5.

**The last document is actually dated 23 May 1853. Because of numeral confusion, this reel contains a great deal from the 1850s.

- ***Many documents from the 1850s.
- ****Many undated documents. Others at the end of the reel cover a period from 1830 to 1935.
- *****No particular order to these documents, which date from the 1830s on.
- *****This reel has a large quantity of material on the 1840–48 period.

NOTES

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1. Several people have contributed to the author's information on the Carrizal Archives. Mr. Simeon (Bud) Newman, assistant archivist at the University of Texas Library, El Paso, provided some of the details regarding UTEP's acquisition of the documents. Lic. Manuel Russek, secretario general de gobierno del estado de Chihuahua in 1980, opened his private library and put the author in contact with Sr. Antonio Martínez who controls the forty "*cajas de folletos*" in which the Carrizal originals presently exist.

2. In 1976, the Archivo General de la Nación created a special department for the purpose of identifying and preserving the oldest documents in state archives. This Departamento del Registro Nacional de Archivos has begun work in all states of the republic except Morelos, Tamaulipas, Chiapas, and Sonora. The scope of this project is so vast that the goal for the present *sexenio* (ending in 1982) is to survey only 20 percent of the civil and parochial archives in 3,020 municipalities. The budget includes funds for publications, one of which, "Inventory of Chihuahua," is scheduled to appear before the end of 1982. For further information, write to the Departamento del Registro Nacional de Archivos at the present address of the AGN: Tacuba 8, Mexico 1, D.F. Telephone: 512-99-08.

3. Pedro Rivera to Casa Fuerte, Presidio del Paso del Río del Norte, 26 September 1727, as quoted in *After Coronado: Spanish Exploration Northeast of New Mexico, 1696–1727*, ed. Alfred Barnaby Thomas (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1935), p. 214.

4. Max L. Moorhead, *New Mexico's Royal Road: Trade and Travel on the Chihuahua Trail* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1958), p. 44.

5. Moorhead, *Royal Road*, p. 16. See also Francisco R. Almada, *Resumen de historia del estado de Chihuahua* (México: "Libros Mexicanos," 1955), p. 112.

6. Almada, *Resumen*, p. 124.

7. Marc Simmons, *Spanish Government in New Mexico* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico [UNM] Press, 1968), p. 4.

8. "Reglamento e Instrucción. Para los Presidios que se han de Formar en la Linea de Frontera de la Nueva Espana," in Sidney B. Brinckerhoff and Odie B. Faulk, *Lancers for the King* (Phoenix: Arizona Historical Foundation, 1965), pp. 53–54.

9. Rex E. Gerald, *Spanish Presidios of the Late Eighteenth Century in Northern*

New Spain, Museum of New Mexico Research Records, no. 7 (Santa Fe: Museum of New Mexico Press, 1968), p. 25.

10. Max L. Moorhead, *The Presidio: Bastion of the Spanish Borderlands* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1975), p. 73.

11. As of 1773, 2000 Apaches were settled on eight reservations. By 1796, the Mimbrenos were divided into two groups, one of which was reduced to half its size by the effects of Spanish arms; the other half settled on reservations at Janos and Carrizal. For more information see Moorhead, *Presidio*, p. 261, and Moorhead, *The Apache Frontier: Jacobo Ugarte and Spanish-Indian Relations in Northern New Spain, 1769-1791* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1968), p. 285.

12. This is the *Plan Político* of 1836 proclaimed by a group of citizens in the municipio de Buenaventura. See Almada, *Resumen*, p. 207.

13. Almada, *Resumen*, pp. 196-97.

14. Elliott Coues, ed., *The Expeditions of Zebulon Montgomery Pike*, 3 vols. (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1895), 2: 650-52.

15. Josiah Gregg reported that Carrizal was a "small village with only three or four hundred inhabitants, but somewhat remarkable as being the site of a presidio [fort] at which is stationed a company of troops to protect the country against the ravages of the Apaches, who, notwithstanding, continue to lay waste the ranchos in the vicinity and to depredate at will within the very site of the fort." See Gregg, *The Commerce of the Prairies*, ed. Milo M. Quaife (New York: The Citadel Press, 1968), pp. 246-47.

16. U.S., Congress, Ex. Doc. 1, 30th Cong., 1st sess., 1847, p. 113, as quoted in *Marching With the Army of the West, 1846-1848*, ed. Ralph P. Bieber, The Southwest Historical Series, vol. 4 (Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1936), pp. 353, 213n.

17. Almada, *Resumen*, pp. 228-29.

18. Reference is made to the killing of twelve Americans who entered Carrizal as part of the invasion force of Gen. John J. Pershing. The date of the encounter, 21 June 1916, became a Chihuahuan holiday. See Clarence C. Clendenen, *Blood on the Border: The United States Army and the Mexican Irregulars* (London: Macmillan Company, 1969), pp. 95, 303-10; see also Florence C. Lister and Robert H. Lister, *Chihuahua, Storehouse of Storms* (Albuquerque: UNM Press, 1966), p. 262.

19. Before 1837, the partido de Galeana was the cabecera for Valle de San Buenaventura, Janos, Namiquipa, and Carrizal. After 1837, Galeana's responsibilities also included Casas Grandes, Escondido, San Miguel, Cruces, Cienega, and Carmen. See the two printed circulars from the state legislature of Chihuahua dated 24 March 1832, Carrizal Archives, reel 3, and 28 June 1837, Carrizal Archives, reel 4.

20. Francisco Almada notes the following regarding the organization of the three districts:

1. Chihuahua, with dependent partidos of Aldama, Cusihuirachi, Guerrero, Ocampo, Rosales, Galeana.

2. Hidalgo de Parral, with dependent *subprefecturas* of Allende, Jiménez, Balleza, Batopilas.
3. Ciudad Juárez, with its dependent partido of Janos (Almada, *Resumen*, p. 208). Almada's information is in conflict with the circular of 28 June 1837, Carrizal Archives, reel 4.
21. After 1837, the governor of Chihuahua nominated prefectos, subprefectos, and jueces de paz (Almada, *Resumen*, p. 208).
22. The citizenry was not too pleased with this arrangement, believing that the Indians were continuing to rob at the same time that they enjoyed the benefits of food and protection. See Juez de Paz de Carrizal to Subprefecto de Galeana, 13 February 1843, Carrizal Archives, reel 5.
23. See correspondence between the Jefatura (Galeana) and the Governor of Chihuahua, October to December 1834, Carrizal Archives, reel 4.
24. Subprefectura de Galeana to Juez de Paz de Carrizal, 18 October 1847, citing an angry letter from the Prefecto de Chihuahua, Carrizal Archives, reel 6.