

**United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service**

**National Register of Historic Places
Multiple Property Documentation Form**



Cover

☒ New Submission ☐ Amended Submission

A. NAME OF MULTIPLE PROPERTY LISTING

Historic and Architectural Resources of Mission, Hidalgo County, Texas

B. ASSOCIATED HISTORIC CONTEXTS

Grapefruit's Lone Star Home: the Development of Mission, Texas (1908-1951)

C. FORM PREPARED BY (with assistance from Bruce Jensen, THC Architectural Historian)

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D. CERTIFICATION

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this documentation form meets the National Register documentation standards and sets forth requirements for the listing of related properties consistent with the National Register criteria. This submission meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60 and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Archeology and Historic Preservation. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)


Signature and title of certifying official

17 July 1998
Date

State Historic Preservation Officer, Texas Historical Commission

State or Federal agency and bureau

I hereby certify that this multiple property documentation form has been approved as a basis for evaluating related properties for listing in the National Register.


Signature of the Keeper

8.28.98
Date

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STATEMENT OF HISTORIC CONTEXT

GRAPEFRUIT'S LONE STAR HOME:

THE DEVELOPMENT OF MISSION, TEXAS (1908-1951)

INTRODUCTION

As in border and frontier regions throughout the world, the ebb and flow of people of differing ethnic and cultural origins left permanent imprints of their cultures on existing populations and landscapes of the Lower Rio Grande Valley of Texas. The social, economic, and architectural development of Mission, Texas, was molded by a continuous influx of immigrants from Mexico, the northern United States, and Europe, who, with Mexican Americans from nearby century-old ranches created a thriving bi-cultural community out of brush land in the early years of the 20th Century. The development of South Texas irrigation systems and the truck crop and citrus industries, possible because of them, also influenced the landscape and industrial layout of Mission. Today the city's built environment reflects a historic record of the efforts of Hispanics and Anglos from disparate origins to cultivate a garden in this arid but fertile landscape.

PRE-EUROPEAN CULTURE AND SPANISH COLONIAL SETTLEMENT OF THE LOWER RIO GRANDE VALLEY

Prior to any European incursion into present day Texas and Mexico, the area known as the Lower Rio Grande Valley was occupied by a group of Native Americans called Coahuiltecans. These people observed the same lifeways for thousands of years, using natural resources in the area for food, clothing, and shelter. Spanish conquest and colonization of the area beginning in the mid-eighteenth century brought European diseases to the Valley, fatally exposing most of the native population. Those groups that remained lived out their last generations dependent on the Spanish missions.

Colonization that began in the 1700s relocated thousands of Spaniards and the now-dependent natives to missions and settlements along the Rio Grande. In 1747, Jose de Escadon y Elguera led one of the most successful colonizing ventures in the history of Mexico. Before 1755, he established 24 villages and 15 missions in the area known as Seno Mexicano, that included the region of the Lower Rio Grande Valley (Chipman, 1992: 166-169). According to the new system of Spanish land distribution along the Rio Grande in this arid region, ranchers and farmers were given long strips of land called *porciones*. Since the land was so dry, the *porciones* spanned the river and extended inland on either side. Thus, land owners possessed property in both present day Texas and Mexico. Most *porciones* were an average of 15 miles long and half a mile wide. The *porciones* remained undivided in families for generations (Heller, 1994: 1-13). This became the accepted system of land allotment in the Lower Rio Grande Valley until the twentieth century. Although almost all of the settlements were

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on the south side of the river during this early period, Escadon's colonization efforts laid the foundation of the ranching economy in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Land owners and their dependents established self-sufficient ranching communities with their own internal power structures. By the end of the eighteenth century, the *vaquero* (cattle ranching) culture predominated on both sides of the river. The new Hispanic culture and commerce of the Lower Rio Grande Valley looked south, to present Mexico, rather than the north and east, for its direction.

MEXICO AND TEXAS: 1821-1848

In 1821, Mexico gained its independence from Spain as a result of successive rebellions, like the one led by Father Miguel Hidalgo y Castillo in 1810. When the rebellion was crushed, Hidalgo and the other leaders were beheaded, but Hidalgo is remembered today as the Father of Mexican Independence (Chipman, 1992: 218-221) and Hidalgo County is named for him (Webb, 1952: 806). The War for Mexican Independence from Spain and the subsequent War for Texas Independence from Mexico that ended in 1836 had little effect on the ranchers in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. They remained fairly isolated from outside events and, despite Texan claims to the area, Anglos made few sustained attempts to colonize the vast "wild horse desert" between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande (Young, 1837: n.p.). Texan Independence had little, if any, political impact on the settlements along the Rio Grande. However, increased settlement in eastern and central Texas forced native groups out of their traditional territories and Valley ranchers began to experience more frequent Apache and Comanche raids during this period. Because of their isolated circumstances on the frontier, settlers along the Rio Grande could depend on neither the Texan nor the Mexican governments to protect them against such attacks, although both countries claimed sovereignty over the region. When the United States finally secured the annexation of Texas from Mexico following the Mexican War (1846-1848), federal troops established frontier forts along the river boundary, both to protect settlers from Indian and bandit attacks and to deter renewed Mexican incursions into the area.

ANGLO AND HISPANIC RELATIONS BETWEEN 1848 AND 1889

While they may have welcomed the protection afforded by the soldiers, Hispanic landowners were justifiably concerned about their rights under the new Anglo government. Ranchers whose families had run cattle on their ancestral *porciones* for nearly 100 years and whose land grants descended from the Spanish Crown, found themselves defending their titles under United States law. Because the *porciones* spanned the international boundary, they claimed land ownership in both Mexico and Texas, now part of the United States. Disputes arose from a variety of sources but in many cases stemmed from the fact that property owners often resided on the Mexican side of the river while they grazed cattle on the Texan section of their *porciones*. Thus, they made few improvements in the way of permanent dwellings or barns on the Texan side of the border.

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Texas Governor Peter H. Bell organized a commission to adjudicate land grant disputes in the area. Although the Bourland-Miller Commission, so named for the two men assigned to it, settled hundreds of land claims in favor of Hispanic owners, many Anglo merchants and lawyers who came to the valley after the war successfully challenged the legitimacy of the *porciones*. These Anglos either did not understand, or did not honor, Hispanic methods of land ownership and inheritance. They presumed that land which passed from father to son without documentation, according to the European custom of primogeniture, was not a legal method of inheritance. Furthermore, Anglos did not know that land in the area often appeared vacant because cattle were being rotated to different pastures on the *porciones*. Whether through ignorance or design, many traditional Hispanic ranches ended up in the hands of English-speaking lawyers and entrepreneurs shortly after the war.

In order to keep the land within their families, Hispanic ranchers sometimes encouraged marriages between their daughters and the more promising of the Anglo newcomers. John Young, a Scottish immigrant entrepreneur, married Salome Ballí, daughter of an elite Hispanic family, and her family's *porciones* passed on to him. Young founded the town of Edinburg (now Hidalgo) where he established a ferry steamboat landing on the Rio Grande about 1850. He owned and encouraged several other mercantile operations along the river front and it became the seat of the newly created Hidalgo County in 1852. It was the first significant Anglo settlement on the Texas side of the river between Rio Grande City and Brownsville (Bureau of Topographical Engineers, 1857: n.p.).

After Texas became a state, land often served as the only medium of exchange for cash-poor Hispanic ranchers. Thus, large properties were divided to pay for debts and services exacted by the new Anglo systems and Anglos came to own more and more of the former Spanish land grants. Many landless families found work as laborers on ranches they or their fathers once owned. Despite this dramatic change in the lifestyle of Hispanic residents, land use patterns in the region remained much the same for more than 50 years. Ranchers continued to raise cattle since there was little advantage in farming due to lack of irrigation. For the most part, the Anglos who obtained *porciones* in the mid-nineteenth century continued the ranching practices of the Mexican landed elite and some, like Young, Henry Clay Davis of Rio Grande City, and others, secured marriage and business alliances with members of that class. Isolated from both the central government in Mexico City and the Anglo-Texans to the north, the *vaqueros* of the Nueces Strip, as the area between the Nueces River and Rio Grande was often called, retained much of their ranching culture.

The Lower Rio Grande Valley is technically a delta, and not the wide valley that the name implies. The delta's formation resulted in river banks much higher than the surrounding land. Coupled with the gentle slope of the land, such topographic realities made gravity feed irrigation systems, more common in arid regions of greater topographical relief, an impossibility for early

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settlers in this valley. In contrast, early Spanish settlers upriver in the El Paso region farmed with the help of gravity-fed *acequeia* systems by the late 18th century. At the dawn of the 20th century, however, residents of the Rio Grande's delta continued to raise cattle rather than farm as reliable irrigation technology was not an economically viable option.

While central governments on either side of the river remained distant from the Valley, one institution was well represented in the area. The Catholic Church established its presence on the north (U.S.) bank of the Rio Grande in the mid-18th century along with Escandon's colonists. After the Mexican-American War, much of the missionary work in the Valley on both sides of the river was carried out by the Missionary Oblate Fathers of Mary Immaculate. They were responsible for a territory that encompassed a 90 mile wide strip along the river from Roma to Brownsville and included eight Texas counties (Castañeda, 1958: 208-215). Circuit priests of the order sometimes used a small adobe chapel on a hill above the Rio Grande, halfway between the order's bases in Roma and Brownsville. Named *La Lomita*, the site is within the present Mission city limits, about five miles south of the central business district. In 1871, the owner of the *La Lomita* Ranch, a French immigrant named Rene Guyard, deeded the building and *porciones* 55 and 57 to the Oblate order (Kemp, 1995: 5). *La Lomita* Ranch became the spiritual foundation for the later city of Mission.

Although generally quite removed from Unionist or Confederate campaign routes, the Civil War years (1861-1865) were eventful for residents of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. There were many skirmishes between Union and Confederate troops in South Texas, as well as between disgruntled and disenfranchised Hispanic residents and some of the Anglo newcomers along the border. Most Hidalgo County ranchers and residents, however, had little direct involvement with the military and political events of the Civil War. Unlike most southern states including most of Texas, the issue of slavery and its economic considerations was not an important one to the ranchers and merchants of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Since there was such a large pool of Mexican and Mexican-American labor in South Texas, and because valuable slaves might easily escape to freedom in nearby Mexico, Anglo-American ranchers owned few African slaves. Indeed, there were only 14 slaves reported in the 1860 census from Laredo to the Gulf of Mexico, with only one slave in Hidalgo County. As a rule, Mexican-American ranch owners did not own slaves. The practice had been outlawed much earlier in Mexico and had, in fact, been a point of contention between the government and Anglo colonists under Mexican sovereignty. One result of such early practices has been the consistently small populations of African-Americans in the Lower Rio Grande Valley.

Following the war, Valley citizens returned to or continued their traditional pursuits. In 1870, Hidalgo County listed only 1,098 acres of improved land. The major crop was Indian corn, with more than 7,000 bushels produced. The only cash export crop seems to have been a mere 117 bales of cotton. Sheep, cattle, and horses were the main business of local ranches, just as they were during Spanish occupation (U. S. Department of the Interior Census Office, 1871:782-783). In 1880,

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Hidalgo County contained 117 farms in the county with a total of 12,569 improved acres (Ibid., 729). Indian corn was still the major crop. Cotton production was negligible and ranching remained the county's primary industry (Ibid., 1881:816-17). In 1890, Hidalgo County listed no commercial fruit production. Due primarily to lack of successfully implemented irrigation, only five fruit trees were reported in the county (Ibid., 1895:531).

IRRIGATION AND THE ARRIVAL OF THE RAILROAD: 1890-1905

During the 1890s, a new wave of Anglo developers, most notably Hidalgo County's sheriff, John Closner, began to consider ways to bring water into the rich soils of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Conditions for reliable agricultural production were uncertain before the turn of the century. Some crops were grown along the river with the aid of tiny private irrigation systems, but these were always in danger of being inundated by floods. Away from the river, the traditional ranching economy reigned among the arid brush country. No railroad lines ventured into all of South Texas, and unlike the exciting developments along the Rio Grande near El Paso, large-scale irrigation systems existed only on paper. However, the fertility of the Lower Rio Grande's soils was well known. Prospective farmers and developers were prepared to overlook the shortcomings of the area to focus upon the rich delta soil and favorable climate. Unlike the earlier influx of Anglo settlers who arrived in the Valley in the late 1840s and 1850s and adopted many of the local lifeways, these men and their families intended to make a profit on the infrastructural and agricultural development of the region. Whereas early Anglo residents were content to adhere to the Valley's ranching traditions while managing their mercantile operations, later settlers wanted to change the entire agricultural base of the Valley's economy from ranching to commercial farming.

In 1893 U.S. Army Lieutenant W.H. Chatfield toured Hidalgo County and subsequently reported to northern investors on the tremendous potential for agriculture in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. He noted little change in the Valley since the Spanish and Mexican eras. Other than the riverside town of Hidalgo (formerly Edinburg), Hidalgo County consisted mainly of large ranches and retained a largely rural character. Chatfield recognized that the Lower Rio Grande Valley was a delta rather than a valley, containing rich alluvial soil. In a published report, he extolled the land's soil and climate and insisted that lack of irrigation was the only obstacle to the region's becoming a major agricultural mecca. He challenged investors to examine the area and put money into building irrigation pumps and canals to bring out its full potential (Chatfield, 1893: 42).

Although it is not known whether he read Chatfield's report, the first person to use a full-scale irrigation system in Hidalgo County was its sheriff, John Closner. By 1894, Closner began clearing his San Juan Plantation east of Hidalgo. In 1898, with no railroad accessible to him, Closner and a team of workers transported a steam boiler to power the irrigation pump by rolling it end-over-end from Hebbronville to the Rio Grande where he floated it down the river to his plantation. He soon

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had 800 acres of land planted in sugar cane and alfalfa, much of it under irrigation. From 1900 to 1906 his cane fields yielded an average of 35 tons (6500 pounds of sugar) per acre. His sugar cane won a Gold Medal at the 1904 World's Fair in St. Louis (King and Co., 1952:14). That year the railroad arrived in the Valley.

From 1904, when South Texas entrepreneurial visionaries financed the construction of a railroad to Brownsville, until the early 1920s, and the dissolution of several large private irrigation/land companies, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, specifically Hidalgo County, transformed from a sparsely populated, brush- and mesquite-covered ranch land to a booming truck garden and citrus-growing oasis serving national markets. In the span of a single decade, from 1906 to 1916, eight new towns (Mission, McAllen, Pharr, San Juan, Alamo, Donna, Weslaco, and Mercedes) sprang up along the railroad line in Hidalgo County. Three others (La Feria, Harlingen, and San Benito) emerged along the eastern stretch of the railroad spur in Cameron County. All were platted and populated as part of an exhaustive land-speculation campaign the canal and railroad builders promoted to sell the region's irrigated farms. Such extravagant town-building in a county that claimed only the single municipality of Hidalgo at the turn of the century, signified tremendous progress—and the potential for tremendous profits—to the irrigation-building land developers who planned to cash in on the county's agricultural bonanza.

Although the railroad opened up the Lower Rio Grande Valley to outside investors and farmers, transportation served little purpose without irrigation. Irrigation was made possible through the perseverance of pioneer agricultural entrepreneurs, like John Closner, who envisioned vast cultivated fields and thriving new towns where arid range land prevailed. Rail access, the establishment of irrigation pumping stations and canals, and the subsequent promotion and sale of irrigated farms and town lots, constituted a potent combination that radically altered the course of regional economics, social and cultural relationships, and politics. It is not a coincidence that the same groups of investors, lawyers, and real estate developers actively promoted all three endeavors simultaneously.

By the summer of 1904, the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railroad pushed its line through Harlingen and into Hidalgo County (Zlatkovich, 1981:84). Railroad builder Benjamin Franklin Yoakum in 1905 laid track through to a place of his own invention, Sam Fordyce, in western Hidalgo County. The arrival of the railroad in the Lower Rio Grande Valley spawned several towns, like Sam Fordyce and Mamie, which later failed due to problems with irrigation and financial backing. These two settlements, in particular, were soon eclipsed by the new town of Mission, founded by Midwestern Anglo newcomers John J. Conway and James W. Hoit.

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CONWAY AND HOIT'S LA LOMITA COMPANIES

Before Conway and Hoit arrived in Hidalgo County, the chapel and ranch community of *La Lomita* was the only settlement in the vicinity of present Mission, Texas. Unattended for years by a resident curate, in 1899 an Oblate priest took tenancy at the site of the *La Lomita* chapel. By 1900, the dilapidated adobe chapel was rebuilt in stone (Figure 1). A priest's house, dining hall, kitchen, bread oven, stables, and guest cottage were built about the same time. William McShane's general store, a blacksmith, several frame houses, and some thatch-roofed *jacales* also stood on the site at that time (Baker, 1986:76). Residents of the small community were mainly Hispanic. Although citrus farming was unknown in the Valley at the turn of century, one account reports that the Oblate Fathers planted and cultivated some citrus trees for their own use at *La Lomita* (Sánchez, 1994: 70).

In 1907, developers John J. Conway and James W. Hoit bought most of the *La Lomita* Ranch, which included all of the land in *porciones* 55, 56, and 57, from the Oblate Fathers. J. W. Hoit was a native of Duluth, Minnesota. J. J. Conway was a native of South Dakota who came to the Valley from Minneapolis in 1906. He had first been attracted to the possibilities of Valley agriculture when he saw onions and cabbages being harvested during a winter visit to the area (Mission Chamber of Commerce, 1994:14) and he pictured his development as an irrigated landscape of similar farms. Conway worked out an ownership-lease agreement with the Oblate Fathers. As he developed the land, Conway paid the churchmen every time he sold a portion of the property. Conway and Hoit also bought *porciones* 53 and 54 from John Closner and J. B. Wells (Heller, 1994: 1-13). Parts of all of these tracts are now contained within the town Mission. Figure 2 shows the extent of the *La Lomita* Ranch lands. After forming the La Lomita Land Company, Conway and Hoit oversaw the construction of an extensive canal network and advertised the sale of small, 20- to 40-acre irrigated farms, mostly in northern agricultural journals (King and Co., 1952:16; Stambaugh and Stambaugh, 1954:191).

Construction began on the Lomita Cooperative Irrigation Company's new canal system in August under the supervision of contractor Albert Sammons and his foreman, Bill Shafer. Others instrumental in the construction of the first lift station included S.A. McHenry, J.A. Robertson, A.P. Wright, O.M. Wakeman, and O.M. Vertrees. That station, located at present-day Chimney Park adjacent to the Rio Grande, was capable of pumping 38,000 gallons of water per minute. A 15" pump was installed in the lift station, and Hispanic workers had the unending responsibility for firing the mesquite-fed boiler powering the lift station. Conway and Hoit formed the Mission Canal Company in 1908 and offered to deliver water in the Mission area for one dollar per acre (Stambaugh and Stambaugh, 1954:191-196). David Gregg Wood, who with his father had helped construct John Closner's first irrigation system near Hidalgo, was the superintendent of the Mission Canal system in 1910. That year Conway upgraded the initial pump house equipment by adding a Worthington 36" centrifugal pump capable of pumping 33,000 gallons per minute. Three years later an even larger

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pump, a 750 horse power Allis-Chalmers Corliss steam engine, was installed (Heller, 1992:12-15). Also completed in 1910, the second lift station was situated in what was known, even then, as South Mission, approximately four blocks from the downtown business district (Figure 3). This station lifted the water another 30 feet above the maximum reach of the first station, storing it in an adjacent holding tank before it flowed downward to the canals (Kemp, 1995:39).

In 1908, John Conway hired engineer S. J. Rowe to plat the townsite of Mission, Texas on the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railroad a few miles north of *La Lomita*, naming it after the old mission. The town, as originally platted, was almost encircled with irrigation canals, except on its southernmost end (Figure 4). Conway and Hoit's agenda for Valley development differed from that of the railroad syndicate led by B. F. Yoakum. The St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railroad syndicate promoted its own newly platted towns like Sam Fordyce and Mamie (the latter was only a mile and a half west of Mission), and, of course, was interested in selling its own real estate to finance the railroad's construction. Conway petitioned the syndicate for, but was denied, a railroad station at his new, privately-owned townsite. The railroad reasoned that the proposed town of Mission's proximity to the fledgling town of Mamie made it difficult to justify a second depot. The railroad syndicate acquired thousands of acres in Hidalgo County, much of the land centered around present-day Edinburg. Since the railroad syndicate had so much property in the immediate vicinity, it would gain little from promoting a private land company. After losing an appeal to the State Railroad Commission, Conway built a station at his own expense. Less elaborate than nearby stations financed by the railroad itself, Conway's frame depot was eventually replaced with a larger, masonry building in the 1910s. For the privilege of having the railroad depot in the center of his new town and to accommodate the necessary rail spur, Conway paid with 20 acres of land.

The town of Mission was laid out on both sides of the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Line railroad tracks, spanning *porciones* 54 and 55. Two blocks each on the north and south sides of the railroad tracks were soon developed with frame buildings, and constituted the primary business district. The land office and boarding houses were 2-story frame buildings, while the stores were smaller frame buildings with boardwalks in front (Heller, 1994: 36-45). The commercial buildings faced onto the wide, dirt thoroughfare of Lomita Boulevard (renamed Conway in the 1950s). According to many accounts, a conscious effort to segregate Anglo from Hispanic residents within the town guided Mission's early development. Most of the Anglos lived and transacted their business on the north side of the tracks and most of the Hispanics lived and traded on the south side, a part of town termed 'Mexiquito' in the early days (Gilliland, 1964:82). Reportedly, this was in keeping with the design of all of the new towns along the railroad (Meinig, 1969:100). This was, however, a departure from earlier Valley traditions in which Anglo and Hispanic lifeways melded more easily.

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LAND PROMOTION AND EXCURSIONS

Conway and Hoit promoted their project through several venues, often mimicking the efforts of dozens of other developers in Hidalgo and adjacent Cameron counties. Valley land promotion from 1904 through the 1920s followed an elaborate, highly orchestrated procedure. A group of private investors obtained a large parcel of land with access to the Rio Grande where they established an irrigation system. Using cheap, primarily Hispanic labor, they financed the construction of pumping plants and irrigation canal systems that extended throughout their property, which developers subdivided into 20- to 80-acre farm plots. Simultaneously, the consortiums promoted their farms through mass distribution of glossy brochures that extolled the valley's many virtues—both real and imagined—particularly to Midwestern farmers. While the railroad syndicate had its own lands to sell, and enticed its own prospects, the privately-owned development companies predominated in settling the Valley.

Testimonials were another widely used promotional device. In a large advertisement for their La Lomita project, Conway and Hoit recounted the experience of G.S. Taylor, a former Texas ranger who had only begun farming in Mission the previous year. According to the advertisement, Taylor planted some beans on an acre and a half of irrigated land in September 1908 and then left his farm to work in Chapin for a few months until December. During his absence the beans grew and were harvested and marketed by a neighbor, yielding Mr. Taylor 178 1/2 bushels sold at an average price of \$2.25 per bushel. Taylor's netted \$391.62 from the endeavor and, as the article implied, he didn't even have to tend the plot! (*Brownsville Daily Herald*, 18 January, 1909: 1). Such newspaper articles and advertisements were not necessarily intended for local audiences. Readers were often exhorted to send the news to friends and relatives "back East" or "up North".

Land excursions, as they were known, became a common occurrence and newspapers from the *Brownsville Daily Herald* to the *Hidalgo Clarion* reported on the arrivals, departures, and expenditures of the many visitors to the valley in the period from 1904 throughout the 1940s. Interested parties contacted sales agents who enticed them to the valley on excursion trips that land companies either partly or wholly subsidized. Home seekers—or "homesuckers," as they were dubbed by some of the local people—arrived in railroad cars exclusively designated for their use by the land companies. Highly organized, even regimented, salesmen in automobiles met prospective buyers at the depots and took them on tours of "model" irrigated farms. In Mission, home seekers were shown Charles and Rose Volz's model farm, which enticed the visitors with thriving gardens producing citrus trees by the early 1910s. Although the vast majority of sales agents were men, some women participated in the recruitment efforts. Rose Volz contracted with La Lomita Land Company to participate in the land sales pitch, and was paid on a per person basis. Skillfully guiding the prospects around her handsome gardens and orchards, she claimed to have earned in excess of \$200 on one busy day (Valley By-Liners, 1978:184).

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As land promotion efforts matured, home seekers stayed in fancy "club houses" with beautiful grounds and amenities built specifically for their use. The real estate salesmen completely manipulated the activities of these home seekers. After they made their purchases and moved to their parcels, they found that the club houses and model farms were the exception rather than the rule. It remained to them to create the paradise that they had been promised.

In addition to selling irrigated farms, many of the consortiums, like the La Lomita Land Company, embarked on town-building enterprises. Although ultimately a failure, the original townsite of McAllen was one of the first such enterprises.

The zealous developers learned from other's mistakes and successes. John Conway advertised mainly in northern agricultural journals, arranged many land excursion trips, and sold hundreds of acres of irrigated or soon-to-be irrigated land to receptive clients. As part of a promotional scheme to attract northern and Midwestern farmers to the area, area developers including Conway brought three time presidential candidate (1896, 1900, 1908) and well-known celebrity, William Jennings Bryan. Bryan either purchased or was given 160 acres of land two miles north of Mission where he built a winter home. Regional newspapers widely publicized the event complete with photos of the popular orator. Although Bryan visited his investment a few times, he sold the property after a few years when a political appointment required his residence in Washington, D.C. (Stambaugh and Stambaugh, 1954:79).

The national economic panic of 1907, and the ensuing depression, interfered with Hoit and Conway's plans by making it difficult for the men to secure full financing for the irrigation of all five *porciones*. The enormous initial costs for buying and clearing the land, building the irrigation canals and pump houses, and organizing a townsite were not compensated quickly enough by the anticipated hordes of eager northern home seekers. Other irrigation and land development companies in the Valley suffered similar setbacks. The Lomita Cooperative Irrigation Company was dissolved in 1910, then reorganized as the Mission Canal Company. The Banker's Trust Company of Houston held the note. As a sales pitch for their irrigated farms, the company guaranteed reasonable charges for water from their irrigation network. The network itself was terribly inefficient, with losses due to water seepage through the porous, unlined channels estimated at 90%. With slower than expected land sales, Conway and Hoit soon found themselves overextended with little return to pay against their debt. The company was forced into receivership by 1913 (Heller, 1994: 60). Hoit abandoned the project and the region, but John Conway persevered, and continued land development efforts on a smaller scale. Although he lived in Minneapolis, he returned to his winter house in Mission every season until his death in 1931, working closely, at times with the more successful John Shary.

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MISSION'S FIRST CROPS

Along with initiating a huge irrigation and land development project, building a railroad depot, and founding a town, John Conway is also partially credited with introducing large scale citrus farming to the Valley. Shortly after founding Mission, Conway planted an orange orchard on a tract just south of town. He is reported to have seen an old orange grove at the nearby *Laguna Seca* ranch, then realized and promoted the possibilities immediately. Others credit his employee, Charles Volz, with implementing citriculture first.

Charles Volz was extracting himself from a failed rice-growing venture near Brownsville when he met John Conway in 1907. Conway hired Volz and his young wife, Rose, to move to the La Lomita area to operate a model farm for Conway's irrigated land development project (Allhands, 1965: 165). Conway convinced the Volz's to plant citrus, and their orchard included oranges, grapefruits and tangerines. Within a few years, the trees were bearing fruit. Conway and his sales agents brought prospective buyers to Volz's gardens and orchard to impress them with the agricultural possibilities that year-round truck cropping and citrus cultivation represented.

Other men who planted citrus orchards at this time were A. P. Wright, Max Melch, Thomas Doughty, a Mr. Ake, and Jack Robertson (Watson, 1931:203). However, when large scale irrigation began, most farmers in the Valley and in the vicinity of Mission planted small fields of such varied crops as onions, cabbages, cucumbers, lettuce, tomatoes, carrots, cauliflower, egg plant, celery, peppers, strawberries, peanuts, sorghum, and cotton (Western Farm Land Company, 1910:15). It was citriculture, however, that was destined to make the Lower Rio Grande Valley famous.

OTHER EARLY LOWER VALLEY TOWNS

As irrigated farming expanded, so did a dozen new Valley towns including McAllen, Donna, Pharr, San Benito and Mercedes. The San Benito and Rio Grande Valley Railroad, chartered in 1912 to connect more Valley growers to the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Line by rail, laid over sixty miles of track in 1913. As truck farming, cotton fields, citrus orchards and their related industries spread and prospered, additional lines were laid until more than 128 miles of track crisscrossed the Valley (Zlatkovich, 1981:86). The network of track came to be called the Spiderweb Railroad because of the numerous spurs along the line connecting it to Valley packers, canneries, and produce warehouses. The line achieved its objective of supporting and benefiting from Valley agriculture and it provided reliable transportation for travelers between the Valley's new railroad towns (Kemp, 1995:7).

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Two of the towns closest to early Mission were also the centers of land development efforts. Five miles north of the Mission depot, Alton was settled by natives of Alton, Iowa. By 1909 the town boasted a store, barber shop, hotel, and post office. Promoters tried to change the name to Chasladd, then Oblate, but the land promotion failed in general because of an unreliable irrigation system. A few miles north of Alton, Monte Christo thrived until 1912. Settled at the same time as Mission, the town had a water system, three stores, a lumber yard, hotel, church, railroad station, state experiment station, and a newspaper that shamelessly boosted the surrounding land development efforts in the Lower Valley (*Valley Evening Monitor*, 29 October, 1958). Monte Christo threatened to eclipse Mission for a brief period, but the wells on which the town's success depended failed to prove reliable. Unconnected to the Valley's irrigation network, by 1920, Monte Christo resembled a ghost town.

South of Mission and the La Lomita Chapel, the small village of Madero, founded in 1909, sat on the banks of the Rio Grande. With a primarily Hispanic population that pre-dated the town's establishment, the community featured a small brick-making concern, a *ladrillera*, which was patronized by local ranchers and some home builders. Early Missionites William and Eloisa Vela Dougherty built the masonry residence they named *Jardin de Flores* in 1907, on the banks of the Rio Grande nearby. Although Mrs. Dougherty maintained a large, more traditional residence in Mission, through her hospitality the ranch along the river provided leisure-time recreational opportunities for Mission's Hispanic and Anglo population for many years (*Valley By-Liners*, 1978: 200). Madero later became the home of Mission Brick, later called Valley Brick & Tile, which was to have a lasting impact on the physical appearance of Mission, and its surrounding irrigation canals.

EARLY SETTLERS

The new towns along the railroad line in the Lower Rio Grande Valley attracted a mixed population. Some Mexican-Americans, whose families had lived on either side of the river for more than a century, arrived in the new communities to start mercantile or service industries. Landless Mexicans and Mexican-Americans came seeking the wages paid for their brush clearing and canal digging labor. After years of political instability in Mexico, many of the urban Mexican elite with direct ties to Spain moved across the river to the relative physical and economic safety offered by the new towns. Local Anglos sought improved opportunity for their families in the new towns. And the numerous northern newcomers solicited during land excursions, worked to create the vision of paradise that had been artfully presented as an accomplished fact. The history of the Anglo settlement of Mission, and similar towns in the Valley, is readily available. The economic and cultural contributions of Mission's Hispanic settlers has been recognized only more recently.

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ANGLOS

Some Anglos who moved to Mission in its formative years were extravagantly wealthy entrepreneurs with larger-than-life personalities, like John Shary. Most, though, came to the area hoping to achieve financial success and higher social status by getting in on the "ground floor" of the emerging real estate and town development boom. One such family was that of Alfred L. Truitt. Truitt had managed the *Capisallo* and later the J.B. Wells ranches before they were sold to northern investors for farmland. In 1911, when he moved his family to the new town of Mission, few municipal services were available. According to his recollections, there were a few houses, two stores, a lumber yard, a restaurant, and a saloon. The odor of burning mesquite perfumed the air around town as laborers ignited brush piles cleared from thousands of acres of surrounding land for new farms (Gilliland, 1964:77). Truitt first served Mission as its City Marshall but the boom town atmosphere presented him the opportunity to profit from real estate. Daughter, Maude Truitt Gilliland wrote that

After we moved to Mission Papa sold his land in Starr County and invested in Mission real estate. He bought six lots and built rent houses on them. During the bandit trouble when thousands of soldiers were stationed in the Valley, many of their families from as far away as New York and Chicago came down to be near their boys who were in the service. These rent houses were always in demand by the families of soldiers stationed near Mission.

Two of these houses were located several blocks east of the Mission Hotel, two were near the old Boyd residence, and two others were on West Tenth Street. Through the years these houses have been torn down to make way for business property. The last to be razed was the old 2-story house on West 10th Street. A gasoline station now stands on the lot (Gilliland, 1964:101).

Another long-time Valley resident finally found his niche in Mission. An entrepreneur and self-educated hydraulics engineer since his 1893 arrival in the Valley at the age of 17, Gregg Wood began working for the Conway and Hoit land development company in 1908. Along with several other agricultural and irrigation endeavors throughout Cameron and Hidalgo Counties, Wood had assisted with the first major irrigation project in Hidalgo County associated with John Closner's sugarcane production efforts. Conway and Hoit hired Wood as superintendent of their canal system in 1910. After it went into receivership, Wood parted ways with Mission Canal Company in 1914 over a difference of opinion with bank officers about improving water loss due to seepage in the canals. Elected mayor of Mission in 1915, Wood resolutely worked to bring municipal improvements to what

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he called a "more or less wide open, stubborn, and independent" town (Texas Historical Commission, 1984). Elected president of the First National Bank in the same year, Wood built a fashionable California bungalow at 1215 Doherty in 1917. He oversaw the addition of a second story in the 1920s. Wood remained active in civic affairs throughout his lifetime.

Of course, many early settlers, who moved to Mission from northern states, quietly opened businesses, or planted their irrigated farms, and proceeded with the activities that build any town. In keeping with the materials and designs available to them and to local suppliers, their homes, stores, and offices were of frame construction. Modest homes, including some L-plans, and later, bungalows, quickly lined the streets of North Mission, or sat near the irrigated fields of their new farmsteads. It is interesting to note that early promoters frequently likened the climate, soils and agricultural opportunities of the Lower Rio Grande Valley to parts of California that had recently experienced an irrigated land boom. California's bungalow designs traveled west to the Valley, along with the ideas entrepreneurs like John Shary brought with them about irrigated agriculture and citrus production as practiced in the booming Golden State.

One of Mission's most prominent and beloved pioneer families represented the cultural and economic transition occurring between the Valley's earliest residents, and the efforts of the newer entrepreneurs. Dr. J. J. Austin, already an elderly man, moved his large, adult family to Mission in 1915, mainly to escape years of political instability in northern Mexico, where the family had resided for 47 years. Dr. Austin arrived in the United States in 1866 from Great Britain, where he had trained as a pharmacist. Joining the Army, the diminutive Austin found himself posted to Fort Ringgold outside of Rio Grande City, Texas. He married into a traditional ranching family by taking the half-Hispanic Elena Ryan as his bride. The young couple moved across the Rio Grande to Camargo, Mexico, where Dr. Austin opened a pharmacy, then practiced medicine, after passing his medical examinations in Victoria, Tamaulipas in 1891. The Austins moved to Mier, where Dr. Austin served a term as Mayor, in addition to his continuing medical related activities. Dr. Austin counted Porfirio Diaz, the deposed Mexican dictator, among his influential associates. Elena and he raised seven children, all but one of whom moved with the family north across the Rio Grande in 1913 when the Mexican Revolution erupted. The family settled near Los Ebanos where they purchased ranch land, a brickyard, and gravel pits, all of which were left to the oversight of a son when most of the Austins moved to Mission in 1915.

Identifying with, and entirely sympathetic to Hispanic lifeways, the septuagenarian Dr. Austin opened his medical practice and pharmacy in South Mission, where he served both the Anglo and Hispanic populations of the new town and its surrounding countryside. The people in South Mission remembered him as "*el Doctor Paloma*" (the white dove doctor), so named because of the white suits he favored, and the team of white horses that carried him to his house calls (Kemp, 1995:23). Dr. Austin's first office/pharmacy, a frame building attached to a frame general store named *La Bola de*

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Oro run by a daughter and son-in-law, sat on the corner of Sixth Street and Lomita Boulevard (Valley By-Liners, 1975: 60-65). The substantial masonry Austin Drug Store, built by the doctor a few years later on the southeast corner of West 5th Street and Lomita Boulevard is still owned by his descendants. It currently houses a photography studio. Austin's daughter and son-in-law replaced their frame general store with a masonry building, and renamed the establishment Guitierrez and Austin. Austin's adult children opened several other businesses in early Mission. One much appreciated Mission business, the bottling works established by José M. Austin on the 500 block of Lomita Boulevard, was subsequently operated by his brother Robert.

HISPANIC SETTLERS

The majority of the people who lived and worked in the Valley's new agricultural fields were not Anglo-American immigrants from the Midwest; they were immigrants from central and northern Mexico. At the turn-of-the-century, no immigration laws restricted Mexicans from moving freely across the border between the United States and Mexico. The Hispanic residents of early Mission also included local Hispanic-Texans who were born on nearby or former ranches before irrigation arrived in the Valley, many of whom still had claims to their land dating back to the 18th Century. Most of Mission's early Hispanic residents operated within a political, religious, and cultural framework that was either incomprehensible or invisible to northern Anglo newcomers. Conversely, the established Hispanic Texas families must have found the attitudes of the Anglo newcomers toward them both puzzling and uncivil.

Enjoying a reputation as one of the premier Lower Valley towns for Hispanic people interested in relocating from either outlying ranches in Texas or northern Mexico, Mission quickly attracted a large Mexican and Mexican-American population. The large population of Mexican and Mexican-American settlers in Mission was vital to the town's early success. No doubt contributing to Mission's reputation, many professionally and culturally accomplished people of Hispanic heritage settled in Mission even before the Mexican Revolution fostered a larger-scale emigration across the Rio Grande.

Long time residents of Northern Mexico and South Texas, Crisanta Guerra and Cayetano Barrera, Sr., contributed several children to Mission's early development. From their *La Reforma* Ranch, about 40 miles northwest of Mission, the elder Barreras took advantage of, or created, business and professional opportunities for several of their 14 children in the mushrooming new town of Mission. Most of the businesses were linked or interrelated. The family moved to Mission around 1917.

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Also coming from *La Reforma* Ranch and linked through family ties to the Barreras, Dario Guerra arrived in Mission in 1909, and opened Mission Wholesale Grocery with his brother Arcadio Guerra. He also had an interest in a farm implement company. Prior to bringing his family south from the ranch in 1913, Guerra built a large, 2-story house on Miller Avenue. Having purchased most of the 600 and 700 blocks of Miller Avenue, Guerra constructed several rental houses, insuring a diversified income base for his family (*Mission Times*, 25 June, 1984).

Occasionally, Mexican Americans were able to work their way up from modest beginnings to positions of respect and responsibility within both the Anglo and Hispanic communities. Jorge J. Cavazos worked as a bookkeeper in Falfurrias before arriving in Mission to operate a wholesale grocery business, Mission Wholesale Grocery, with several other partners in 1913. For his first few years in the business, Cavazos traveled upriver to Rio Grande City once monthly, peddling groceries and dry goods to settlements along the way from the back of a horse-drawn wagon. By 1916, the firm added a Ford delivery truck to their stable (*Mission Enterprise*, 15 September 1932).

Cavazos was born in 1889 at the *Noria Cardenia* Ranch, and his father, Jorge Cavazos Cardenas, was a rancher. Cavazos went on to become vice president of the First State Bank & Trust Company in Mission, vice president of the Cotton Belt Gin Company in Edinburg, and a Mission city commissioner, serving a four year term. In addition to acquiring considerable agricultural acreage, Cavazos owned city property as well, and after obtaining part ownership of Mission Wholesale Grocery, built that into a business requiring 12 clerks to handle the volume of trade. Cavazos died in 1930, just three years after building a large new brick store at 600 Lomita Boulevard.

Other Hispanic residents of Mission who were not agricultural laborers supported their families by working as farm supervisors or other clerical and managerial positions for the Anglo establishment. Some with more capital or education became business owners and worked to create a unified Hispanic community in Mission (Johnson, 1991: 207-8; Watson, 1931: 195). C. G. de la Garza opened the first of his family's large wholesale grocery and dry goods mercantile operation in 1913, on Doherty Street in South Mission. After several successful years, de la Garza built a larger masonry store and warehouse at a more central location adjacent to the railroad tracks at 716 Lomita Boulevard (razed in 1997). A major employer of Hispanic clerks and delivery men, *Don Carlos* was highly respected within South Mission's social and political structure. The wide front porch of his mercantile establishment often served as a gathering spot for political rallies (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997). His family continued the mercantile tradition until 1997, when heirs sold the store, which was then demolished.

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More typical of the non-landed, or displaced families who migrated to South Mission, and then moved on after a few years, Gilberto Longoria's parents arrived in the raw new town in 1912. Gilberto was born shortly thereafter in a small house on Lomita Boulevard, then on the outskirts of town. Joined by other family members, including his father's brothers, the entire family worked together to ensure adequate income. Gilberto began working as a shoeshine boy, at the age of four, for soldiers stationed along the border in 1916 (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997).

When his uncle secured a distributorship of *La Prensa*, the Spanish language paper published in San Antonio, Gilberto was recruited to peddle the paper on the street corners of South Mission on busy Saturdays, and to carry the paper to subscribers' homes during the rest of the week. At the time, South Mission consisted of a handful of densely populated blocks, and not all residents subscribed to the paper. However, the responsibility for covering the area weighed heavily on such a young boy. With adequate funds coming into the household, Gilberto's mother could send him to the privately-funded kindergarten operated by the Sisters of Mercy. Perhaps more important to Gilberto, the Electric Theater had opened in North Mission in the 1910s, and he clearly remembers the excitement of attending shows there as a young child.

Although much of his young life centered around the activities of the South Mission business district, Gilberto's memories of the earliest buildings and the supporting infrastructure are, understandably, selective. While adult civic leaders applauded themselves when they finally built wide sidewalks for the downtown businesses in the late 1910s, Gilberto's memory of such improvements were tied up with the ease with which he could then "test drive" the tricycles and bikes sold at the hardware store on the corner of Fifth Street and Lomita Boulevard. This vicarious pleasure was not long-indulged, however. Beginning with the economic recession of 1919, Gilberto's father followed the work opportunities in the Lower Valley and elsewhere in South Texas, and during the next 6 years, the family had lived in Kingsville, San Antonio, Reynosa, McAllen, and Donna. Blessed with drive, the ability to speak English, and job skills that exceeded those of untrained field laborers, Gilberto's father still had to move his family regularly to earn a living. (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997)

Pedro Salinas is representative of a non-landed family that found its niche in Mission and stayed. Estella Guerra Salinas' father came to Mission in 1907, and as a carpenter, literally helped build the town. Although possessing only a second grade education, Salinas excelled at mathematics and soon became known as an exacting builder. Salinas worked at J. E. Walsh's lumberyard on Ninth Street and Mayberry for many years, where he often worked on construction projects throughout the Valley. In 1909, Mr. Salinas built his first home at 604 Oblate Avenue. Salinas eventually became a local contractor, and built many homes in Mission. His first wife's family lived next door in a large 2-story

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home that Pedro built for them in 1923. Upon the death of his first wife, he began a second family. A voracious reader, Salinas made certain that his children were well educated. Three of his daughters became teachers, one became business manager for the local school system, and his son became an Air Force pilot (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997).

EARLY COMMERCIAL AND INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT

In 1910, Mission incorporated in 1910. According to the 1910 census, the population included 27 English-speaking and one Spanish-speaking citizens although the census taker, for reasons unknown, failed to record large numbers of other people undoubtedly living in the new town. Those townspeople able to vote elected Sam Hargrove as mayor (King and Co., 1952:53). The same year, Mission received telephone service, although this was quite selective. Bob Jefferies began publishing a newspaper, *The Missionite*, in 1911, later changing the name to the *Mission Times*. The town contracted for such infrastructure as street lamps, graded streets, sidewalks, and fire hydrants. Speed limits of 15 miles per hour in town and eight miles per hour at crossings were set for automobiles that year as well (Heller, 1994: 42-67). Mission had seven mayors in its first five years, some lasting less than a month. The new town suffered from a somewhat transient population and a plethora of alternate and potentially lucrative business opportunities for any potential civic leaders.

Although a city water system was in place in North Mission by 1916, South Mission lacked such amenities for many years and depended upon blacksmith Pedro Flores' windmill, located in the 700 block of Lomita Boulevard. Flores dispatched the water in barrels hauled by his own burros and soon provided piped water to nearby businesses. While many South Mission residents relied upon Flores' water system, farm owners in outlying areas who did not have access to a windmill bought water from *barrilenos*, men who hauled it in large barrels from the Rio Grande and delivered it in burro-driven carts (Figure 5).

In 1915, with Gregg Wood serving as mayor, the town entered a steady period of economic growth and prosperity. Wood's first efforts to improve the town's infrastructure centered around obtaining the 100,000 gallon water tank erected by a private party at Eleventh Street and Slabaugh Avenue, and laying out \$6,000 worth of two-inch water pipe, mostly in North Mission. In 1916, through selling warrants, Wood raised \$25,000 to build sidewalks in the main part of town (Heller, 1994: 88-89). He organized the fire department and purchased a chemical cart for \$150. He oversaw construction of a sewage plant, and saw that Mission had a Ford fire truck before he left office in 1920.

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SCHOOLS

In 1909, the first public-funded school opened in North Mission with one teacher, George Wolfram. Classes were held in a 2-story building on Lomita Boulevard. A feed store operated from the first floor, and the Masons and the Order of Eastern Star also met in the large space where classes were held. At the same time, the Sisters of Mercy opened a Catholic school that served the children in 'Mexiquito', south of the tracks (Mission Chamber of Commerce, 1994:14). In North Mission, the 1910-1911 school year opened in a proper school house, a 2-story frame building. By 1920, the more substantial North Mission Grammar School was built on the southeast quarter of 15th Street and Doherty Avenue. South Mission had its own grammar school by 1918, which was named Roosevelt Elementary in 1921 (Figure 6). Early teacher salaries reflected ethnic divisions in town. Teachers in North Mission received an average of \$60 per month in salary, while teachers in South Mission received only \$45. By 1915, salaries had risen to \$90 and \$60, respectively (Mission School Board, 15 March, 1915). Although the School Board reportedly agreed that Hispanic children could attend the predominantly white high school after completing 7th, many of South Mission's scholars attended high school elsewhere in the Valley to avoid the prejudice their families perceived in Mission (Heller, 1995: 3).

Professor and Mrs. Samuel J. Treviño opened the *Colegia Fronterizo* in Mission in 1913. The bilingual education program taught business and academic courses, music, English, and Spanish for several years in the 1910s. Aided by the Mexican Consulate, the school featured a well-stocked library. Highly educated and well-connected, Professor Treviño eventually served as Mexican Consul in McAllen and other towns in South Texas.

The Catholic Church also offered parochial educational opportunities in Mission. In South Mission, Our Lady of Guadalupe School operated from a frame building on West 6th Street and Dunlap Avenue across the street from the church. In North Mission, St. Paul's Catholic School at 1102 Doherty provided educational instruction to predominantly Anglo students of the Catholic faith.

BUSINESSES

Established as a rail and mercantile center to supply the surrounding 20- to 80-acre irrigated farms, Mission attracted opportunists and merchants, who flocked to the new town of Mission in the 1910s. During this early period, many Anglo newcomers filled various business niches that opened up as the town and its surrounding agricultural area grew in population. Some of the first businessmen in Mission were Augustus P. Wright, citrus nurseryman; Monroe Dunlap, who owned a general store and lumber yard; Dr. J. W. Jeffreys, who opened the first drug store; William

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Drummond, a furniture store owner; Hiram Knox, lumber yard proprietor; and the partners Edward Hayes and Thomas Sammons, who owned a hardware store (King and Co., 1952:55). An early Anglo businesswoman, Mrs. Helen Dawson, opened a millinery shop. Many of these early businesses operated from frame buildings located in the center of North Mission along Lomita Boulevard.

South Mission featured numerous businesses, as well (Figure 7). In 1910 Isidro Peña and Sons opened as Mission's first wholesale grocery. In 1912, Acadio Guerra, Dario Guerra, Jorge Cavazos and Felix T. Martínez opened Mission Wholesale Grocery. C. G. de la Garza established his first grocery outlet on the 400 block of Doherty in 1913. In the days when refrigeration was an impossible luxury for many, the Marqueta Colorado on Fifth Street and Doherty provided freshly butchered meats (Valley Byliners, 1975: 64). Felix Ramírez and Eutimio Garza opened and operated local bakeries (Hidalgo County Historical Museum Vertical files: Contreras).

Street vendors, still common in Mexico, peddled merchandise on Mission's streets during the early days. On Saturdays, the stores were open late into the evening, so that shoppers from outlying villages such as La Joya and San Benito might see a movie and do some additional marketing before catching a late train home. Reportedly, some store owners paid strolling musicians to serenade the shoppers, and this contributed to the festive atmosphere (Valley By-liners, 1975: 64). Along with the many hardware stores and lumberyards in the raw town, Ramon Garza's brickyard supplied indigenous materials for construction (Davis, 1984: 15-16).

Leopoldo Muñiz's employment agency provided important brokering services for both Anglos and Hispanics. Hispanic laborers could apply to work on construction gangs building new irrigation canals and clearing new farmland. Anglos, by contracting with Muñiz, could ensure adequate labor for such huge undertakings and could rely upon him to interpret when the language barrier proved problematic. Muñiz also provided hauling services to and from outlying farms (Davis, 1984: 15).

CHURCHES

Along with the material services provided by lumberyards, dry goods stores, and nurseries, several churches attempted to serve early Mission's spiritual and social goals. In North Mission, four churches had been built by 1910. In 1908, the congregation built St. Paul's Catholic Church. The Methodist Church was built in 1909, and the Baptist Church was erected in 1910. J. J. Conway and J. W. Hoit donated a lot at 12th Street and Doherty for the Presbyterian Church, a small frame building erected by the congregation in 1910. South Mission's Our Lady of Guadalupe served most of the Hispanic population, although the *El Mesias* Methodist Church also had many attendees. Gilberto Longoria, born in Mission in 1913, reportedly was the first child baptized in *El Mesias* Church. Mission's Methodist congregation benefited from the hardships forced upon Mexico's residents during the revolution when the Reverend R. G. Farías moved his family from Mier, in Mexico, to Texas,

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settling in Mission in 1915 (Rio Writers, 1983: 3). Married to the former Carolina Austin, daughter of Dr. A. J. Austin, Reverend Farías served the community in many capacities prior to his untimely death during an influenza outbreak in 1920. Farías attended to both the religious and educational aspirations of his flock. After a heated battle with Mission's school board, Reverend Farías secured the right for Hispanic students to attend the town's only high school, located in Anglo North Mission.

Traditionally playing a large role in Hispanic communities along the border, the Catholic Church in Mission provided both spiritual and educational uplift in Mission's early years. The original wood-frame building housing Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in Mission was built in 1909 (Kemp, 1995: n.p.). From 1914, the Sisters of Mercy operated the Catholic School affiliated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. The tidy church on Dunlap Avenue served parishioners until it burned in 1925. The current masonry church was built the following year, in 1926. It is a Recorded Texas Historical Landmark.

ENTERTAINMENT

By the early 1910s, Mission featured two theaters, a few saloons, hotels and restaurants for visitors and businessmen, and several billiard halls. Gentlemen of the time popularized billiards as an indoor sport and billiard halls were well patronized; entrepreneur Victoriano Contreras, Sr. opened three parlors in early Mission. Contreras, who served as Deputy Sheriff of Mission for several years beginning in 1908, also opened a saloon named "La Concordia" and a small restaurant on the corner of Fifth Street and Lomita, where Barrera Supply now stands. North Mission soon featured the substantial 2-story Mission Hotel across from the railroad depot at 115 East Ninth Street, and the Boulevard Cafe offered fine dining. The more modest Ames Cafe served as the unofficial spot for Mission's power brokers to meet at midday.

Many Anglos in North Mission arrived as family units, moving their social customs and organizations along with their household goods. They welcomed the same kinds of social and benevolent associations popular in the communities they came from. Fraternal organizations such as the Knights of Pythias, the Freemasons, and Woodmen of the World organized in Mission's early years. Although the Knights of Columbus suffered from mercurial leadership in Mission's early years, the Freemasons and other groups soon had large memberships, especially among Mission's Anglo population. Woodmen of the World also appealed to Mission's Hispanic population, and their first gathering hall sat on the eastern 400 block of Lomita Boulevard. In 1910 Anglo civic and business leaders founded the Kum On Klub, primarily to promote tourism (Heller, 1994: 79). Amateur baseball was thoroughly enjoyed by Mission's residents, with eager participants riding in from surrounding ranches.

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A few early theaters offered escapist fare. The Electric Theater, on 10th Street between Lomita Boulevard and Doherty, offered silent films on a somewhat irregular basis and both Anglo and Hispanic Missionites enthusiastically attended. Although built by a Mr. Frick, Tom Humason, and then I. J. Wright, ran the theater (*Mission Times*, 8 June, 1951). A dynamo set up in the rear of the theater furnished electricity for the theater and for several "modern" businesses. The Electric Theater was a combination general entertainment center and movie house. Typically, a movie played three times a week. Other evenings, traveling stock companies used the stage. When Chatauqua programs traveled to the Valley, they would commandeer the facilities, as would home-grown talent or local music clubs. The seats could be easily removed should local groups want to stage a dance or ball, and likewise, the theater could be cleared for roller skating (*Ibid.*, June 8, 1951). George Davis recalled that the theater used to hire him to advertise the evening movie in the early 1910s. "We walked up and down the streets holding a banner which had the name of the movie and rang a cow bell to attract people's attention" (Davis, 1976: 17). Two airdromes, or open-air theaters popular in the Valley's mild climate, also operated for varying lengths of time in the main business district.

With its small but significant population of highly educated Hispanics, Mission was a natural place for Juan Bautista Barbéra, a native of Spain, to open a performing theater catering to a Spanish-speaking audience. His first, the wood-framed Concordia Theater, stood on the corner of Fifth Street and Lomita Boulevard. A bricklayer by profession, Barbéra soon built the masonry *Teatro La Paz* (Peace Theater), now the Rio Theater, in 1912, later adding adjacent buildings in the small complex. To fill the 250 theater seats, Barbéra brought in a stream of well-known, primarily Spanish or Mexican performing artists, musicians, lecturers, and an occasional silent film (*Valley Business to Business Newsletter*, 11 March, 1996). Men such as Jose Vasconcelos, later Mexico's Minister of Education, and Nemecio Garcia Naranjo, historian, journalist, and playwright, were among the best-known lecturers. Mission's theater-going crowd eagerly attended Spanish classics like *Don Juan Tenorio* and Mexican works such as *Llorona Malditas Sean Las Juires* (Kemp, 1995: n.p.). During the silent film era, Juan Barbéra contracted with the Unique Film Service in Houston. By 1916, the theater contained a 10-horsepower Douglas gas engine, a dynamo, and a 5-kilowatt Edison moving picture machine (Kemp, 1995: n.p.). Barbéra later included a drug store, pool hall and bowling alley in the buildings he constructed adjacent to the theater on Doherty Avenue.

THE MEXICAN REVOLUTION AND THE "BANDIT ERA"

Concurrent with Mission's early development, a period that many Anglos have simplistically dubbed the "bandit era" ensued. In the early 1910s, violence erupted along the U. S. and Mexico border from Arizona to Brownsville, Texas, precipitated by numerous factors. Political turmoil in Mexico, along with real and perceived injustices perpetrated against Hispanic citizens in the rapidly

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changing border communities triggered many border conflicts. The Lower Rio Grande Valley experienced a number of skirmishes, and temporarily hosted various law enforcers from small squads of Texas Rangers to regiments of the National Guard.

REFUGEES FROM MEXICO

Mexican President Francisco Madero was assassinated in 1911 by a band of military officers led by General Victoriano Huerta only fourteen months after he took office. Huerta and his men attempted to re-impose dictatorship on Mexico in 1913 and the country exploded in violence. Soon Huerta's forces were on the run and rebels sacked the Mexican border town of Reynosa, opposite the town of Hidalgo in southern Hidalgo County (Blum et al., 1977:549). The city of Mission filled with refugees from northern Mexico, primarily from the state of Tamaulipas, after Reynosa was taken (Gilliland, 1964: 81-82). For several years, the *Cruz Azul Mexican* (Blue Cross), which functioned similarly to the American Red Cross, had a branch in Mission. Founded by the Mexican Consulate, the organization was directed for many years by Hilaria Villarreal (Valley By-Liners, 1975: 63). Mexican families with relatives on the northern shores of the Rio Grande were among the fortunate. They had a destination, and often had the resources to either wait out the conflicts or to start over in a new location. Many thousands were not so fortunate, and joined the new Hispanic underclass of landless laborers building the canals, clearing the brush, and harvesting the crops in the developing agricultural lands of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The sudden influx of refugees worried many of the Anglo transplants to the Valley, as did the political strife nearby across the border.

CULTURES IN TRANSITION

Many of the newcomers who came to the valley in the early 20th century had no experience with Mexican life and culture. Unlike earlier Anglo ranchers, merchants and lawyers of the mid- to late 19th century, they formed few alliances with established Mexican American families. Newcomers were not compelled to negotiate or cooperate with Mexican landowners because they purchased their farms from real estate salesmen instead of descendants of original grantees. Few newcomers knew or appreciated the long history of Mexican American occupation in the valley. In fact, they made little contact with local Mexican Americans other than as laborers. In newspaper articles, promotional brochures and practice, the newcomers deplored the *jaca*les in which people lived, rejected Mexican values and gave short shrift to Mexican American contributions in the valley. With their attitudes reinforced by the literature luring them to the Valley, many northern Anglos regarded Mexican Americans as a commodity, or a source of cheap labor.

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As more Anglo farmers brought their families and values to the valley, they quickly outnumbered the Mexican American and old Anglo ranching families. Now representing the majority interests, they assumed leadership positions in civic and governmental organizations, further reducing Mexican Americans in the valley hierarchies. Some communities, particularly those "north of the counties bordering the river" practiced segregation of Anglo and Mexican Americans (Montejano, 1987: 114). Mission was a segregated community almost from its original platting. The 1919 Sanborn map of Mission labels the large developed area south of the railroad tracks the "Mexican Settlement". The changes were particularly degrading to members of the old Mexican elite. A prominent member of that class observed,

Before their arrival, there were no racial or social distinctions between us. Their children married ours, ours married theirs, and both were glad and proud of the fact. But since the coming of the "white trash" from the north and middle west we felt the change. They made us feel for the first time that we were Mexicans and that they considered themselves our superiors (Gonzales in Montejano, 1987: 115).

The majority of Mexican Americans living in the valley at that time worked as laborers building irrigation canals and clearing and cultivating fields—some on lands their ancestors owned for generations. With the exception of those landed and mercantile families, like the Barreras and Guerras of Mission, who were foresighted enough to create opportunities in the quickly evolving economic landscape in the Lower Valley, most Hispanics lived in poverty compared with the relatively affluent newcomers. The irony was apparently lost on the majority of commercial farmers who accepted no complicity in their displacement.

In this atmosphere, angry Mexican Americans formulated the Plan of San Diego (a document signed in San Diego, Texas), which called for an uprising against "Yankee tyranny" by people of color (to include Mexicans, blacks, Japanese and Indians). The plan proposed to create an independent republic consisting of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California (Montejano, 1987: 154). For most of 1915, groups ranging in number from 25 to 100 men, organized in quasi-military companies, raided the Valley over widely separated points, in actions that included train derailments, bridge burnings, and sabotage of irrigation pumping plants (Ibid., 1987: 117).

Raiders attacked Lon C. Hill's plantation near Harlingen several times, eventually burning his sugar mill. Closer to Mission, John McAllen killed three raiders and turned away the several more when a group attacked his home at Santa Anita Ranch. The pumping plant at Mercedes came under fire during this period, as well. Two raids resulting in loss of life, occurred in August and October, 1915, at different locations close to the river near Mission.

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Most Texans viewed these incidents as simple banditry inspired by the Mexican Revolution. While the Mexican Revolution did affect the situation somewhat, the principal source of conflict in the Lower Rio Grande Valley lay in the bitter Anglo-Mexican relationships that had developed since the emergence of commercial farming in the region (Ibid., 1987: 118). Attacks continued in the summer and fall of 1915 and Anglos began to panic when news of death or injury to one of their own became a daily occurrence.

TROOPS ALONG THE BORDER

Already alarmed by the influx of refugees fleeing the Mexican revolution, the Anglo newcomers encouraged intervention by the United States government. Many recent immigrants left the area, some permanently. In the Mission area, Squadrons K and L of Captain Frank McCoy's Third Cavalry Regiment arrived in early June, 1915. An early September raid, later named 'The Battle of Cavazos Crossing' involved an unknown number of Mexican raiders, the Third Cavalry Regiment, several Texas Rangers, and Sheriff Baker. The incident occurred approximately four miles south of Mission, along the Rio Grande. Residents of Mission, upon hearing the gunfire, rode out to the crossing near the First Lift Pump Station, and added to it (Heller, 1994:90). Two days of skirmishes resulted in many wounds and some loss of life among the bandits.

McCoy's small group of soldiers was augmented with the arrival of a squadron of the 6th U.S. Cavalry Regiment later in September. In addition, a small post with 13 soldiers was temporarily established at *Ojo de Agua* Ranch near Mission. In mid-October, a group of 50 Mexican bandits attacked the ranch, and were routed by a nearby squadron who, by chance, were camped less than two miles away. Again, loss of life to the raiding party occurred. Arriving the following day to view the raid's damage, Mission's Mayor Gregg Wood claimed to have seen a "dead Jap who had been with the bandits" (Ibid., 1994: 95). Such allegations must have fueled the rumors about the multiethnic aspects of the Plan of San Diego.

In the March, 1916, Francisco "Pancho" Villa launched a raid on the town of Columbus, New Mexico. Nineteen U.S. citizens were killed as well as many Villistas (Blum et al., 1977: 550). President Wilson sent General Pershing to pursue Villa into Northern Mexico. At the same time he ordered the National Guard to various camps along the border to support the regular army's operations in Mexico. In the late summer of 1916, the New York Division, composed of several regiments of the New York National Guard, came to the Lower Rio Grande Valley. The division numbered between 18,000 and 20,000 men at various times during their stay. While stationed on the border this division published a weekly newspaper called the *Rio Grande Rattler*.

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Except for their experiences during the hurricane that blasted the area shortly after they arrived, the New York soldiers found themselves more at home than they might have expected. They were heartily welcomed by the Anglo farmers and businessmen, many of whom were recent arrivals from northern states, themselves. At the beginning of the New York Division's sojourn in the Valley, the First Brigade, including the Fourteenth Infantry Division, was stationed at Mission. Their arrival prompted a minor economic boom in the fledgling town, with local merchants creating opportunities to sell additional goods to the temporary residents. In the first issue of the *Rattler*, the City Drug Store, located across from the Mission Post Office, ran an advertisement inviting the Guardsmen to come in for a mug of "Hires Root Beer with cracked ice" (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 23 August 1916). Other businesses whose advertisements targeted the New York soldiers included the grocery stores, like Mansur's Grocery. In one ad, Mansur invited the supply sergeants of the Seventh Infantry Regiment to buy groceries at his store: "We are already feeding several companies of the 7th, 12th, and 1st Field Artillery regularly and also shipping supplies daily to the 2nd and 69th at Sterling's Ranch." Missionite S. P. Klein advertised ice cream at his Royal Cream Parlor. Other early Mission businesses advertising in the *Rattler* included Elliot H. Roberts' Palace of Sweets and Field Brothers (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 13 September 1916). Briefly assigned to the border, Henry Allen, Jr., a First Lieutenant in New York's Second Regiment, wrote about Mission in the *New York Gazette*:

It has been the best-located campsite on the whole border. The people of the village of Mission have done all in their power for the comfort and pleasure of the Second Regiment men and the local merchants, instead of raising their prices, as those in many places along the border did, arranged to keep the prices down, with the result that the men came from various other towns to Mission to purchase articles. Taking it as a whole, the men of the Second Regiment are a happy and contented lot. (Heller, 1994: 96)

Despite the seriousness of their purpose, the soldiers brought entertainment to the area. At the end of August 1916, the Second Infantry Regiment invited other soldiers of the division to visit their camp at Mission for the nightly minstrel shows. They also issued a challenge to the athletic teams in the other regiments stationed at McAllen and Pharr to play their teams at baseball, basketball, and volleyball (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 30 August 1916). The presence of the troops may also have hastened civic improvements in Mission. Public electric, water, and ice service were all initiated in 1916. Before that time, blocks of ice covered in sawdust were shipped daily from Brownsville (Heller, 1994: 42-67). There were also the problems associated with the sudden influx of hundreds of troops. Mission residents found that the soldiers got drunk and broke into their homes (Ibid., 1994: 95). Mexican residents of "Mexiquito" were often questioned by sentries.

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The boom of 1916 was short-lived, however. In September, several cases of paratyphoid fever broke out among the troops at Mission and nearby Sterling's Ranch, leading to a quarantine of those two places. The local water supplies were disease transmission suspects. The quarantine lasted only a week, but the loss of anticipated revenue to the merchants of Mission must have been considerable. Worse, the last of First Brigade moved out of Mission for camps at Pharr and McAllen, where an approved water treatment system already operated, when the quarantine ended. The New York Division was withdrawn from the Texas-Mexico border in late December, 1916. The time spent training in the Valley was no doubt invaluable for the upcoming war in Europe, and the revenue that 19,000 soldiers brought to the new towns of the area was an important factor in the success of many newly established businesses. Area merchants were unhappy to see the young men leave and they assailed the departing soldiers with last-minute sales pitches for keepsakes to take home as souvenirs of their deployment to the border. In the final issue of the *Rattler*, Bernard Levy advertised Mexican souvenirs and novelties at his McAllen Curio Shop in Mission (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 13 December 1916). Mexican curio shops and cantinas along the border did a "landslide business" during this period (Gilliland, 1964:100).

Once the troops departed, the border tensions did not end immediately. However, the country's entry into World War I, and the cessation of hostilities with Mexico allowed the conflicts to taper off. Following a volatile hiatus during the "bandit" era, commercial farming and land sales resumed anew in the valley almost as if the period of violence had never happened. Nowhere in the media was there mention of the recent violence that so badly shook the area. In their unending quest for commissions, the local land sales agents hardly skipped a beat during the border tensions, and continued their efforts to sell property to northern farmers who were unaware of the border's problems. Bad press was too risky to the future of commercial farming in the valley.

EXPANDED AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT NEAR MISSION: 1913-1920

The valley's early agricultural pioneers met with spectacular success and dismal failure as they experimented with irrigated crops in the Valley's particular climate and soil conditions. John Closner's early attempts with sugarcane near Hidalgo caused great optimism until the killing freeze of 1912. Fortunes were made and lost depending on the timing of crop choices. Local newspapers, many attempting to lure Northerners, printed mostly positive news. Articles promoting the valley's agricultural progress — as well as disclaimers about "false reports" about crop failure— were squeezed between advertisements during this period and the society sections of the newspaper centered around the town builders and boosters promoting in the Valley. In fact, the Valley's main newspaper, the *Brownsville Daily Herald*, contained very little "hard news," serving largely as a promotional vehicle for the irrigated farm consortiums.

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The blossoming of the irrigated Eden occurred with both the vision and capital of Northern investors, and the poorly compensated labor of Mexicans and Mexican Americans. In the early years of Valley development, Hispanic families worked in large gangs to clear brush and cactus from the land to be irrigated. Other crews dug canals and later operated the machinery for the irrigation systems. Entire families worked the fields during planting and harvest time. Once the transplanted Northern farmers understood the transportation and marketing imperatives for their crops, and privately-owned or cooperative packing sheds and canneries were built, they were also staffed with Hispanic labor.

INTRODUCTION OF CITRICULTURE

Early experimenters with citriculture were overshadowed by farmers who by 1915 were reportedly shipping hundreds of carloads of other irrigated crops to northern markets. Cabbage and Bermuda onions were the headliners, although corn and livestock represented substantial harvests as well. A 1915 Mission Chamber of Commerce advertisement claimed that the railroad hauled an estimated fifty million pounds of freight from the Mission area and estimated that average annual shipments of agricultural products tallied:

Head lettuce	75 cars
Snap beans	40 cars
Cabbage	500 cars
Onions	800 cars
Hogs and Cattle	400 cars
Corn (shelled)	300 cars
Melons, Alfalfa, etc.	75 cars

The advertisement claimed that 46,500 acres of land were under irrigation, "richer even than the Valley of the Nile", and an additional 250,000 acres of semi-arid pasture land were subject to irrigation (*Mission Times*, 10 December, 1915).

However, early pioneer Charles Volz related intriguing economic information to those interested in orchards. His model farm south of Mission featured 189 orange, 12 grapefruit, nine lemon, and two tangerine trees, most of them planted in 1907 and 1908. By 1917, he realized a return of \$3,000 on 2 acres of citrus, with only an estimated \$200 in expenses (Watson, 1931: 105). Granted, Volz was selling small quantities at retail prices, mainly to land excursion visitors. Nonetheless, the prospect of such high economic returns, with such little effort appealed to many.

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The early efforts of Mission pioneer horticulturalists Charles Volz, A.P. Wright and John Conway were magnified when John Shary began promoting citrus cultivation on a large scale in the late 1910s. John H. Shary first came to the Valley in 1911 and in 1914, he purchased the troubled irrigation company previously owned by Conway and Hoit from the Banker's Trust Company of Houston, renaming it the United Irrigation Company. Shary had already established a wildly successful land promotion and development organization in the Corpus Christi area, and saw the Lower Valley as another opportunity to increase his fortune. Shary was especially intrigued by the potential for citrus cultivation, especially after quizzing pioneer citriculturalists like Volz.

In 1914, after securing title to 16,000 acres of the Swift estate north of Mission, Shary planted 360 acres to citrus in the center of his burgeoning land development empire, named Sharyland, between Mission and McAllen. Shary, already a wealthy man with big ideas, had the resources to throw behind agricultural experimentation on a grand scale. His first efforts failed miserably. The trees, imported from California, were grown on rootstock inappropriate for Valley soil conditions. Further experimentation determined that trees grown with sour orange rootstock would meet the particular growing conditions found in the Lower Valley. By 1915, Shary was convinced that citrus was a wise investment. Nearly all of the original orchard was replaced within the first few years and to stimulate interest in citrus cultivation, Shary's development company gave new settlers a few trees (*Mission Times*, Silver Anniversary Ed., 1934).

Other early attempts at citrus production in the Valley identified problems with marketing, quality of fruit, and quantities to meet the developing demand. Fifty Valley orchard owners met in Harlingen in 1921 and organized the Valley Citrus Exchange. Their objectives included the establishment of a citrus experimental station for the Valley, and the reduction of express rail freight rates (Martínez, 1982: 46). Reliable and appropriate nursery stock was in short supply. Nurseries in Mission, some already carrying various kinds of citrus stock, expanded to meet the demand. Nurseryman W. H. Briscoe arrived in Mission in 1915, with considerable citrus experience from his previous business in California. His nursery was among those who supplied the citrus boom. Lloyd Bentsen, Sr. opened a nursery between Mission and McAllen, and went on to build another personal land development fortune.

In 1922, the first commercial crop of citrus was ready for harvest on the Sharyland tract. It was moved to market under crude conditions, hand cleaned and sized in an improvised shed. Touring the California citrus fields in 1923 to observe their methods of handling and marketing fruit, Shary returned to the Lower Valley with ideas that resulted in, among other innovations, the first modern commercial packing plant built with easy rail access. He also organized and promoted the Texas Citrus Fruit Growers Exchange, headquartered in Mission.

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JOHN SHARY AND THE DEVELOPMENT OF SHARYLAND

In 1914, concurrent with his interest in citrus, Shary began developing Sharyland, a community of small irrigated plots surrounding his own home and model farm. Sharyland was originally a few miles northeast of Mission. Shary brought his prospective customers to the Valley free of charge on board a railroad excursion car. He wined and dined them at his impressive Craftsman-style winter mansion, and then took them on well-planned day trips to see specific prosperous farms and marvels of irrigation technology in the valley. Ultimately, Sharyland consisted of *porciones* 58, 59, and 60, and several lots formerly owned by Conway.

When the National Guard's New York Division arrived in Mission in 1916, Shary welcomed them and invited the soldiers to tell their friends in New York about Sharyland, which had 7,000 acres under cultivation at the time. In September 1916, the month the New York Division left Mission, an advertisement for Sharyland written by one of the New York Guardsmen, Fred B. Barton of the First New York Cavalry Regiment, appeared in the *Rattler*. Barton described Sharyland as a 16,000 acre strip of land, two miles wide and extending north from the Rio Grande for fifteen miles. Barton also mentioned what was perhaps the area's first winter resort, Shary Lake, scheduled to open in 1917. Barton's article noted many of Shary's selling points. According to Barton, in two years Shary had cleared 12,000 acres of land and divided it into 40-acre tracts that fronted onto Shary-built roads. By 1916, 7,000 people whom Shary brought to the Lower Rio Grande Valley bought a total of 8,000 acres of his land. The new property owners planted in 40,000 citrus trees, including grapefruit, Washington Naval and Valencia oranges, Eureka lemons, and acres of shade trees along Shary Boulevard (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 20 September 1916).

In addition, Shary's workers dug 90 miles of irrigation canals and Shary himself had invested \$4 million in the development of the area. Shary's farms were available to people of varying income level. Depending on the location, a 20-acre farm could be purchased from \$200 per acre to \$1,000 per acre. According to Shary and his assistants, the farms were so easy to cultivate and provided crops so abundant, the investment would be returned very quickly. In his article, Barton informed his readers that lack of cheap labor would not inhibit new owners cultivating large tracts of land:

Mexican "hombres" clear the land, dig the field ditches to connect the big company canals, build the fences, and plow the surface, all at a cost of about \$15 an acre. You give your orders to a Mexican contractor who speaks English better than you talk "Mex" and the hombres do the work (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 20 September, 1916).

Barton also tried to allay soldiers' concerns about Hispanic workers in the climate of unrest that had brought them to the area:

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Take a look at these Mexicans. If you have come to believe that all Mexicans are a bunch of bandits, more familiar with big-bladed knives than hoes and shovels, you are badly mistaken. Mexicans are quiet and efficient laborers. They work for 75 cents a day and board themselves, where a northern farm hand would require \$35 to \$40 per month plus board and washing. They do not pilfer, are even-tempered, and have a wonderful ability to work in the sun (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 20 September, 1916)..

In 1917, Shary completed his impressive mansion, intended to house "land parties" of prospective buyers (Kemp, 1995:13-14). The following year he began to develop another 10,000 acres of land under yet a third irrigation pumping station powered by a Nordberg 48" centrifugal pump from Wisconsin. Its installation at the third lift station was not completed until 1920. With a pumping capacity of 55,000 gallons per minute, it was the most powerful and most modern of the three stations. It came to be known as Shary's Showplace and was a highlight of the land party tours for prospective buyers (Ibid., 1995:27). By the time he retired, John H. Shary had reportedly sold a million acres of land in the Valley and South Texas for a total price of \$50 million (Ibid., 1995:13). Unlike Conway, who invested in the Lower Rio Grande Valley during hard times, Shary was able to capitalize on the prosperity of the boom years, particularly those following World War I.

AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL ENDEAVORS DURING THE 1920S

By the early 1920s, the great land excursions and promotions of the previous decades finally yielded the promised landscape. Throughout Hidalgo County vast stretches of arid ranch lands had been transformed into 20- to 40-acre irrigated farms, their neat rows of cabbages and citrus trees offsetting the modern dwellings, including many bungalows, and outbuildings. Land promoters now had hundreds of model farms to show their prospective buyers. Visitors traveling through the valley on the Spiderweb railroad spurs saw for themselves the neat rows of cauliflower, onions, spinach and cabbage spreading out on either side of the train tracks in all directions. From Harlingen to Mission, the fields were watered by a network of established irrigation systems that seemed reliable and substantial to the prospective buyers. Small but progressive towns like Mercedes, Pharr, San Juan, McAllen and Mission, with contemporary schools, churches and shops appeared along the railroad line every four or five miles (Figure 8). McAllen and Mission, in particular, continued to grow.

By the mid-1920s, Mission was known as an important distributing center for much of Hidalgo County and adjacent Starr County. Four large wholesale, and numerous retail, outlets supplied ranches and towns as far away as Rio Grande City. Two bottling plants helped slake the thirst of Mission during Prohibition, one of them specializing in citrus fruit drinks (Davis, c. 1930: 102). Both produce and livestock were shipped from Mission. Cotton was first harvested, then ginned, in increasing quantities in Mission, before it was shipped north. Ed Sprague built the first gin in 1915. By the mid-1930s Mission featured five cotton gins. Also by the mid-1930s, canning plants and citrus

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packing plants lined the industrial corridor along the railroad tracks, or skirted the western edge of town. Fresh produce, such as cabbage, onions, beans, melons, figs, and grapes arrived in town in seasonal waves. Ten gravel pits had offices in Mission, where the gravel was billed and shipped. The monthly payroll from the gravel pits exceeded \$20,000. Ranches north and west of Mission used the town's facilities to ship their cattle to market. The Missouri Pacific Railroad now serviced most of the Valley towns and helped promote the area to new markets.

CITRUS ASCENDS

By the time John Shary's first commercial citrus crop was harvested in 1922, no question remained about the future of grapefruit in the Lower Valley. Throughout Hidalgo County, as well as in adjacent Cameron and Starr Counties, land-clearing, followed by tree planting, kept pace with the extension of canal laterals. The promotional literature of the day focused on citrus production and futures, and men like John Shary and Lloyd Bentsen Sr. parlayed their orchards into huge, profitable enterprises. Figure 9 shows John Shary with citrus pioneer John Conway around 1925.

Grapefruit, in particular, became a big Texas product and by 1925, it accounted for as much as 80 percent of the valley citrus harvest (Webb, 1952: 348). The Valley's grapefruits, marketers claimed, lacked the characteristic bitter flavor found in those grown in Florida or California. Valley grapefruit marketed as 'Texas Sweet', brought prosperity to those fortunate enough to secure the right combination of real estate, soil, irrigation, orchard stock, transportation, and labor. In 1925, a total of 22,847 fruit-bearing orange and 78,965 fruit-bearing grapefruit trees grew in Hidalgo County. Trees not of bearing age (those usually less than five years old) numbered 62,381 and 140,952 respectively (Census of Agriculture, 1925). The early 1920s saw enormous numbers of citrus saplings planted. By 1935, Hidalgo County's orchard workers harvested 676,488 field boxes of oranges from nearly 700,000 trees, and 2,796,333 field boxes of grapefruits from more than 2,400,000 trees (Census of Agriculture, 1935).

The landscape around Mission continued to evolve. Additional land-clearing prepared the way for tidy rows of low-growing citrus trees, watered by tile-lined irrigation extensions that were increasingly being built underground to reduce evaporative loss. Nurseries sprang up or expanded to meet the demands for hardy citrus stock specific to Valley soil conditions. Large wood-framed and metal-sided packing sheds rose up in the industrialized area near the railroad switching yards downtown. In North Mission, John Shary set up the Texas Citrus Fruit Growers Exchange, and continued to direct his myriad business interests from the old Mission Canal Office built by John Conway in 1908, which he used for his local business operations.

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Throughout Shary's life (he died in 1945), citrus dominated agriculture in the county. By 1932, Texas enumerated 7,864,000 producing citrus trees, most of them in Hidalgo, Cameron, and Willacy counties in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. Surplus, and a poor fresh fruit market during the Great Depression, pushed valley growers to expand into processing grapefruit and orange juices to solve their marketing and transportation problems, and fruit processing grew into one of the dominant industries in the Lower Valley.

To promote the semi-tropical climate, natural resources and agricultural possibilities of the valley, local citrus growers held the first of what became the annual Citrus Fiesta in Mission in the winter of 1932 (Webb, 1952: 348). Quickly evolving into a major annual festival in the Lower Valley, newspapers and magazines advertised the event statewide. Featured on the floats for the annual Citrus Fiesta parades, attractive young women wore elaborate gowns created from foodstuffs, including citrus peels, cactus, avocados, and popcorn. Sometimes weighing in excess of 40 pounds, the frocks would be removed and refrigerated in between events (*Valley Evening Monitor*, 27 November, 1949).

Hidalgo County farmers also produced bumper crops of alfalfa and cotton during this period. With irrigation and the mild climate, five or six alfalfa cuttings per year were possible, increasing the profitability of the animal feed. This encouraged farmers to keep large numbers of acres in alfalfa. The climate allowed cotton to be harvested in mid-summer, nearly two months before harvests in other cotton-growing areas. The early arrival of Valley cotton on the New Orleans exchange usually commanded a better price than later crops brought. The growth cycle of cotton fit in well with other agricultural products in the Valley. Planted in late February through May and harvested in July and August, another crop could be grown in the same field during autumn and winter. The cotton harvest came after most other truck crops were out of the fields, so that the inexpensive Mexican workers, said to be "adaptable to its cultivation and harvest", were available for labor intensive picking (Gulf Coast Lines, 1922: 15).

ECONOMIC DISPARITY DURING MISSION'S PROSPEROUS YEARS

The advertisement for Sharyland in the *Rattler* that extolled the tractability of the cheap Mexican laborer clearly defined the relationship between Anglos and Mexican Americans in early twentieth century Mission. Although the author of this article appeared fairly well-disposed toward the area's Hispanic population, Mission predominately operated under a power structure in which the Anglo was the owner and employer and the Hispanic was the laborer during that period. However, by 1920, the majority of the people who lived and worked in the Valley's new citrus and older cotton and vegetable fields were not Anglo-American immigrants from the Midwest; they were immigrants from central and northern Mexico. The population of Hispanic workers in Mission also included local Hispanic-Texans who were born on nearby or former ranches before irrigation arrived in the Valley.

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The census figures for 1920 reveal astonishing information about the town incorporated 10 years earlier for the benefit of Anglo investors in Valley irrigated real estate. Mission listed 3,846 residents in 1920, 70% of whom spoke Spanish as a primary language (Texas Census Records, 1920). Two census takers, apparently charged with geographically separate tasks, recorded the population of North Mission and South Mission. North of the tracks, 1,376 people resided. Of these people, 177 spoke Spanish as a first language, 57 spoke German, 13 spoke Norwegian, 12 spoke French, and seven spoke Russian, with minor representation from Swedes, Danes, and Syrians. The majority, nearly 1,100, of North Mission's residents spoke English as a primary language. South of the wide industrializing swath adjacent to the railroad tracks, the situation was reversed. Of South Mission's 2,470 residents, only 79 of the people recorded spoke English as a primary language, with nine speaking German, seven French, and one each speaking Irish and Russian (Texas Census Records, 1920). The economic dislocations in Mexico during the 1910s, coupled with the economic opportunities present in rapidly developing Valley towns such as Mission, encouraged Mexican nationals to uproot their families and settle north across the river.

By 1920, the geographically separate parts of Mission, had developed other noticeable differences. North Mission, with a lower population, had a more prosperous appearance. Comfortable, middle-class houses sat on standard lots in residential areas. Commercial, institutional and industrial areas were fairly well separated from each other and from residential neighborhoods. The North Mission business district, with the post office, two banks, and three gentlemen's furnishings stores, was primarily of brick construction. In contrast, South Mission, where an additional 1,000 people lived in an acreage similar to North Mission, experienced more crowded conditions. Many residences were little more than shacks, indeed, the 1919 Sanborn map identifies several tenements and *jacales* in the 'Mexican Settlement'. Two, sometimes more, housing units occupied lots on many blocks. Many houses contained just one or two rooms. Industrial and commercial areas were not so separated from residential areas. Even the commercial district in South Mission looked and functioned differently. Seventeen domestic buildings were scattered among the stores, restaurants, and cantinas between 4th Street and 8th Street on Lomita Boulevard in 1919. With some exceptions, most commercial buildings were still frame, and many were quite small.

Despite some lucrative opportunities for Hispanic residents, primarily in mercantile operations, nowhere else in Texas was there such disparity between the richest and the poorest residents as in the Rio Grande Valley during the early 20th century. The new, irrigated farms were too expensive for poor people to purchase (Richardson, Wallace, and Anderson, 1981:322). In most cases, land was owned by one group of immigrants, the northern and Midwestern Anglo farmers, and worked by another, Mexican nationals with few other options available to them. The promotional literature promised the new landowners an abundant supply of cheap labor in the form of local Hispanic Texans and Mexicans from across the river. The landowners who moved to Mission in the first half of the 20th century were mostly people of means. While some, like Shary, were real estate developers,

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others were citrus magnates or agricultural inventors who profited from the use of their inventions in Mission and elsewhere. In 1916, unimproved 40-acre farms in Sharyland were advertised at a cost of between \$8,000 and \$40,000 (*Rio Grande Rattler*, 20 September 1916). By 1925, irrigated land in Hidalgo County cost between \$300 and \$5,000 per acre as compared with \$25 to \$50 per acre for unimproved land. This put the price of a 40-acre irrigated farm as high as \$200,000 (*Dallas News*, 1925:293-94), a small fortune to any prospective local farmer at that time. The economic and social conditions in Mission reflected this contrast between Anglos and Hispanics.

NORTH MISSION'S DEVELOPMENT

Anglos in North Mission entered a decade of sustained prosperity in the 1920s. Owners of citrus orchards realized healthy returns on their investments when their trees matured and bore fruit. The primarily Anglo owners of Mission's packing sheds, cotton gins, machine shops, lumberyards, auto dealerships, and mercantile businesses all profited from the Valley's increasing agricultural productivity and growing population. Fine middle-class homes sprang up along the unpaved avenues in North Mission. The earliest frame commercial buildings lining Lomita Boulevard were replaced with sturdier brick construction. Substantial schools and other institutional buildings were constructed, many of them using local brick. A c. 1925 booster publication for Mission claimed that nearly 800 homes stood within the boundaries of the town and that more housing was needed, especially apartment units. "These houses represent the homes of the producers of the wealth of this wonderful Valley. Many of them of course are the beautiful homes of men of means, who have located in this Garden of Eden to spend their last days amid the orange blossoms, under the sunny skies of the southland." (*The Plain Facts* c. 1925: 1).

Several early residents built homes along Doherty Avenue above 12th Street. Many of the homes were fine examples of the Craftsman Bungalows popular at the time. The sub-tropical climate allowed almost year-round gardening, and many yards featured rose gardens and tropical landscaping accents. Two small additions to the original townsite accommodated Mission's expanding population in North Mission. The town of Mission included the Oblate Addition, consisting of the land between 11th and 13th Streets and between Francisco and Keralum Avenues (Figure 10), in its city limits in March, 1916. The 2.9-acre Oblate Park, leased to the City of Mission by the Oblate Fathers for a 99-year period in 1916, served as a focal point for gracious residential living in Northeast Mission. The nicely landscaped park extended over the block between Francisco and St. Marie Avenues and 11th and 12th Streets. During the 1930s, the city built tennis courts, that doubled as a dance floor in the evening, in Oblate Park. A few sizable homes graced the large lots oriented toward Oblate Park. Churches of several denominations were scattered throughout residential settings in Northeast Mission. Mission included the Blake Addition in the 1920s. This added the property between 13th and 16th Streets, due north of the Oblate Addition, to the growing city. Residents began building homes in the addition in the late 1920s.

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The four block campus of Mission's high school developed in the mid-1920s in the Blake Addition. Built in 1924, the first masonry school was joined three years later by a larger U-plan building, along with a manual training building, and eventually a gymnasium and an athletic field. This resulted in a public school educational campus of five contiguous blocks in northeast Mission that included the North Mission Grammar School, the junior high and the high school and associated outbuildings.

West of Lomita Boulevard in North Mission, the character of the neighborhood varied with its proximity to the railroad. North of 12th Street and east of Perkins Avenue, the neighborhood primarily consisted of single family houses, with the bungalow predominating. South of 12th Street, the housing tended to be even more modest, and consisted of a higher percentage of multifamily housing units. Rooming houses and, later, apartment buildings, scattered throughout North Mission, were more concentrated along Dunlap Avenue between Ninth and 12th Streets.

In the early 1920s, the modernization of the local *ladrillo* (brick) trade resulted in a long-term impact on the appearance of the public face of Mission. In 1923, the Masonic Order in Mission contracted with the brickyard in Madero for enough machine-made brick to build a new Masonic Temple. Part of the contract included money to purchase the machinery needed to produce the brick. Guenther Weiske, who owned a farm nearby, had run the hand-made Weiske Brick operation as a sideline since 1912. Several structures in and near Mission had been built from the traditional brick. With the temple contract, Weiske bought the equipment, took on a partner, and modernized the brickyard. With the help of Hill Cocke as sales manager, the Mission Brick Company became one of the largest brickyards in the Valley. Many of the institutional and commercial buildings in Mission, originally built of lumber, were replaced with Mission Brick Company brick in the 1920s and 1930s. In 1930, Mission Brick Company merged with Valley Clay Products in Brownsville, and the company became Valley Brick and Tile. As with many of the industries in the Valley, Weiske was dependent on Hispanic workers for his labor force.

Because of its rapid growth, Mission soon supported three large lumberyards, all in North Mission. Along with sales of construction materials, the lumber and hardware companies often had building crews attached to them. Some, like Hidalgo County Lumber Company, offered house plans and other construction-related services for newcomers (Figure 11). The more affluent of North Mission's residents built large, impressive homes in the popular styles of the period. The majority of incoming middle income Anglos moved into North Mission residences that were variations of the then-popular California bungalow form, on palm-lined streets (Figure 12).

North Mission featured relatively segregated residential, commercial/industrial, and institutional clusters of activity and function. Ninth Street, just north of the railroad tracks, contained lumberyards, a few factories, and auto/vehicle related businesses. Northwest Mission, along the San

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Benito and Rio Grande Valley rail spur which ran along Combings Avenue, evolved into another industrialized corridor, eventually containing two cotton gins and several canning factories. North Mission's main commercial activities occurred on either side of Lomita Boulevard between Ninth and 12th Streets. Substantial masonry buildings, many of them featuring two stories, graced the northern commercial district. An 80- foot road bed allowed for considerable on-street parking. Both of Mission's banks, its furniture stores, clothing and dry goods shops, several restaurants and confectioneries, theaters, hotels, a printing firm, a photography studio, and general merchandise stores were found in this three-block area (Figure 13). By 1919, North Mission even boasted an ice cream manufacturer. Businesses less dependent on pedestrian traffic, such as auto sales, filling stations and auto repair shops, feed warehouses and lumberyards were found along Doherty Avenue to the east, and Dunlap Avenue to the west, or along the east-west trending streets in between. The city's main institutional buildings and offices developed on the periphery of the northern commercial district. For example, the Post Office, initially on Lomita Boulevard, moved to 200 East 10th in the 1930s. The City Hall, Fire Department, Chamber of Commerce and Public Library eventually conducted operations from either side of Lomita on 11th Street.

The Mission-Revival style railroad depot, built during the 1910s to replace John Conway's earlier modest frame depot, greeted travelers at Ninth Street and Doherty. Close to the depot, stood the original frame headquarters of John Conway's La Lomita Land and Irrigation companies until John Shary's stately 2-story stucco office building replaced it in 1938. Both buildings served as the Mission headquarters for Shary's myriad business interests in the vicinity. Within two blocks of the depot, three hotels and several restaurants were available to serve the needs of traveling businessmen and visitors. Not only was the railroad the most convenient method of transportation for long-distance travel, it served local populations from outlying communities, as well. The railroad was an economic lifeline to Mission until road improvements after World War II allowed the trucking industry to compete with rail service. Carrying supplies such as agricultural chemicals and lumber into town, and perishable agricultural products and, in the 1930s, petroleum products, away from Mission, the railroads tied the small border town to an international trade network.

Running from east to west through the center of Mission between Eighth and Ninth Streets, with a perpendicular spur running north and south along Combings Avenue, the rail corridor's multiple rails and transportation right-of-way created a physical barrier between the sections of town it bisected. North of the tracks along Ninth Street, as mentioned previously, light industrial concerns such as filling stations and lumberyards were found, until the spur ran north along Combings Avenue on the western edge of town. On either side of the tracks in this part of Northwest Mission were more agribusiness concerns such as cotton gins, machine shops and canning factories. Lee Akins & Sons Canning Factory extended across the block northwest of 10th Street and Combings.

SOUTHWORTH CO. U.S.A.
100% COTTON FIBER

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SOUTH MISSION'S DEVELOPMENT

The situation south of the tracks in Mission was considerably different. Industries requiring more land area, or with greater potential for noise or dirt were concentrated in the industrial corridor between the railroad tracks and Eighth Street. Along with the tracks and right-of-way, this industrial zone further emphasized the differences between the ethnically and economically separate parts of town. The 1933 Sanborn Map provides a snapshot of the dense concentration of warehouses, packing sheds, box factories and public utilities in the seven block area north of Eighth Street between Keralum and Dunlap Avenues. Starting from the eastern side of the original townsite just north of Eighth Street, trains headed west passed the Atlantic Commission Company, the W. T. Liston Concrete Pipe Manufacturing Company, two chemical warehouses, a canned foods warehouse, Bordo Products Shipping and Warehouse, Sinclair Refining Company, the Golden Glow Wholesale Grocery, Melch & Company Fruit Packing, G. G. de la Garza Wholesale Grocery, the Central Power and Light transformer yards and ice plant, and a cluster of three shipping stations for the Gulf, Magnolia, and The Texas oil companies. Many of the buildings housing these firms consisted of 2-story metal-sided warehouse or factory buildings similar to Mission Fruit and Vegetable Company (Figure 14).

The neighborhoods in South Mission reflected the economic status of the majority of its residents, as well. Large families continued to live in modest frame dwellings. The neighborhoods contained a few *jacales*, covered with tin panels, interspersed with more substantial dwellings and institutional buildings. South Mission boasted some bungalows and a few 2-story homes; however, most houses were small, with minimal architectural ornamentation. Many house lots contained two small dwellings, and the population density in many blocks far exceeded that of neighborhoods north of the tracks. Businesses, such as grocery stores, auto repair shops, and health clinics were scattered in among single family homes. South Mission's streetscapes probably included more signs of a family's economic life, rather than a series of manicured lawns. Instead of tending the rose gardens in front of their homes, many Hispanic women were tending vegetable gardens in the back yard, harvesting someone else's cotton field, or helping their families run businesses.

Although John Shary had donated a lot in South Mission for use as a neighborhood park, by the mid-1930s the city had done nothing to develop facilities for its recreational use. The two largest open spaces in the Hispanic section of town surrounded the public school and the Catholic Church. Like North Mission, South Mission also had churches scattered throughout the residential area, including a Methodist Church, a Baptist Church, and an Assembly of God Church. An assembly hall used by the Woodmen of the World for many decades stood beside the Methodist Church at 608 Doherty. Reflecting its important role in the spiritual and educational guidance of Mission's Hispanic population, Our Lady of Guadalupe church and school spread over two full city blocks on either side of Sixth Street and Dunlap on the western side of Lomita Boulevard by the late 1920s.

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ECONOMIC LIFE IN SOUTH MISSION

Some residents of South Mission during the 1920s and 1930s had a more stable economic life than did many Hispanics in the Valley. With homes, employment, a social and family support system, and schools for their children, many Hispanics struggled into the middle class. Home ownership usually depended upon the stability of a family's employment. Sometimes the man of the house would work away from town during the week, returning home on weekends. Pedro Salinas, a carpenter working for J. E. Walsh's lumberyard, often left town during the week to build houses or work construction projects as far away as Corpus Christi (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997).

Merchants and business owners, of course, had more control over their employment and work schedules, and some Hispanic mercantile families enjoyed relative prosperity. Business ownership often involved the whole family, and sometimes an extended, interlocking network of businesses evolved. The Barrera family businesses, were prime examples of this phenomenon. Ezekial Barrera, along with brothers Francisco and José, opened Barrera's Supply in South Mission on Lomita Boulevard, as well as an automobile repair garage next to Dr. Austin's pharmacy in 1918. Initially the only service station and repair shop in South Mission, the business also kept the fleet associated with other family businesses operational (Figure 15). Francisco also owned a ranch and José owned a nursery, and both enterprises had trucks associated with them. A wholesale grocery with its delivery trucks was also in the family. Brother Cayento left Mission to attend medical school at Baylor University in Dallas, and Tulane University in New Orleans. He opened the first health clinic in Mission in his home in South Mission in 1920, after being refused hospital privileges in McAllen. In 1926, Dr. Barrera opened a 10-bed hospital in the 500 block of Lomita Boulevard. Dr. Barrera's brother, Pedro, opened a pharmacy adjacent to the clinic about the same time. The family's service station and supply company kept the hospital's ambulance and the pharmacy's delivery vehicles in good repair, as well. The Barreras, the de la Garzas, and the Cavazos were the exceptions, however.

For many of South Mission's residents the increasing prosperity enjoyed by many of the Valley's Anglos and the Hispanic merchants affect their economic situations. With no land and few marketable skills, entire families worked in the agricultural industries of the Valley. The proximity of the border, and the large population of willing Mexican laborers a few miles away, kept wages for Mexican American and Mexican laborers depressed. Prior to World War I, labor was usually compensated at the rate of \$1.00 a day (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997). During the mid-1920s, wages for labor rarely exceeded \$2.50 per day (Alanzo, 1983: 45).

Seasonal vegetable picking and packing employment continued to be available, but the low wages and dull work did not appeal to many people for long. During the 1910s, packing shed workers in the Valley earned about twelve cents an hour. By 1930, the hourly wage increased to thirty cents for the tedious, repetitive work. The most strenuous jobs involved packing, stacking,

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moving, loading and unloading the sacks or crates full of fruits or vegetables (Ibid., 1983: 46). The sheds were not heated or air conditioned, although they did offer shelter from direct sun (Figure 16).

Once the brutal, hot, but somewhat better-compensated work opportunities involved with land clearing and canal digging slowed in the early 1920s, the citrus orchards offered some laborers acceptable year-round employment, although wages continued to be low.

A family's economic livelihood often depended on a number of income sources. Hispanic women working as maids in Anglo homes might earn as much as \$10 per month by the early 1920s. Laundry work compensated as much as fifty cents a day. Teen-age girls worked busy Saturdays at the mercantile establishments along Lomita Boulevard, earning as much as two or three dollars a day in the 1930s (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997). Hispanic men were hired for public works projects in Valley towns installing sewer pipe and water mains, and paving roads. The transition from open, packed earth canals to cement-lined and underground canals in the Valley's irrigation systems offered additional employment opportunities.

Some families, accustomed to the seasonal nature of agricultural production, lived in Mission for part of the year, then left as a unit to follow the cotton harvest (Salinas interview 14 July, 1997). As a whole, a family working in agricultural employment might earn as much as \$7.00 a day in the mid-1920s (Martínez, 1982: 107). Other families came to Mission for a few years and left to seek employment opportunities elsewhere in Texas. In all, the population south of the tracks in Mission was denser, more transient, and the neighborhoods reflected the more modest economic situations of their residents.

MISSION'S EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Mission had an exemplary, if segregated, public school system by the early 1920s. From its humble beginning on the second story of a feed store in early Mission's tiny commercial district, it ranked among the top school systems in South Texas in a decade. Students graduating from Mission's nationally accredited high school in the 1920s could theoretically attend any state university in the country. On a national level, educators during this time worked to assimilate the thousands of incoming immigrant children by teaching American values in their schools. In Mission, teachers met with great success in this arena. Mission had the only school for Mexican children in Texas that was fully accredited by the State Department of Education. For its efficiency in teaching citizenship to Mexican children, the school system was awarded a certificate from the Department of Interior's Bureau of Naturalization (Heller, 1995: 11). Roosevelt School served the Hispanic children in South Mission, while the North Mission Grammar School, later Wilson Elementary, provided education north of the railroad tracks.

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The enormous junior high and high school campus began its growth in North Mission, as mentioned previously, in 1924. In 1930, a vocational junior high school intended to provide education to all sixth, seventh, and eighth graders living south of the tracks, was built in the Alta Vista subdivision in South Mission. As the first strictly vocational program to be established in the Southern United States, Mission's school attracted visitors from all over the state. Designed to train young men and women not intending to attend college, in a trade or vocation for which they could earn a living wage, the placement of the school in South Mission, and the compulsory attendance required of junior high students angered many Hispanics. The school was thought to be another example of racial prejudice, and its vocational nature implied that Hispanic children lacked the ability to obtain a college education (Ibid., 1995: 13). The school board eventually allowed transfers between the junior high schools. By the mid-1930s, after school system restructuring that resulted from reduced budgets, the vocational school became East Side Elementary.

Most Anglo youngsters automatically went to the high school in or near their own neighborhoods. Many young Hispanic men and women also went on to Mission High School, although this required a trip across the tracks every day. Upon graduation, a small percentage of all students went on to college, or to business college in nearby McAllen. College attendance, although less common, was certainly a goal among Hispanic students. Depending on an extended family's resources and a student's abilities every effort was made to provide additional education. For example, Elena Farias Barrera graduated from Mission High School in 1929, and was only one of seven children in her family to do so during the Depression years. Through the determination of her widowed mother and the assistance of relatives both Elena and her sister were sent to college. Elena graduated from the University of Texas with a degree in sociology in 1932. She taught school in Roma and La Joya until 1939, and later taught in Mission (Rio Writers, 1983: 4).

SOCIAL AND SPIRITUAL LIFE IN MISSION

By the 1920s, Mission's citizenry formalized their relationships with many of the local chapters of national social organizations by building substantial halls for their respective social and charitable activities. The American Red Cross operated from a building on the 1100 block of Lomita Boulevard. Mission's chapter of the centuries-old Freemason's Order soon established a substantial brick temple at 1404 Lomita Boulevard. The Knights of Columbus built their lodge hall across from Oblate Park, at 1101 Francisco. The Woodmen of the World met at a hall adjacent to the Methodist Church on South Doherty.

Extended families were common in South Mission, resulting in a strong sense of community. Families helped each other in hard times and joined in celebrations such as marriages and religious rites of passage. Both the Catholic and Methodist churches provided a place to worship, venues for

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religious instruction, and charitable support systems when hardships befell congregation members. The Catholic Church continued to offer parochial education for families able to afford the tuition throughout the period of significance, reinforcing the cultural identity of these families.

Woodmen of the World continued as the primary secular benevolent association in South Mission. From its initial meeting place on South Lomita Boulevard, the social hall moved to Doherty Avenue, adjacent to the Methodist Church. Members formed a supportive, tight-knit group and sponsored monthly dances and parties (Ramirez interview, 16 July, 1997).

SOUTH MISSION COMMERCIAL DISTRICT

As Mission matured, the commercial blocks along south Lomita Boulevard retained their unique identity. A narrower roadbed, and a concentration of groceries and wholesale merchandisers provided a more work-a-day character to this end of the commercial street. Beginning in the late 1910s, many of the original frame buildings from which the earliest businesses operated were replaced with more substantial, mainly masonry, storefronts along South Lomita Boulevard. The reasons for the change were manifold. Most of the commercial properties quickly erected in the raw new town between 1908 and 1912 probably didn't benefit from permanent construction techniques and materials. A major hurricane-force storm that hit Mission in 1919 damaged many of the frame buildings, certainly many roofs, in town. The general prosperity of the 1920s allowed merchants the excess capital needed for infrastructural improvements and expansion. Finally, Guenther Weiske's machine-made bricks from the modernized Mission Brick Company were readily available after 1923.

The many and varied businesses and professional offices owned and operated by the Barrera and Austin families have previously been mentioned. While a few businesses operated from family homes, or along Doherty Street near the Rio Theater, the main business district centered around Lomita Boulevard. Reflecting Mission's role as a distribution center for western Hidalgo County, several wholesale grocer and supply, hardware, and feed stores served as South Lomita's cornerstone businesses. These large facilities were joined by the other general merchandise stores, pharmacies, barber shops, saloons, pool halls, theaters, cafes, and stands that lined Lomita Boulevard.

The substantial, masonry C. G. de la Garza Wholesale Grocery Store on the corner of Lomita Boulevard and Eighth Street sustained many benefits from its proximity to the railroad tracks and depot. Ordered goods were efficiently off-loaded from rail cars and brought to the store. People from outlying towns did their marketing in town on Saturdays, then packaged their goods and groceries for the train ride home in the evening. The store's location provided a competitive advantage over those located several blocks further away from the tracks for such rural clients. The store also maintained a fleet of delivery vehicles for customers without convenient rail access.

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More typical of the smaller businesses, Mission Dry Goods, a general merchandise store that remains in business today, was established in 1924, with Rafael Guerra, Joaquin Martínez, and Pedro Longoria as stockholders. The store sat in the 600 block of Lomita Boulevard until the business moved north of the tracks in the 1940s. Another modest business served as a social center for the community. Antonio Flores' frame barbershop in the 500 block of Lomita Boulevard was a long-time gathering spot and news exchange forum. On a barber's wages, Flores sent all of his children to high school, and some to college. Two sons, minor celebrities for their athletic skills in the local '30/30' minor baseball league, later joined him in the business for several years (Longoria, Salinas, and Ramirez interviews 14 July, 1997).

One of the few Jewish residents of Mission, Sam Greenfield established a modest general merchandise business in Mission in the early 1910s. By the 1920s he had parlayed what was essentially a Lower Valley peddler's route into a permanent emporium and wholesale business, in the 700 block of South Lomita Boulevard. Greenfield's masonry store building was heated in the winter by six *braseños* (galvanized buckets, lined with cement and brick, in which live coals were kept) located throughout the store, on which workers would sometimes roast sweet potatoes. Known as a compassionate man, Greenfield distributed the wood packing boxes his merchandise arrived in to the needy for home repairs. His charity extended to needy families, who were encouraged to take what clothing or supplies they needed from his store, before he sent them to Crisoforo Garza's grocery for food (Hidalgo County Historical Museum, Vertical Files, 1979). Mission Western Wear now occupies the same building.

While Anglo merchants and business owners in Mission had their active Chamber of Commerce to which few Hispanic businessmen belonged, South Mission's merchants had their own association. The Merchant's Association met monthly and held large, festive receptions on a yearly basis. Among its annual events, the Association organized donations of candy and toys for children at Christmas. A newsletter kept members abreast of news and provided a venue for advertising (Ramirez interview 16 July, 1997).

THE GREAT DEPRESSION

In the early 1930s, while other regions of the country suffered from the economic and natural hardships of the Great Depression, the ever-optimistic John Shary began development of 20,000 acres north of Mission (Watson, 1931:278). Early in 1933, he announced his "Shary Plan For Social Stabilization." His suggested remedy for the economic ills of the country involved relocating unemployed city residents to the countryside, where they would buy subdivisions of existing farmer's tracts with the aid of government loans. The existing farmers could then pay the money to their creditors and retain half of their holdings instead of losing the whole farm to the bank (*Mission Enterprise*, 5 January 1933:7). Federally sponsored government programs, such as the Resettlement

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Administration, actually operated under similar premises in various urban and rural areas scattered throughout the country later in the 1930s. Hidalgo County's Rio Vista Farms originated as one of these programs and operated as a cooperative into the 1960s. Elsewhere in the Valley, the relative prosperity allowed business to continue as before, if on a somewhat diminished scale.

CONTINUED LAND DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

Other developers, following the successful Shary's lead, attempted to promote their projects in the vicinity, as well. Mission Groves Estates was organized in 1928. Irrigated by Hidalgo Water Control and Improvement District Number Six, the project featured over 1,000 acres of citrus groves by 1934 (*Mission Times*, Silver Anniversary Ed., 1934). A 1931 advertisement in *Monty's Monthly* promoted another development near Sharyland, Mission Development Company, which featured paved roads, concrete underground canals, and 1,400 acres of grapefruit and orange 'BENTSEN' trees, sold under their three year care plan (*Monty's Monthly*, March, 1931).

Also north, but west of Mission, Nick Doffing promoted the Golden Groves Project, with many of the same irrigation features. Begun in 1928, Golden Groves started with the typical land promotion chronology. The main road was scraped in, and plans for the clubhouse proceeded prior to any land-clearing. Land-clearing and irrigation proceeded simultaneously, then the cleared acres were planted to citrus. The first season's planting consisted of 60,000 citrus trees. The ensuing economic downturn may have affected Doffing's initial prospects. By 1934, only 100,000 more trees had been planted on the 3,500 acre project (*Mission Times*, Silver Anniversary Ed., 1934). Although land sales apparently proceeded, they were probably not at the rate Doffing initially hoped for. The fever pitch of land sales slowed during the 1930s, but they continued none-the-less.

In Mission itself, city officials and business owners tried to boost the local economy with incentives for people for all ages. In January 1932, a contest was organized with cash prizes for local boys who killed the most rats (*Mission Enterprise*, 12 January 1933:2). In addition to economic depression and an apparent plague of rats, Valley farmers also had to deal with the Mexican fruit fly. The federal government sprayed orchards in Hidalgo County twice that year with nicotine sulfate (*Mission Enterprise*, 25 May 1933:3). Sales for many products slowed, and many people throughout the valley felt the pinch of hunger. Florian Kapeller, a Mission nurseryman, was forced to plow thousands of his young citrus trees under when the market slowed (Valley By-Liners, 1978: 187). With family budgets restricted nationwide, the fresh fruit market suffered. Mission's canneries quickly organized to meet the challenge of local oversupplies of citrus, and the canned juice market was further enhanced during the 1930s.

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PUBLIC WORKS IN MISSION

The Great Depression continued into 1941, but beginning in 1933, federal New Deal agencies provided some relief, and hope began to return to the nation. Although many people in Hidalgo County did not experience economic hardship, others had lost steady sources of income and welcomed government jobs when available. Government projects in Hidalgo County included road and irrigation improvements. In 1934, a federally sponsored public works project filled in and graded the steep drainage ditches along U.S. 83 from Mission to Pharr. Once sources for sufficient quantities of dirt were located, men with shovels loaded trucks with earth. The fill was then driven to roadwork areas where hundreds of other men with more shovels filled and graded ditches by hand. In 1937, some of this effort was repeated when a subsequent public works project hired men to widen the base of U.S. 83 between Mission and Weslaco (Heller, 1994: 124).

Mission native Gilbert Longoria, a teenager at the start of the Depression, was chosen to work with the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for two years beginning in 1929. He traveled to West Texas, where he built park facilities at Fort Davis. He went on to work at Garner State Park for a few months until returning home. His father was hired as a timekeeper for the WPA road-building project in nearby Havana (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997). It was unusual to have two Hispanic family members working for government programs at the time. Most Hispanic people around Mission earned fifty cents a day for their field labor during the Depression (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997).

OIL IS DISCOVERED

In the mid-1930s, Mission experienced a temporary boom due to the successful drilling of multiple oil wells in Hidalgo County. Ben King and Otto Woods struck oil in a well sunk near Sam Fordyce, approximately 15 miles west of Mission. Almost immediately the telephone and telegraph companies noted the increased volume, "hotels and rooming houses hung 'no vacancy' signs, office space in Mission was at a premium, housing accommodations were absorbed, and cash registers in every business establishment were oiled up for the "symphony" that followed" (*Mission Times*, 16 March, 1951). Within a year, 145 wells had been drilled in the localized field, and a pipeline to Port Isabel was under construction soon afterward. Offices for the oil business opened in downtown Mission, and many oilmen moved their families to town. However, businesses spawned by the oil excitement soon moved to McAllen and Mission resumed its slower, agriculturally-based pace.

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AGRICULTURE AND COMMERCE IN THE 1930S

In spite of a bad citrus crop in 1932, the Mission area had more fruit trees than any other irrigation district in the Valley in 1933, with almost one and a half million mature trees (*Mission Enterprise*, 25 May 1933:3). Due to the success of the local citrus industry, as well as the small oil boom, businesses appeared to prosper in the commercial district of Mission in the 1930s. Businesses advertising in the local newspaper in 1933 included, among others, the Red Front Grocery (located across from the Post Office), McClane's Radio Electric Shop (at 1011 Lomita Boulevard - now Conway), Barrera's Garage and Supply Company (Figure 17), the Mission Theater, Peters Manufacturing (producing batteries), Mission Motor Company, which opened October 14 and sold Ford cars, Hayes-Sammons Hardware Store, the Manhattan Cafe, and Bentsen Brothers (*Mission Enterprise*, 1933, various dates). Many of these businesses were owned by Anglos who had come to Mission as military personnel. They opened their businesses after World War I and prospered during the resulting economic boom. Large-scale land developers continued to profit in Mission in the 1930s. Lloyd Bentsen, Jr., former Hidalgo County Judge, and a United States Senator, is the son of a Mission land developer. Lloyd Bentsen, Sr., established the Bentsen Development Company in 1935, in the depths of the depression, and was a founding member of the Rio Grande Valley Chamber of Commerce (Johnson, 1991: 145-146).

Relative prosperity in the 1930s allowed for a variety of leisure time activities in Mission. Movie theaters, like the Mission Theater and the Lomita Theater, which opened in the late 1930s, became very popular and provided the latest Hollywood movies (*Mission Enterprise*, 28 April 1938:2). Spanish-language fare could be viewed at the *Teatro de La Paz*, now the Rio Theater (Kemp, 1995:32). Amusements also included local baseball teams and carnival type side shows. On July 4, 1935 the Mission Rifles (affectionately known as the 30-30s) blasted the Lions of McAllen. "Grandpa" Manuel Peña pitched a three-hitter while local phenomenon Leo Najo drove in two runs, on three hits, to lead the Rifles to victory, 5-1 (*Mission Enterprise*, 11 July 1935:3). On February 10, 1937 the Mammoth Marine Hippodrome and Congress of Unbelievable Biological Exhibitions arrived in a special railway car at the train station for a two-day stay to answer, among other questions, "do mermaids live? Is she human or fish?". For 10 cents the curious could enter the railway car and see *Serpentina* for themselves, along with other "strange living enigmas" (*Mission Enterprise*, 28 January 1937:3).

More than twenty-five years after the town's founding, the city commission renamed Mission's main street after founding father John Conway. Lomita Boulevard became Conway Boulevard in 1935 (Heller, 1994: 123). Mission's relative economic well-being prompted not only the construction of several movie theaters, but the improvement of local business buildings. In 1938, the First National Bank remodeled its building, adding stucco to the outside and renovating the interior with a 42-inch ventilating fan to cool both employees and customers (*Mission Times*, 9 September 1938:4).

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It seemed like a statement that better times were ahead. A variety of businesses continued to advertise in Mission newspapers in the late 1930s. M.D. Cavazos, owner of the Mission Bottling Works, advertised Pearl Beer and celebrated the "5th Anniversary of the Return of Beer" (*Mission Times*, 16 September 1938:6). Other active businesses in 1938 included the Joe Summers and Company machine shop (on West 11th), the Ollen Rome Sinclair Station (812 Miller), Mission Drug Store, the Waites Drug Store, Mission Dry Goods (922 Conway), Tom Vines' Furniture Store, R. R. Stevens' Cigar and Curio Shop, and Ray Landry's Garage (*Mission Times*, 1938, various dates).

WORLD WAR II AND MORE RECENT DEVELOPMENT

By 1941, the war economy, with its huge demand for soldiers, manufactured goods and agricultural products, ended the Great Depression, although unemployment continued to pose problems for Valley residents (Richardson, Wallace and Anderson, 1981:396-97). Mission's population in the 1940 census was 5,982, a gain of 2,000 people in two decades. Profitable trade made its mark on Mission during this period. In 1940, Mission boasted 220 business establishments, 130 of which were retail stores, with \$2,098,000 in sales.

MOORE FIELD AND RELATED BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES

World War II brought new construction employment opportunities and a return of military personnel to the Mission area in the form of Moore Army Air Corps Field. Built in early 1941 to train men for possible duty overseas, Moore Field sprawled across more than 1,000 acres on a reservation 12.5 miles northwest of Mission. The cities of Mission, McAllen, and Edinburg formed an airport committee called the "Three-City Committee" to lease a 1,158.33-acre site to the government for use as an air field. The construction and operation of the air field provided a variety of entirely new job classifications in the Mission area. Construction crews employed 1,400 workers, and during the war the base employed 250 civilians. Combined civilian and military payrolls encouraged steady growth of the local economy. After World War II, the base was rehabilitated and reopened at Moore Air Force Base in 1954 (Heller, 1994: 122-127).

Moore Field's proximity to Mission served as a boon to local businesses. While many young men and a few women left the area to participate in the war effort, the older men and women left behind to run Mission's enterprises benefited from the additional military population and payroll. Mission Wholesale Supply owner Esteban Martínez lamented that the war took many of his good employees (Martínez interview, 14 July, 1997). Women and teenage girls stepped in to run businesses and serve customers. As a teenager, Estella Guerra Salinas worked Saturdays in the Gutierrez Store, then run by Emillia Austin Gutierrez, on South Conway Boulevard in the early 1940s. She remembered the Saturday shopping days continuing to be busy, even after many townsfolk left for the military or war-related jobs (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997). Rural people

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continued to come to Mission from surrounding communities like Peñitas to do their marketing. Carmen Flores Ramirez, also a teenager at the time, worked at Mission Dry Goods during the war. Her status in the neighborhood rose once neighbors realized she could reserve rationed items for them when shipments of scarce goods arrived at the store (Ramirez interview, 16 July, 1997).

Businesses responded creatively to war-time rationing and patriotic fund-raising efforts. C. G. de la Garza Wholesale Grocers' Christmas advertisements exhorted shoppers to:

Save Money by shopping here and put that saving in Defense Stamps! Our merchandise gives you greater value for your money than any other store in the Valley—cooperate—save Gasoline and Tires—our stock is very complete! (*Mission Times*, 18 December, 1942)

M. D. Cavazos' Mission Bottling Works cosponsored an advertisement with Pearl Beer, in support of America's truck drivers, who like many other Americans, were working overtime to support the war effort (Figure 18). A driver, leaning out of his truck toward a bottle of Pearl beer, declares "I can see Hitler in my rear-view mirror", while a small medallion urges the reader to buy war bonds and stamps (*Mission Times*, 18 December, 1942). Upon reading the small print, the puzzled viewer determines that the driver's vision of Hitler in his mirror is not related to his consumption of Pearl.

Estella Salinas observed that the war opened up social opportunities for young people (Salinas interview, 14 July, 1997). Dance patios opened in town and were filled most weekends. The theaters in town were heavily visited. The thematically appropriate, highly decorated Border Theater (Figure 19) opened downtown to much fanfare in April, 1942, and provided such entertainment as "The Yanks are Coming" for the viewing public (*Mission Times*, 18 December, 1942). The theater probably owed much of its initial success to the increase in population from the airfield. The less thematically stylized Rex Theater on South Conway opened during the early 1940s, as well.

Increased business profits during the war allowed Esteban Martínez to expand his holdings on Conway Boulevard. He bought out the business run by the Gomez family on the 400 block of Conway, later demolishing the two-story frame store building and replacing it in 1951 with a modern brick storefront that he used as commercial rental property (Martínez interview, 14 July 1997). After peace was declared, South Mission received some of the war's material legacy in the form of Joe's Army Surplus Store, a barrel-roofed warehouse-like space on the 600 block of Conway Boulevard that peddled Army jackets and ammo boxes for many years.

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Along with increased business opportunities for some, the experience gained by many Hispanic people in their travels outside South Texas during the war helped to erode racial and ethnic barriers once considered the norm in South Texas. The G.I. Bill offered higher education opportunities on a scale previously unknown, and some local men took advantage of the program. Some people returned from the war more curious about the world beyond the Rio Grande Valley. Gilberto Longoria spent much of his military active duty in Adak, Alaska, as a radio communications technician during the war. When he returned to Mission, he opened a business that sold seeds for ornamental plants. He then proceeded to travel around the world seeking sources for the seeds for the next 38 years (Longoria interview, 14 July, 1997).

The mild climate and employment opportunities led many more civilian and military personnel to the Mission area after the war. Some, primarily retirees, came only for the winter, part of the seasonal "Snow Bird" migration, a trend that accelerated through the 1950s, eventually influencing the direction and pace of housing development in the area.

THREE FREEZES CHILL THE CITRUS BOOM

Despite expanded economic opportunities in the immediate post-war era, Mission and the surrounding Lower Rio Grande Valley continued to rely heavily upon citrus production for both its livelihood and its identity. Always touted as the "land of no winter", disaster struck the Valley in the form of back-to-back freezes in 1949, 1950, and 1951. The successive freezes destroyed not only the citrus crops, but the mature trees, as well. To compound the damage resulting from the severe winter freezes, droughts conditions in 1952, 1953, and 1956 severely reduced the flow of the Rio Grande during those years. Entire irrigation systems were forced to shut down periodically during those years, resulting in low crop yields, and further stress on damaged trees. The citrus industry never truly recovered from the succession of freezes and drought. Anglo farmers did not replant the groves at the same densities, and agribusiness eventually came to dominate the citrus industry.

Although many Anglos still live in Mission as both seasonal and permanent residents, most reside on the outskirts of town. Some maintain "gentleman" farms but in general do not produce the high yields of citrus that lent Mission, "Home of the Grapefruit", its fame. The 1951 freeze also heralded the acceleration of profound changes that tied the lower Valley ever more tightly to other parts of the country.

By the final freeze in 1951, the post-war social and economic changes occurring nationwide had found their way to Mission. For those men and women who pursued the privilege, increased educational options for veterans through the G.I. Bill eventually allowed for increased opportunities in the workforce, in the Valley and elsewhere. The enormous expansion of the military-industrial complex in the post-war period touched Hidalgo County, as it did many other parts of Texas. In

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1951, military officials announced their plans to re-open Moore Field as an Air Force training field. The base offered civilian employment on construction projects as early as 1953, and administrative and service positions once the Air Force reopened the facility as a jet-trainer base in 1954, provided further diversification of the Valley's economic base. The construction of Falcon Reservoir, 60 miles west of Mission, in the early 1950s also offered construction jobs. The reservoir and its irrigation system marked another level in the continuum of irrigation control in the Valley, from private, to local, to federal control of the dispersal of critical water supplies. Federal Highway Administration projects in South Texas allowed for major improvements along paved transportation corridors, decreasing dependence on local railroads.

As the valley's infrastructure rapidly changed in the 1950s, the population changed, as well. Increased leisure time, and the improvements in travel technology allowed thousands of Midwesterner and retirees to take advantage of the moderate winter climate and low cost of living along the Rio Grande in South Texas. The ascendancy of McAllen as a regional business center encouraged housing development in suburban plots between Mission and its rapidly expanding neighbor. As the Anglo population moved out of the town's original neighborhoods in North Mission and into the new suburbs, prospering Hispanic families moved north of the railroad tracks and into the many residences they vacated. Insufficient housing in South Mission was gradually replaced with sturdier masonry and frame houses during the 1950s and early 1960s.

The vast social and economic changes beginning in the early 1950s are observable in the built environment around Mission. Surrounding the original, canal-encircled townsite, tree-lined streets run through the neighborhoods of brick ranch-style homes built during the 1950s and 1960s. Larger lots, generous set-backs, and driveways leading to attached garages characterize the neighborhoods and reflect both economic prosperity and the increasing importance of the automobile in residential settings. Further beyond the original townsite, housing developments dating from the 1970s and 1980s, interspersed with citrus orchards, spread out to include Sharyland and now approach McAllen on the east. The more modern residential options also include mobile home and recreational vehicle parks, capable of supporting thousands of partial year residents, most with convenient access to major thoroughfares.

Still, Mission is a product of its past, of land and citrus promoters and of the irrigation, packing and canning endeavors that employed its citizens. Some people stand out in the development of the city and surrounding areas. Mission's original 'snowbird', John Conway brought the railroad and financed the irrigation canals that created a garden in the arid desert of the Lower Rio Grande Valley. John Shary, the man most responsible for the promotion and development of the Texas citrus industry, and his wife, Mary O'Brien Shary, were tireless promoters of the Valley all of their lives. Men like John Conway and John Shary came to the Valley at a time when the area was ripe with possibilities. They gathered together the physical, biological and human resources necessary for the

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establishment and continued existence of the town of Mission and the surrounding agricultural areas. Then they depended upon the life savings of northern farmers and investors, and the labor of untold numbers of Hispanic men and women to make the desert bloom.

Four decades of limited success and frequent set-backs in the area's agricultural industry since the 1950s have had a negative effect on Mission's original townsite, but the city has managed to stave off the type of wholesale neglect and abandonment that has plagued many other small agriculture-based communities in the country. Because of its mild climate and relatively low cost of living, the Lower Rio Grande Valley, in general, has benefited from expanded tourism and retirement-related opportunities. The Valley has long attracted winter visitors and now many are coming to stay. In the midst of this growth, Mission remains a viable community with much to offer its citizens and visitors, alike.

Today the central residential neighborhoods are populated mostly by Hispanic residents who now stand at the forefront of Mission city government. Although some of the area's more recent businesses have been drawn to front onto the valley-wide highways that by-pass the central business district, many of Mission's older businesses along Conway Boulevard, Tom Landry (10th) and 9th Street, enjoy a lively trade. Unfortunately, many commercial buildings along Conway, south of Ninth Street, lie vacant or abandoned. They include some of the most architecturally intact and significant buildings in Mission and their restoration and adaptive use could inspire increased heritage tourism and business opportunities for the city. The commercial buildings and unique homes surrounded by Mission's irrigation canals recall the prosperous years of the 1910s, 1920s and even the 1930s, when most of the country suffered from the effects of the Great Depression. Their preservation, rehabilitation, and promotion could spark a new era of prosperity for the city to challenge that of the boom years in which they were built.

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ASSOCIATED PROPERTY TYPES

INTRODUCTION

The 873 extant historic resources identified and minimally documented during a 1996 survey of the original Mission townsite reflect the city's early 20th century heritage. The city's collection of building forms, styles and types can be classified into five major groupings or Property Types: Domestic Buildings (690 properties), Commercial Buildings (128 properties), Institutional Buildings (24 properties), Industrial Buildings (28 properties) and Infrastructural Elements (3 properties). This classification system relies on the original or intended use of the resource and the physical attributes and associative qualities that distinguish them from other kinds of historic properties. The Texas Historical Commission has adopted this typology in its statewide historic context of *Community and Regional Development in Texas (1690-1945)*, which serves as an umbrella topic for such nominations in the state. Although the statewide context ends in 1945, Mission's historic context logically extends to 1951. In that year the valley suffered the last of three devastating freezes that permanently affected citriculture in the region and ended its dominant role in Mission's economy. For survey purposes, properties dating as late as 1955 were documented and given a priority assessment to account for any lag time between the end of Mission's historic period and associated construction. Subtypes within each of the five Property Types further differentiate the historic resources and facilitate a more effective and analytical approach in the evaluation of these properties.

Since Mission was not founded until 1908, all of the city's historic resources date to the 20th century. In fact, most were built between 1915 and 1935 when Mission experienced its greatest period of sustained growth and development. Although 1955 served as the general cut-off for the survey, several properties postdate 1955. The table on the following page charts buildings by age, according to factual or estimated dates of construction from the 1996 historic resources survey.

The original Mission townsite, the boundaries of which defined the 1996 survey area, is divided into nearly-equal sized quadrants by the city's main business corridor and the primary line of the former St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexican Railroad (refer to Figure 11). Conway Boulevard, a north/south commercial corridor, bisects the city longitudinally, while the east/west running railroad tracks, along whose right-of-way lie some of the city's most prominent industrial plants, divides it latitudinally. Domestic properties constitute the majority of the city's resources within each of the four sectors defined by Conway Boulevard and the railroad tracks. Institutional buildings such as churches and schools, along with a handful of smaller scale commercial buildings, primarily small neighborhood stores, are found scattered throughout each of the four quadrants, as expected. Several industrial elements flank the railroad spur that extends along the western edge of the townsite but most of the city's historic manufacturing plants and warehouses fronted onto the main track lines that pass

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through the center of town from east to west. Three infrastructural resources, including a landscape element (a city park), a water retention pond and a water tower, were identified in the 1996 survey. Although neither the railroad tracks nor the irrigation canal system that defines the north, east and west boundaries of the original city were counted as infrastructural resources, they should be examined in future efforts. In addition to its infrastructural importance, the railroad tracks historically divided the city along ethnic and socioeconomic lines, with Anglo professional and middle-class families living in North Mission and Hispanic families of all classes living in South Mission.

TABLE 1
HISTORIC RESOURCES BY DECADE

DATE RANGE	NO. OF RECORDED EXAMPLES	U.S. CENSUS POPULATION
before 1909	0	N/A
1910s	48	N/A
1920s	350	3,847
1930s	179	5,120
1940s	181	5,982
1950s	112	10,756
1960s	2	14, 081

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DOMESTIC BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION

Roughly 80 percent (690 properties) of Mission's historic resources fall within the Property Type category of Domestic Buildings. Examples abound in each of the city's four quadrants with the most intact, cohesive historic residential concentrations on the north side. Neighborhoods in the southeast and southwest quadrants of the city were generally poorer and comprised of smaller, less substantial dwellings than those built in the northern sectors. As a result, the southwest and southeast quadrants experienced greater loss of early building stock as successive redevelopment and urban renewal efforts replaced many of their original houses with modern dwellings, beginning in the 1960s and continuing to the present. While North Mission neighborhoods exhibit greater uniformity in size, scale, style and construction period among its domestic properties, South Mission contains a more diverse collection of dwellings, including a some of the city's oldest vernacular houses as well as some of its most recent manufactured homes. In fact, it would not be unusual to find a full range of domestic property types and ages sharing the same blocks in South Mission.

As the name implies, domestic buildings were built for residential purposes. Most of Mission's historic dwellings are 1-story frame buildings with gabled, hipped, or combination gabled/hipped roofs. More than half (371) are almost entirely of wood construction with horizontal lapped or flush wood siding the most common type of exterior finish. Brick is the second most common building material (94) seen on historic domestic buildings, with stucco (78) a close third.

Throughout the country, and particularly in the Southwest, stucco was associated with Spanish Colonial and Mission revival styles of the early 20th century. Since those styles were popular during Mission's greatest historic developmental period, stucco played a larger role in its residential construction than is generally found in other parts of Texas outside the El Paso area. Although adobe is a building material that is closely associated with the Southwest, it is not a common building material in this part of South Texas. Only a single surviving property in the survey area, now in ruins, was built with adobe brick.

Synthetic sheathing materials including aluminum (50), asbestos (37), asphalt (7), Permastone (5) and vinyl (3), cover about 15 percent of the city's domestic properties while hollow tile (7), hardboard (press board)(23), concrete (10), stone (1) and metal (1) complete the list of exterior finishes in Mission. In most cases, these synthetic finishes covered or replaced original exterior materials.

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All properties classified as Domestic Buildings are free-standing and most occupy a single town lot. Though the majority are single-family dwellings, Mission has 26 multiple-family properties including nine apartment complexes and 13 duplex/triplex buildings. Nearly all of these were originally built as multiple-family dwellings in the 1920s and were not merely adapted from existing single-family buildings. Promotional booklets of that period discussed the need for more rental properties and encouraged their construction in Mission. Although several hotels, apartments and boarding houses sprang up along Conway Boulevard, the main commercial street, and on E. Ninth Street, near the railroad depot, most duplex/triplex and apartment houses were built in North Mission residential sections. Some of the best examples survive in the northeast quadrant where Mission's professional and business-class families lived and were probably leased to young businessmen and their families.

Other subgroupings in the multifamily category include two hotels, one with a group of associated tourist cabins, and a separate tourist court. Mission's single-family and duplex/triplex buildings typically are set back from streets, providing owners or occupants with minimal spaces for landscaping their respective yards. Apartment buildings and hotels in Mission, on the other hand, have very shallow setbacks but may be built around interior courtyards or similar common areas. The only surviving tourist courts in Mission share common areas with an associated hotel or single-family dwelling.

Many historic dwellings have associated outbuildings that also fall into the Domestic Property category. The most common of these are relatively small, frame garages and utility sheds. Since Mission was developed largely after the ascendancy of the automobile, nearly all houses in the more affluent North Mission, and many in South Mission, had contemporaneous auto garages built at the rear of their lots. Only substantial or otherwise noteworthy auxiliary buildings such as 2-story garage/apartments were identified as separate entities in the survey effort. Thirty-five separately identified auxiliary domestic buildings, 24 of which were converted from garages to apartments, were documented in Mission.

The kinds of alterations to domestic buildings vary greatly; however, typical changes include the application of asbestos, aluminum, or vinyl over original wood siding; the removal of rotted porch floors and trim; the replacement of wooden porch supports with aluminum or wrought iron supports; and the replacement of wood-sash windows with aluminum frame windows. Additions to the rear elevations of domestic buildings are common. Additions to more visible elevations, including the enclosure of front porches, are less common but more likely to compromise the architectural integrity of the buildings.

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Domestic Buildings, as a property type, includes three subgroupings: Vernacular Houses, Popular Houses and Stylistic or Period Houses. Both Vernacular Houses and Popular Houses are small- to medium-sized dwellings that housed the majority of Mission's citizens. Vernacular houses utilize traditional forms passed down from generation to generation and reflect regional approaches to the residential design. Popular houses, in contrast, are those dwellings that appeared simultaneously throughout the nation. Their plans appeared in journals, magazines, pattern book and other popular media sources and quickly gained favor. The third subgrouping, Stylistic or Period Houses, includes domestic buildings that display more academic or "high-styled" architectural ornamentation and typically are the products of professional architects or master builders. Because they often were individualized designs and thus were expensive to build, Stylistic or Period Houses usually were home to the city's elite. These residences set community-wide architectural trends, and numerous property owners looked to these buildings as a guide for determining fashionable architectural trends. While they might not have been able to secure the services of an architect, other local residents purchased stylistic trim from local lumberyards and applied it to their homes. Many buildings classified as Vernacular or Popular Houses exhibit features characteristic of houses discussed in the Stylistic or Period Houses section; however they typically are not as grand in scale or scope.

POPULAR HOUSES

Mission's early development coincided with the emergence -- and enthusiastic acceptance -- of what has become known as Popular Plan Type houses. The city's domestic resources are overwhelmingly represented by Popular Plan houses, especially Bungalows which comprise more than half (352) the total number of historic single family dwellings (619) found in Mission. While traditional building types continued to be built well into the second quarter of the 20th century, particularly in South Mission, these new domestic forms were promoted in the popular reading material of middle-class Americans by the early 1900s. The plans for these houses were supplied by mail order firms, or were published in plan books that were available at local lumberyards or from mail order firms that mass produced and marketed house plans. Some retail firms, such as Sears, Roebuck and Co., offered house kits that could be delivered by rail to virtually any location in the nation. Consequently, local traditional building forms yielded to Popular Plan Types, such as Four-Square and Bungalows houses, that appeared simultaneously throughout the country, as they did in Mission. Because Mission was founded and largely developed at a time when Popular houses were in vogue and widely available by rail, they constitute the great majority of the city's historic domestic buildings.

The Four-Square, a common house form of the early 20th century, was developed as a reaction to the picturesque, asymmetrical dwellings that dominated domestic designs of previous decades. Supplied in a variety of styles by mail-order concerns and lumberyards, Four-Square houses were built throughout the nation during the 1910s and 1920s. Their cube-like forms conferred a fresh,

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modern appearance, and they were often built in the same neighborhoods as the period's other new house type, the bungalow. The Four-Square house type takes its name from its interior configuration that is divided into four rooms of equal size. A Four-Square house is two stories in height and is capped by a hipped roof, whose profile typically is broken by a dormer at the facade elevation. Fenestration patterns are balanced but asymmetrical, usually with the entry slightly off-center. A single-story porch that stretches across the entire facade superimposes horizontality on the otherwise boxy form. Local examples display architectural features that are characteristic of the Prairie School, Classical Revival or Craftsman movements.

Although the Four-Square was a very popular house type throughout the country, they are not as prevalent in Mission. Only seven were identified in the 1996 survey; one has been divided into several units for multifamily use, one was converted to commercial use, and the remaining five remain traditional single family dwellings. Mission's Four-Square dwellings date to an early period of the city's development and have suffered from various remodeling efforts over the years. One (Site 626) was altered by the addition of poorly-executed Missionesque details possibly to enhance its conversion to commercial use. Another Four-Square with Prairie School influences (Site 666) has served as the Catholic parsonage since it was constructed, about 1915. Unfortunately, it received numerous character changes in a c. 1970s remodeling effort that included replacing its original porch posts with tree trunks, possibly to achieve a rustic appearance. One of Mission's better examples of a Four-Square (Site 327) with Craftsman inspired detailing is located in the midst of the commercial district at 1211 Conway Boulevard. It is somewhat unusual in that it has a stoop rather than the more typical full-width front porch but if an original porch was altered, it was done so more than 50 years ago. Probably the best, classic example of a Four-Square house in Mission is the two-story frame dwelling at 523 E. 12th Street (Site 53) with its hipped roof, central dormer and off-center entry.

During the nation's residential construction boom of the 1910s and 1920s, another new domestic form, the Bungalow, attained widespread popularity, and local examples comprise the single largest subgrouping within the Domestic Building category. The archetypal bungalow plan consists of two rows of side-by-side rooms, staggered front to back. Exterior features may differ greatly; however, a bungalow should be considered as a building type, not a style, for the economical dwellings were offered with Craftsman, Spanish Colonial Revival, Colonial Revival, Mission Revival, Tudor Revival (See Stylistic or Period Houses) and Shingle stylistic ornamentation and features. In the city of Mission, all but the Shingle style are represented in the city's many bungalows.

The most frequent type of bungalow displays architectural elements characteristic of the Craftsman or Arts and Crafts movement. Distinctive features include a low-slung profile of one or one-and-a-half stories and a broad roof line that incorporates the porch in an attempt to minimize the contrast between exterior and interior space. The most common roof form is the front-facing gable, although bungalows with cross-gabled, side-gabled and hipped roofs also exist. These houses often

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have triangular braced supports under widely spreading eaves. Exposed structural elements such as rafter ends are another common feature. Although they can display an infinite diversity of porch treatments, a bungalow often has tapered box columns that either rest on brick or wood pedestals or reach the full height of the porch. Natural rock piers support the porch posts on several of Mission's more noteworthy Craftsman-inspired bungalows. Good examples of bungalows with rock piers are found at 1511 Doherty (Site 441) and 1413 Doherty (436).

As befits its name, Mission also has some good examples of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival (See also Stylistic or Period Houses) bungalows, represented by both single-family and multifamily dwellings. They typically feature flat roofs with red or green clay roof tile embellishments and white stucco exterior surfaces pierced along the roof line by tile canales or drains. Mission and Spanish Colonial Revival dwellings often have niches, modeled after those found in old Spanish missions, built into their facades. They occasionally display colorful decorative tiles to enhance features such as doorways or roof lines.

Floor plans in single-family versions are modeled after standard bungalows but the duplexes generally contain two parallel rows of rooms under a single roof. The living rooms of each half fronts onto a porch which is sometimes shared with the other half of the duplex. Generally these properties contain no hall. Doors lead directly from the living room to the kitchen, on one side, and to the bedroom on the opposite side of each half. From the exterior, the duplex appears as a single-family dwelling with two front doors. In Mission, such duplexes are found among single-family bungalows of the same era, particularly in the northeast and northwest quadrants of the city. Excellent examples of Spanish Colonial Revival styles applied to multifamily dwellings are found in duplexes at 308-310 W. 12th Street and at 1216-1218 Oblate and in the Dick Hall Hotel (Site 330A, 1204 Conway).

Another locally common bungalow form has steeply pitched, multigabled roofs, round-arched front entrances, and brick exterior finishes that are suggestive of the Tudor Revival style (See Stylistic or Period Houses). This subtype attained popularity during the late 1920s and 1930s and Mission has a number of good examples, including the houses at 1401 Doherty (Site 434) and 330 St. Marie (Site 805).

STYLISTIC OR PERIOD HOUSES

Mission's residential properties reflect the influence and variety of America's dominant early 20th century architectural styles and movements. Architectural historians traditionally have relied on stylistic categories as a method of organizing buildings based on shared key physical characteristics and function as a shorthand means for ordering the built environment. Some buildings, especially the grandest edifices, can be effectively understood using stylistic categories, but the concept falls short when pressed into service to classify most domestic buildings, as well as the commercial buildings that

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comprise the business precinct. While a handful of houses may be classified as an example of a particular style, most are merely vernacular or popular houses that display easily applied elements associated with a particular style. For this reason, the concept of style serves as a companion to vernacular and popular building types to account for all properties when describing and assessing historic properties.

19TH CENTURY ARCHITECTURAL VESTIGES IN MISSION

Because Mission was not founded until 1908, the city claims few true examples of Greek Revival, Queen Anne or other common 19th century styles. However, some of the city's early domestic buildings display some of the distinguishing characteristics of much older styles, generally in combination with other styles and plans. That these 19th century styles were adapted to more modern buildings is probably a reflection of their widespread use and enduring popularity throughout the United States. It may also be an artifact of Mission's relatively recent founding. In established communities where such styles enjoyed long histories, people tended to adopt the latest architectural fashions as they came into vogue. In new towns, especially those founded in relatively isolated or frontier areas, early settlers were more likely to build in the styles and traditions with which they were familiar. Thus, it is not unusual to find 19th century stylistic features incorporated in the designs of 20th century buildings in such areas. This may be true of both domestic and commercial buildings in Mission where some of the town's vernacular buildings appear much older than their 1910-1930 construction dates because they display features or embellishments more typical of earlier styles.

The Queen Anne style perfectly personified the nature of the late 19th-century picturesque movement, and an elaborate arrangement of ornamental details drawn from English architecture gave the Queen Anne its appeal. The style's asymmetrical form typically appeared in frame, raised to two stories. A collection of rounded towers, fanciful domes, turrets and steeply pitched roofs built up of conical, pyramidal and hipped shapes distinguished the Queen Anne from other residential architectural movements. No other style exhibited such a rich variety of textures, as smooth clapboard, imbricated shingles, polychrome roof tiles, carved brackets, turned balusters and porch supports, and sawn bargeboards were used to create a harmonious and lively configuration. The style was also a favorite among the less affluent who merely applied selected features, a bay window or porch trim, to a more vernacular house form. This appears true of Mission where modest Queen Anne embellishments are found on some of the city's earliest vernacular houses such as the house at 716 Doherty (Site 693).

From the late 19th century, well into the 20th century, the promotion of academically correct historic styles in builder's magazines, professional journals and the popular press created a demand for houses revival styles throughout the nation, and Mission was no exception. This movement was

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clearly a departure away from the fussy styles of the Victorian era to more familiar, traditional modes. Architects drafted ambitious and stylistically correct examples, but plans for smaller, less-detailed versions were purchased from women's magazines and the growing number of mail-order catalogs.

A popular architectural expression of the period was the Classical Revival style. The style is chiefly characterized by its use of the classical orders, pediments, temple front motifs and symmetrical organization. Seen primarily on large, institutional buildings, the Classical Revival style was used in the design of residences, although often in a modest and unpretentious way. A 2-story portico is the style's signature detail, although vernacular houses may have a porch with Doric or Tuscan columns that merely reflect an influence of this architectural mode. In Mission, it is more common to see this style expressed by classically influenced Doric order columns on modest, pyramidal roofed bungalows such as the one at 1104 Miller.

Possibly due to the city's self-conscious cultivation of Spanish Colonial architectural traditions, Mission has few examples of the (American) Colonial Revival style that enjoyed popularity in other parts of the country and state in the early 20th century. Associated with the country's pre-Revolutionary past and its architectural history, the balanced facades of Colonial-style dwellings are relatively undecorated except for the entry bay, where single-story porticoes or molded door surrounds embellish the opening. Dormers enhance the hipped roof, as do exaggerated chimney stacks. In Mission the style appears relatively late in the city's historic architecture and is generally seen in combination with other styles or types. The side-gabled frame house at 409 Doherty (Site 413) has the balanced facade and dormers indicative of the Colonial Revival style but its classically inspired porch is a departure from houses typical of the style.

Much more popular in Mission and other areas with Spanish colonial roots in the early 20th century were the Spanish Colonial Revival and Mission Revival styles. These styles originated in California but spread throughout much of the nation during the early 20th century. In a sense, they were a West coast version of the then-popular Colonial Revival movement, which recalled a more virtuous time in the nation's history. These Spanish-derived styles endured in the cities of the American Southwest including Phoenix, Tucson, Albuquerque and El Paso long after their popularity died elsewhere. Distinguishing features of the Spanish Colonial Revival style include low-pitched, red-tiled roofs, stuccoed exteriors and round-arched window or door openings. The facades are generally asymmetrical, with off-center front entrances. The Mission Revival style is similarly detailed but its signature is the use of a Mission parapet, particularly the swept version, called an *espadaña*, most often associated with the Alamo. Both architectural expressions are often seen on popular domestic forms, such as the bungalow, discussed earlier in the Property Types section.

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Perhaps in recognition of the area's Spanish Colonial roots, its proximity to Mexico and the city's namesake, a number of Mission's early 20th century residents built houses, duplexes and apartment buildings with Spanish Colonial Revival or Mission Revival stylistic embellishments. Thirty-six domestic buildings, including several apartment complexes and duplexes and an auxiliary building, exhibit such distinctive Spanish Colonial or Mission features such as flat roofs with clay tiles, ceramic canales or roof drains, stucco finish, wrought iron grilles and light fixtures, and colorful glazed tiles and nichos or alcoves set into the walls. Despite their flat roofs and the absence of such bungalow hallmarks as wide eaves, these dwellings retain the bungalow plan, size scale and often the fenestration pattern. Outstanding examples of Spanish Colonial Revival duplexes abound in Mission. Among them are the duplexes at 1216-1218 Oblate (Site 747), 1308-1310 Francisco (Site 794). Several larger, more elaborate houses display distinctive characteristics of those styles. The two-story Spanish Eclectic house at 513 E. Twelfth Street (Site 52) combines a variety of Spanish influenced elements including a stucco finish, red clay roof tiles, wrought iron railings and balconies and a stepped parapet reminiscent of the Mission Revival style.

The Tudor Revival Style was a popular architectural expression of the 1920s and 1930s. Mail-order catalogs and style books of the period made no distinction between Tudor, Elizabethan and Jacobean styles, instead distilling the various shapes and details under the name Tudor Revival. Architect-designed interpretations appeared in new upper-class suburban developments, while the steeply pitched gabled roofs, half-timbered detail, decorative chimneys and round-arched openings are commonly seen on the modest cottages, most of which followed the bungalow plan, built in the 1920s and 1930s.

In contrast to the reactionary architectural styles of the early 20th century, at least one innovative and progressive movement, the Prairie School style, attained a degree of popularity in Texas, although no houses in the city of Mission and indeed few in the state exhibit the complex horizontality and interpenetration of interior and exterior spaces that were based on the turn-of-the-century domestic designs of Frank Lloyd Wright. The most distinctive element associated with the style is the strong horizontal emphasis which is underscored by long bands of ribbon windows; long, low or flat roof lines; elongated terraces projecting from side elevations; contrasting coping materials; wide, low chimneys; and horizontally placed decorative materials.

VERNACULAR HOUSES

Like most Texas communities, the majority of domestic buildings erected in Mission during the earliest years of its development are classified as Vernacular Houses. They are distinguished from other kinds of houses by their use of common building types and modest building materials. These vernacular residences are defined by their floor plan and overall shape, which remained stable in the face of stylistic diversity. With few exceptions, vernacular houses are the ordinary buildings

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constructed by common people. Local carpenters or masons constructed most of these houses, essentially replicating a known and accepted building type. Trim secured from a local sawmill or lumber yard provided the necessary individual appearance and reflected the owner's level of affluence and stylistic pretensions.

While Mission's vernacular domestic buildings exhibit an assortment of plans and forms, most can be assigned to one of the following building subtypes: Jacal, Two-Room, Shotgun, Center-Passage, L-plan and Modified L-Plan houses. The basic form of these subtypes remained remarkably consistent over extended periods of time, while various architectural styles gained and lost popularity.

JACAL CONSTRUCTIONS

From the earliest period of Spanish Colonial settlement in the mid-18th century, until the influx of Anglo settlers in the early 20th century, the one-room jacal was one of the most common domestic building types found in the region of the Lower Rio Grande. Typically, jacales consisted of vertical poles cut from mesquite branches set a few feet apart and filled in with smaller horizontally laid limbs plastered with mud. Roofs were either side-gabled or hipped and covered with thatch. A mid-18th century inspection of Spanish colonies along the Rio Grande noted that the inhabitants of Dolores lived in jacales. One hundred years later, travelers including U.S. boundary surveyor William Emory, found the area's poorer families still living in jacales. As late as the 1920s, regional magazines promoting the Rio Grande Valley's agricultural potential to Midwestern farmers touted the area's Hispanic workforce and mentioned that they "boarded themselves" in jacal colonies in the countryside. Until the advent of the railroad brought inexpensive milled lumber to the area in the early 20th century, jacales made from cheap, locally available materials prevailed throughout the Rio Grande Valley as the standard for Hispanic agricultural workers housing.

As the Lower Rio Grande Valley became more urbanized and cosmopolitan, the traditional jacales began to disappear from the landscape. The 1919 Sanborn maps depicted several jacales in South Mission, but by 1933 they appear to have been replaced or significantly altered. Small one- and two-room frame houses, sometimes identified as shacks or shanties, as well as Shotgun dwellings, replaced the jacal as the area's low-income housing alternative. Although no jacales were identified during the 1996 survey of Mission, it is likely that some survive beyond the project boundaries, particularly in more rural settings. Where they exist elsewhere in the Laredo-Brownsville corridor, they have been partially covered with metal sheathing and serve as auxiliary buildings. Care should be taken to recognize and document these important traditional dwellings in any future survey efforts in Mission.

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TWO-ROOM HOUSES

Imported into Texas by settlers from the Upland and Lowland South in the mid 19th century, the Two-Room house form remained in the builder's repertoire into the first quarter of the 20th century. As its name implies, the Two-Room plan type consists of two rooms (a hall and a chamber) of unequal size and decoration. The larger room, or hall, is the public space, while the smaller room is the family's private chamber. The building footprint is rectangular, with one room deep and two rooms wide. In Mission, the two-room house seems to have become an early 20th century urban version of the *jacal* as the principal dwelling of the city's least-affluent workers. Most local examples of the Two-Room house are 1-story frame buildings with wood (usually weatherboard) siding and side-gabled roofs. Of the 33 Two-Room dwellings documented in Mission, 20 display no distinctive stylistic characteristics while 11 exhibit some Craftsman influence. Three nearly identical Two-Room houses (Sites 115-117) at 215-219 E. Fourth Street are among the best-preserved examples of the plan type in Mission. Built about 1920, the small side-gabled frame houses display Craftsman details, including exposed rafter ends and knee braces.

SHOTGUN HOUSES

The Shotgun house type may have originally evolved from a traditional African house form that was transported from the Caribbean to southern river deltas in the United States (Vlach 1976, appears in Upton and Vlach 1986:58-78). Like all vernacular dwellings, the Shotgun house is a vigorously stable form. From its initial appearance in Texas in the latter half of the 19th century until well into the second quarter of the 20th century, it remained essentially unchanged. In plan, the Shotgun is a single room wide and varies from two to four rooms in depth. The typical Shotgun is a 1-story, frame dwelling with a front-facing gable or hipped roof. Although the Shotgun house is generally associated with poorer economic groups, many display modest amounts of stylistic ornamentation such as turned porch posts, fishscale shingles and ornamental brackets. Those dating to the 1910s and 1920s often display Craftsman-like elements including exposed rafter ends and knee braces.

Associated with African-American urban settlements throughout the south, the Shotgun became a generic workers' house in the west (Pratt, 1991:177). With few southern or African-American traditions, Mission's Shotgun houses followed the western model. Most of the city's early Mexican American workers lived in one- or two-room frame houses in South Mission (depicted on 1919 Sanborn Maps as "Mexican Settlement"). Although some were identified as "shanties", "tenements" and "jacales", rows of Shotgun houses also lined the streets of these neighborhoods until the 1960s, when the city began clearing the area of substandard housing. Today only 15 Shotgun houses survive within the original townsite, although others may exist outside its boundaries. Mission's Shotgun

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houses display virtually no embellishment. An intact example with asbestos siding can be found at 1023 N. Perkins (Site 266). A garage/apartment at 403 E. Fourth Street (119B) presents an unusual instance of a two-story shotgun house.

CENTER-PASSAGE DWELLINGS

With its central hallway, the Center-Passage house appears to be a somewhat larger version of a Two-Room dwelling. It is further distinguished from its Two-Room cousin by its broader, symmetrical, 3- or 5-bay facade, with a central door flanked by windows on each side. The building footprint is rectangular, usually three rooms wide and one room deep. Most are one-story frame houses with lapped wood (usually weatherboard) siding, although a few houses have board-and-batten siding or brick veneer. Stylistic ornament, if it exists, is usually seen on the porch, around the entry and windows, or in the gable ends.

Early examples of Center-Passage houses often have Greek Revival features such as a pedimented portico with squared columns and molded caps, and/or a transom and sidelights surrounding the front door. Late 19th and early 20th century examples of the plan type are more likely to have Queen Anne-style embellishments, such as turned-wood columns and spindled friezes on the porches. Mission's single example of the Center-Passage dwelling type is similar to the late 19th century model. The c. 1915 house (Site 594) at 1001 Keralum was modified about 1955 but retains its form and late-Victorian era detailing to a large degree. Other examples that may be encountered in future surveys of the larger Mission area, are expected to be similar to this one-story frame house.

L-PLAN HOUSES

The L-plan or Gable-Front-and-Wing (McAlester and McAlester 1989:92-93) dwelling, is one of the most common house forms of the late 19th and very early 20th centuries. This plan type probably is an elaboration of the center-passage house, with an off-center front extension. . The front projecting wing usually contains two rooms, with the back room serving as a rudimentary kitchen and dining area. A partial-width front porch often protrudes from inner side of the front wing, extending across the setback portion of the facade. Wood-frame construction prevails, and all of Mission's L-plan houses originally had exterior finishes with weatherboard siding. Because they first attained popularity during the late-19th century, L-plan dwellings often display elaborate detailing and ornamentation, particularly on the porch and in gable ends. Shingled gable ends, turned-wood porch columns and jigsawn-wood porch trim indicative of the Queen Anne style are often found in L-plan houses. Still others exhibit no distinctive stylistic ornamentation.

Although the popularity of the form waned by the time the city was founded, Mission contains five late L-plan type dwellings dating primarily to the 1920s. While the form can be found in both one

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and two story versions, all of the local examples have only a single story. Possibly due to their later construction, only one of Mission's L-plan houses conforms to the traditional property type. Two are very small cottages that essentially borrow the L-plan but display Craftsman details. One (Site 230) at 700 E. Second Street exhibits both Folk Victorian and Craftsman characteristics with the combination of turned porch posts and exposed rafter ends. One of Mission's earliest and best preserved examples of an L-plan with Folk Victorian features (Site 693, 716 Doherty) is essentially a Center-Passage dwelling with a prominent rear projecting ell and a wrap around porch.

MODIFIED L-PLAN HOUSES

Another locally common vernacular domestic building of the late 19th and early 20th centuries is the Modified L-plan house. This house form features a cube-shaped central mass with a central hipped roof and projecting front and side wings. Small, secondary gables extend from the hipped roof and often display noteworthy architectural detailing. Late 19th-century versions typically have Queen Anne-styled ornamentation, such as elaborately cut wood trim in gable ends and porches. Houses erected in the early 20th century often have Doric or Tuscan columns supporting a wrap-around porch. Sidelights and transoms commonly frame the front door.

Mission has five examples of Modified L-plan houses, all of which date to the city's earliest period of construction between 1910 and 1920. Four of the five are good examples of the type in Mission. Neighboring houses at 1005 Francisco (Site 532) and 1013 Francisco (Site 530), and the house at 723 St. Marie (Site 559), display fishscale shingles in their gable ends and feature wrap-around porches. The house at 708 St. Marie (Site 826) is similar to the others but has only a partial width porch. A fifth example of the Modified L-plan is found at 502 E. Eleventh Street (Site 161). Built about 1915 and modified in 1925, it has both Folk Victorian and Craftsman features. A poorly executed wrap-around porch, added in recent years, detracts from its appearance.

T-PLAN HOUSES

The T-plan house resembles an L-plan but it features a central front-projecting wing instead of an off-center extension. A single noteworthy example of the T-plan house lies in Mission's southeast sector at 702 Francisco (Site 783). Typical of T-plan houses elsewhere, this example has applied ornamentation, reflecting Queen Anne-style motifs.

SIGNIFICANCE

Since they represent such a large percentage of the city's historic built environment, Domestic Buildings are an important part of Mission's early 20th century heritage and they are tangible links to the city's physical development. A domestic building can have both historical and architectural

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significance and may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, B or C, either individually or as part of a historic district. A domestic building with historical significance is one that is representative of important events or trends of the past (Criterion A) or is associated with an individual(s) that made noteworthy contributions to the city's historical development (Criterion B). A domestic building with architectural significance is a property that displays notable physical features, craftsmanship or design, or is an exemplary illustration of a style or an architect's or builder's work.

An individual domestic building considered eligible under Criterion A most likely will be a residence that was erected during the city's early 20th century development and is associated with a period of widespread growth and prosperity in the community. An example might be a house linked closely with Mission's rise in importance as the center of thriving citrus growing industry. To be nominated under Criterion A in such a scenario, however, the property must be the building most closely associated with that historical event or trend.

Most domestic buildings that are eligible under Criterion A will be nominated as part of a historic district that is representative of the city's early 20th-century development. A neighborhood whose development reflects community-wide trends is an example of how a historic district can be eligible under Criterion A. Another example might be a historic Mexican American neighborhood that has survived with only a limited amount of new residential construction since the early 20th century. This neighborhood can be nominated if an argument can be made to demonstrate how the area and the houses within it are representative of broad trends in local Mexican American history. The dwellings need not be particularly noteworthy examples of an architectural style or type but should retain enough integrity to be recognizable to the period when the neighborhood attained its importance.

Historical significance can also involve associations with individuals who were important in the city's past (Criterion B). Typically, it involves a dwelling that was the home of a person who achieved importance while living in that property. If nominated under Criterion B, the house must be the residence of an individual who played a pivotal role in the city's early 20th century development and be of transcendent importance at a local level; thus, the house is directly related to the associated historic context. The property typically is nominated if the house is the primary building where that person achieved significance or when no better examples survive. An example might be the house of an individual who was instrumental in promoting or exploiting the area's citrus-growing potential. Citriculture and its associated harvesting, canning and shipping industries played a pivotal role in the city's economic development. Thus, the house of John Shary, renown as the Rio Grande Valley's Citrus King, may be eligible under Criterion A for its historic associations with Mission's most important industry.

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A domestic building may also be nominated to the National Register under Criterion C as a noteworthy example of an architectural style, type or form, which are identified and discussed in the DESCRIPTION section of the property type Domestic Buildings. If nominated for this reason, the property would be considered under the Area of Significance of Architecture. The house could also exhibit exceptional craftsmanship and detailing which might distinguish the property from others in the community. More often, however, a dwelling is significant for its architectural merits and will be nominated because it best illustrates a specific type or method of construction.

Domestic buildings can also be nominated to the National Register under Criterion C as members of a historic district, including a concentration of similarly intact historic properties within a well-defined area. The historic district may include buildings that are not necessarily significant on an individual basis but are noteworthy because the area has few post-1951 properties and/or physical changes. The area should convey cohesiveness and invoke a strong sense of the past, which can be further reinforced by various historic landscaping and infrastructural features. When nominated within a historic district, domestic buildings can provide a more complete cross-section of the local history and can help reflect broad themes and influences that contributed to Mission's growth and development in the early 20th century. Moreover, groupings of domestic buildings typically enable a better understanding of how the area functioned as a whole and often, but not necessarily, are associated with more significant individuals in local history. An analysis of architectural styles within a district can show developmental patterns and can also reveal to what degree designers, builders and contractors conformed to or diverged from prevailing tastes in architecture. If a historic district is nominated under Criterion C (as most are), it likely will be listed under Architecture as an Area of Significance.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Domestic Buildings can be considered for nomination to the National Register if they pre-date 1951 and retain a significant amount of their architectural integrity. They should be recognizable to their period of significance which, in most cases, is the date of construction. To be listed in the National Register, a domestic building must also meet at least one of the four National Register Criteria for Evaluation. To be listed, an individual domestic building or a historic district comprised primarily with domestic buildings must be strongly linked with and related to the associated historic context. The Statement of Significance should discuss how the individual property or historic district meets the National Register criteria and how the area relates to, and is associated with the historic context.

Because an individual domestic building being nominated under Criterion A or B is one with strong historical associations, it does not necessarily have to be unaltered or a particularly noteworthy example of an architectural style, type or form. It should, however, be closely associated with

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important trends and events in the past (Criterion A) or with individuals who have been historically significant (Criterion B). Whether nominated under Criterion A or B, a strong argument must be made to establish the relative importance of that event, trend or person within the context of Mission's early 20th century development. Merely stating, for example, that a residence was the home of a locally successful businessman living in the city is not enough to justify listing in the National Register. The accomplishments of that individual must be articulated and then related to the historic context. Also, such a property must have been used by that person when significance was achieved or be the residence most closely associated with that individual. The dwelling must retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable to its Period of Significance.

Many individual historic dwellings are candidates for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as good examples of an architectural style, type or method of construction, or are noteworthy commissions of an architect, builder or contractor. However, that property's relation with the historic context must be addressed. Moreover, its physical integrity must be retained to an exceptional degree. A building's exterior detailing should appear almost exactly as it did when it was originally constructed or when it was sympathetically altered before 1951, which marks the end of Mission's period of historic significance. While architectural fabric inevitably deteriorates over time, restoration, rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts should be sensitive to a dwelling's historic character and should utilize shapes, forms and materials that are compatible with original detailing. The installation of historically inappropriate elements can detract from a property's integrity and, therefore, can make that house ineligible for the National Register. Common alterations, which can compromise a residence's integrity, include the replacement of wood-sash windows with modern metal-sash ones, the installation of wrought-iron porch supports or a concrete porch floor, or the application of vinyl, asbestos or aluminum siding over original wood siding. The removal of architecturally significant details can also compromise a dwelling's historic integrity.

To be eligible for listing in the National Register, a historic district must be a well-defined area that contains a significant concentration of historic (pre-1951) dwellings that retain their architectural integrity to a noteworthy degree. At least 50 percent of all properties in the district should be classified as Contributing, a designation which requires that a building still possess enough of its original fabric to be recognizable to the district's period of significance. The house does not necessarily have to be unaltered but should retain its most important historic architectural details and materials. A Contributing property can also be a resource that does not necessarily relate to the architectural character of the district but may be eligible for the National Register on an individual basis.

Domestic buildings classified as Contributing typically should still have their original exterior sheathing and porch trim and materials. The application of asbestos, vinyl, aluminum or any other synthetic siding over the original exterior walls is often regarded as insensitive to a dwelling's historic

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character and proper maintenance, and can preclude listing as a Contributing property. The replacement of wooden porch floors and supports, likewise, can compromise a property's historic integrity, as the porch usually displays some of the most significant and distinguishing architectural detailing on a residence. One of the more common alterations is the installation of wrought-iron porch columns. For example, the tapered box columns of bungalows are an extremely important visual element of this house form, and the removal of these features can represent a severe modification to the property's historic appearance, thereby justifying its exclusion from the Contributing category. More superficial alterations, such as the application of non-historic colors or paint schemes or the installation of a metal roof, are less severe compromises of the resource's historic integrity and do not, by themselves, warrant rejection of the building as a Contributing element.

If, however, the district is nominated for its historical associations, architectural integrity of the dwellings is not as critical as it would be for a district nominated merely for its architectural significance. The integrity problems discussed in the preceding paragraph are not necessarily applicable. However, such a district must be extremely intact with very few non-historic properties within its confines. For instance, residents of a predominantly Mexican American neighborhood often could not afford to maintain the original architectural fabric and character of their residences. They were less concerned with historic integrity than they were with making their homes livable.

Associated historic outbuildings can also be considered as Contributing elements if they display architectural detailing that is in keeping with the overall district and if they are substantial enough in size and scale to be perceived as separate properties, independent of the main house. Such outbuildings may include 2-story garage/apartments that have an address separate from the primary dwelling, or they may be 1-story garages which incorporate stylistic elements similar to those exhibited on the main house.

Noncontributing properties are those that detract from a district's historic character and should comprise less than 50 percent of all buildings in a district. This category includes historic resources that have lost their integrity through severe exterior alterations, as previously discussed, or have been relocated to a new site within the last 50 years. Post-1951 properties comprise the other major grouping within the Noncontributing category; most of these display physical characteristics that have little in common with the prevailing historic character in the area.

Finally, a residential historic district, like all historic districts, must have boundaries that are logically determined and can be defended on aesthetic and/or historical grounds. Gerrymandering to bypass Noncontributing properties cannot be allowed. Instead, the boundaries must be regularly shaped and, whenever possible, follow lines of historical development.

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COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION

The property type Commercial Buildings is the second most common building form in Mission and comprises about 15 percent of the total number of historic resources. Most of the city's 128 historic commercial properties are aligned along the main business route, originally named La Lomita but now known as Conway Boulevard, primarily between Fourth Street on the southern end, and Fourteenth Street on the north. A second, much smaller but extremely significant commercial node, the Rio Theater and attendant buildings, lies in the 500 block of Doherty Avenue which runs parallel and one block to the east of Conway Boulevard. Isolated commercial properties, including service stations and neighborhood groceries, are scattered in historic neighborhoods throughout the city. Historic commercial buildings reflect periods of prosperity and stagnation in the local economy and the city's more substantial commercial buildings date to its greatest period of growth and development from the late-1910s through the mid-1930s.

The same dilemma with style that limits its usefulness in describing and assessing domestic building is true also when analyzing commercial architecture. For this reason, building-type analysis, paired with stylistic evaluation and descriptive summary, provides a more precise system of evaluating commercial properties. This analysis is based on facade organization and is adapted from Richard Longstreth's typology of commercial architecture in *The Buildings of Main Street* (1987). He defines eleven possible building types, although the One-Part Commercial Block and Two-Part Commercial Block, form the majority of commercial buildings in Mission. Another subtype found in Mission include a single example of an Enframed Window Wall. Many of Mission's commercial buildings do not conform to Longstreth's typology.

The One-Part Commercial Block is a discrete, independently treated building. Found free-standing or as part of a group, the One-Part Commercial Block facade typically consists of a tripartite store front with an extended brick parapet. Many buildings in this category have store fronts with a central, recessed door and flanking, fixed-glass, display windows. A row of transoms extends above these openings and provides a supplemental source of natural light. Corbeled brick, ornamental panels, parapet walls and cast-stone coping are often used to enhance the upper or parapet wall. The city's 1996 Historic Resources Survey identified 29 extant One-Part Commercial Blocks in Mission. Little more than half exhibit detailing associated with an architectural style. In most cases, the buildings are not "high style" examples, but instead are vernacular buildings with some features that are characteristic of a particular architectural movement. Of those, 12 display Mission Revival characteristics, while two follow the Art Moderne and one the Modern Movement trends. The remaining 14 properties within this commercial type displayed no or insignificant amounts of stylistic ornamentation.

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The Two-Part Commercial Block, which rises two to four stories, is distinguished by its division into two distinct horizontal sections. The ground floor, or lower section, is similar to the organization of the One-Part Commercial Block, with a central door, flanking display windows and fixed transoms. However, the upper section is often a more solid surface punctuated with smaller window openings. The 3-bay configuration that is commonly seen on the ground level is usually repeated in the upper section. Windows on the upper floor(s) typically are double hung and proportionally long and narrow, in contrast to the broad fixed-glass display windows at the street level. Moreover, windows in the upper section often display some type of stylistic detailing. As with the One-Part Commercial Block, Mission's Two-Part Commercial Block buildings most often exhibit Mission or modest Spanish Colonial Revival elements, if any at all. Five of the 11 documented Two-Part Commercial blocks exhibit some degree of Mission/Spanish Colonial Revival detailing. Most of Mission's commercial buildings were erected from the 1910s to the 1930s when these styles were at the height of their popularity. Mission's business leaders may have adopted the Spanish-influenced styles in an effort to link their identity with the region's "romantic" Hispanic heritage. Of the remaining six examples of the Two-Part Commercial Building type, one was identified as having Modern Movement elements and one noteworthy building attached to the Border Theater is identified with the Pueblo Revival style, as is the theater.

The Enframed Window Wall is easily identified by its use of a large central section that is bordered on each side with wide bays. The central section can be treated in a variety of ways included the use of glass blocks or patterned tile or brick. Movie theaters built from the 1920s through the 1940s frequently used this type of facade organization and often display classically inspired architectural detailing. Only one commercial building in Mission can be typed as an enframed window wall. It is an Auto Supply Store at 113 W. 19th Street (Site 65) that has been severely altered.

Of the city's 128 recorded commercial properties, only 41 are clearly definable as commercial blocks or enframed window walls, while the majority (87), do not fall into those categories. Most of Mission's historic commercial buildings are better defined by their uses which in turn dictate form. Like most towns of its size, Mission's historic commercial buildings include retail or wholesale dry goods stores, theaters and restaurants, auto repair and/or filling stations, office buildings and banks. One- and Two-Part Commercial Blocks and Enframed Window Walls generally serve as retail stores or office buildings.

In general, Mission's commercial buildings are either one or two stories in height, feature load-bearing brick construction and have flat or slightly inclined roofs. They have rectangular plans that are more deep than wide. Brick and stucco are the most commonly used building materials.

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STYLISTIC FEATURES OF COMMERCIAL BUILDINGS IN MISSION

Many of the more substantial commercial properties display Mission or Spanish Colonial Revival stylistic embellishments popular throughout the country, particularly in the Southwest, at the time of Mission's commercial greatest commercial development. Typical decorative motifs found in Mission's commercial buildings include stepped or swept (espadaña) parapets, commonly identified with the Alamo, wrought iron grilles over windows or doors and wrought iron balconies. Good examples along Conway Boulevard include the C. G. de la Garza Building (Site 375, 716 Conway) and the Muñoz Building (Site 353, 907 Conway). The 2-part commercial block at 406-408 Conway (Site 387) is among the city's best articulated Mission Revival style buildings. It displays a pair of well-defined, Alamo-esque espadañas, the larger one surmounting a 3-bay span of the building and the smaller capping a 2-bay section. The Spanish Colonial Revival style Rio Theater complex (Sites 696, 697, 698), at 514-518 Doherty, consisting of the 2 1/2-story theater and adjacent meat market and art gallery/restaurant, is one of the truly outstanding architectural treasures of Mission and is a designated Recorded Texas Historic Landmark (RTHL).

During the period in which Mission's commercial district was largely developed, architects and builders experimented with the Pueblo Revival style. It was not as popular as the Mission or Spanish Colonial Revival styles beyond the cities of New Mexico, Arizona, and some areas of far West Texas like El Paso where Pueblo traditions were known and embraced by the inhabitants. It is noteworthy, therefore, that the South Texas city of Mission contains a good example of Pueblo Revival architecture in the Border Theater (Site 355), a local landmark at 903 Conway.

Although many buildings in this Property Type category retain their historic integrity to a noteworthy degree, few have been restored or rehabilitated by their owners. The Border Theater on Conway Boulevard and the Rio Theater complex on Doherty Avenue, both of which contain thriving businesses, are exceptions. Most of the city's remaining historic commercial buildings fall into one of two categories, (1) intact but vacant or abandoned, or (2) altered but marginally occupied. Most of the intact but vacant buildings lie in the southern half of Conway Boulevard which has traditionally been home to Hispanic businesses, while the altered buildings in the northern half retain local businesses, for the most part. However, many of these businesses as a group are also threatened by the advent of large national chain stores like Wal-Mart and other discount stores that typically build outside the downtown area and draw business from the local retailers and restaurants.

SIGNIFICANCE

Like their domestic counterparts, commercial buildings are an important component of Mission's past and were a vital underpinning of the city's early 20th-century development. They may be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion A, B or C for their historical

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associations and/or architectural significance. The SIGNIFICANCE section for Domestic Buildings includes a more complete discussion of the National Register criteria and how they can be applied to property types. A commercial building can be nominated either as an individual property or a member of a historic district.

A commercial building being considered for listing on an individual basis under Criterion A is one that is closely associated with important trends in local history. For example, it could be a building that housed a retail business that contributed greatly to the community's economic development in the early 20th century. If a group of commercial buildings is being nominated as a historic district under Criterion A, the buildings must collectively represent a significant chapter in the local history. The downtown, for example, has been the center for retail, wholesale and service activity in Mission and thus is potentially significant for its historical merits.

A commercial building nominated under Criterion B is one that is associated with an individual who played a pivotal role in the city's development. It is important to keep in mind, however, that the contributions of that person be clearly stated and that his or her efforts are compared with those of others in the community. Regardless of whether a commercial building is nominated under Criterion A or B, a property being nominated for its historical associations must be the one most closely identified with that event, trend or individual.

Still other commercial buildings will be nominated for their architectural merits (Criterion C). These can be listed either individually or as part of a historic district. An individual commercial building may display noteworthy craftsmanship and/or design qualities and can be an outstanding example of an architectural style, type or form. It may be an important commission of a local architect, contractor or builder. Groupings of commercial buildings often possess architectural significance when considered as a historic district. These buildings usually are of a similar scale and form, utilize the same kinds of building materials and were erected at about the same time. They are closely interrelated physically and aesthetically, and often appear as a unified grouping of independent parts. Such concentrations can have several properties that are significant individually and/or can include commercial buildings that may lack significance on an individual basis but are more important when considered as part of a collection. The overall sense of cohesion can be further reinforced if the streets retain their brick paving. If the individual building or historic district is nominated for any of these reasons, it likely will be considered under the Area of Significance of Architecture.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

A commercial building being nominated individually must pre-date 1951 and retain sufficient integrity to evoke the property's date of construction or period of significance. In general, a commercial building should maintain its original facade and/or fenestration, as well as its exterior

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finish. Superficial and easily reversible changes, such as the covering of transoms or the removal of signs, are less important than major remodeling or additions that can detract from a building's overall historic character. Alterations completed before 1951 sometimes are important in their own right and can represent the architectural evolution of a building over time. For example, a commercial building constructed in the 1910s but substantially remodeled in the 1930s can still be architecturally noteworthy. If essentially unchanged since the 1930s, such an alteration may not necessarily be intrusive to the property's integrity. Indeed, the changes could be regarded as architecturally significant.

A commercial building with strong historical associations should retain enough of its integrity to be recognizable to its period of significance. For example, a commercial building that formerly housed a locally important bakery need not be unaltered but must appear much as it did when the business achieved its significance. Most, but not all, of the building's architectural fabric should survive in a relatively intact state. In Mission, a street level application of stucco over the original wall surface is a common alteration to commercial properties during renovations to update the building's appearance. In many instances, the original wall fabric remains on the facade above canopy level. For commercial properties with strong historical associations, this street level application of stucco does not represent an irretrievable loss of integrity for the building. A special case in Mission includes a commercial property, the Chappa Building (Site 383) at 407-413 South Conway, constructed in the mid-1940s utilizing Permastone as its original exterior facade covering. Close examination reveals the application of Permastone to be an integral part of the facade's embellishment. In this instance, the Permastone cannot be considered an alteration of historic fabric, since it is the historic fabric.

An individual commercial building being considered under Criterion C must retain a greater degree of its integrity than those being listed merely for their historical associations. The building can be a noteworthy example of a particular style or type, or display outstanding craftsmanship or detailing. If important or distinguishing architectural elements such as parapets, cornices, original surface materials or fenestration patterns are changed, modified or removed, the building may not be considered eligible for National Register designation under Criterion C. Additions to the Shary Building, now Mission's City Hall (Site 692), however, while extensive, do not significantly detract from the historic office building's significance because they were added to the side and rear and have little visual impact on the building's primary facades. Furthermore, all of the building's many distinguishing features have been preserved so that it appears very much as it did in 1938 when it was built as an office for one of Mission's most prominent businessmen.

Intact concentrations of commercial buildings are most likely to be considered for National Register designation as historic districts under Criterion C. They should qualify if a majority of properties within the district retain their historic architectural integrity and the overall impression of

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the district conveys a sense of time and place from the period of significance. These buildings are classified as Contributing properties, and a minimum of 50 percent of the total number of properties within a district should be so categorized. Although each historic district will have its own definition as to what constitutes a Contributing property, National Park Service criteria provides a threshold for a "building, site, structure or object that adds to the historic architectural qualities, historic associations, or archeological values for which a property is significant because a) it was present during the period of significance, and possesses historic integrity reflecting its character at that time or is capable of yielding important information about the period, or b) it independently meets the National Register criteria" (National Register Bulletin No. 16).

Buildings that detract from the district's overall historic character are considered as Noncontributing and include new (post-1951) buildings and severely altered historic resources. The National Park Service recommends that less than 50 percent of the buildings be classified as Noncontributing properties. In addition, the boundaries must be logically drawn and not gerrymandered to achieve the 50-percent composition.

INSTITUTIONAL BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION

Designed for governmental, educational or religious activities Institutional Buildings are where people congregate, socialize, obtain services and other activities most often undertaken in groups. They represent the efforts of organizations such as church groups, city councils, school boards and others - to create an appropriate facility and project a suitable image to convey pride, growth and success. Institutional buildings typically occupy corner lots or other prominent and highly visible sites. Most properties in this category front onto Conway Boulevard, the principal business street and major thoroughfare of the town, as befitting their status in the community. Others are scattered throughout the city's four residential quadrants to serve the people who live in them. Most institutional buildings have brick exteriors that are purely decorative or are structural and load bearing. Full and partial basements are common, as are elaborately designed entrances that reinforce a sense of grandeur and significance to these buildings. Detailing can vary greatly depending on the group responsible for its construction, the amount of money spent in its construction, and the period in which it was built.

Mission's 24 historic institutional properties documented in the 1996 survey comprise only about two and a half percent of the total number of documented historic properties but their importance to the communities they serve surpass their small number. They can be subdivided into four subtypes — Religious Buildings, Educational Buildings, Government Buildings, and Hospitals — that are based upon their associative attributes. Unlike those properties classified as in the categories

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of Domestic Buildings or Commercial Buildings, those historic resources within the Institutional Buildings classification have not been broadly analyzed by plan and form. Instead, use and stylistic influences have commonly been the primary factors in assessing and cataloging institutional architecture. The evaluation of local institutional buildings incorporates plan and form with the traditional means of examination, thereby providing an effective means of analysis.

RELIGIOUS BUILDINGS

The 13 historic properties classified as Religious properties comprise the largest subgrouping of Institutional Buildings in Mission. This category includes churches and their ancillary buildings, as well as any other property used for religious purposes such as the meditation garden (Site 58) in the 400 block of E. Eleventh Street. Properties in this grouping frequently are among the grandest edifices in the community and often display finely crafted architectural ornamentation that is derivative of either the Gothic Revival or Classical Revival styles. Mission's churches indeed are among the city's largest and most imposing buildings but few exhibit classic characteristics associated with high style designs generally seen in religious buildings elsewhere. None display true Gothic Revival elements and only one, now used as a funeral parlor, at 1321 Conway (Site 319) can be loosely described as Classical Revival. Church plans vary from simple rectangular halls to more complex Latin cross plans with numerous appendages.

Most of Mission's churches exhibit some characteristics of the various Revival styles that were popular throughout the country in the early 20th century. Of the 12 identified historic Religious buildings, two are classified as Mission Revival, two as Spanish Colonial Revival, one Classical Revival, one Tudor Revival and two as Modern Movement. Spanish motifs are seen in many of the churches, often in combination with other idioms. Several, like Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church and the First Christian Church, appear to have been designed by architects or master builders while others, like the funeral parlor, are simply large or imposing rather than beautiful or awe inspiring. Still others are modest, one-story brick meeting halls with few noteworthy design elements.

Perhaps the most architecturally elaborate religious building in the original townsite is found in Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church (Site 104) built in 1927 at 119 W. Sixth Street, in southwest Mission. The building combines aspects of the Spanish Colonial Revival style such as the domed steeple cast stone entry with Mission Revival elements displayed in elements such as its quatrefoil windows and espadañas. Another church built a few years later, the First Christian Church at 221 E. Twelfth Street (Site 43) has some minor Spanish Colonial/Mission Revival embellishments including the use of a quatrefoil window and low pitched espadaña on an otherwise restrained edifice with some Classical Revival references. The 1932 First Church of Christ Scientist (Site 325), now a law office at 1420 Conway, displays the steeply pitched entry and brick detailing associated with the Tudor Revival style in domestic buildings. In the post-World War II era, Mission's church architecture

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departed from the period revivals of the 1920s and 1930s. Built in 1948, Trinity Lutheran Church (Site 746) at 1322 Oblate, took a decidedly modern turn. Executed in limestone, the steeply pitched front gabled building follows clean, spare lines uninterrupted by ornament except for a regular pattern of narrow stained glass windows. It is distinguished by its bell tower, a rectangular shaft punctuated by an open grid for sound on one side, and an elongated cross on the other. The effect is geometric, abstract and very modern. Other congregations pursued Modern Movement design in their Religious buildings during the 1950s and 1960s. The remaining four Religious buildings are best regarded as vernacular properties, with no significant or discernible stylistic ornamentation.

Although Religious Buildings are often conspicuous physical landmarks, their ancillary buildings — Sunday School or education buildings — sometimes are noteworthy themselves. They typically stand behind or to the side of the church and display architectural detailing that is complimentary, if not similar to, embellishment seen on the primary building. While Mission's more modern church education buildings tend to follow these trends, the historic ones do not. In some cases, separate Sunday School classes are not evident. They may be included within the church building itself, possibly in the basement. Others occupy domestic buildings near the church. Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church and its associated parochial school, were designed and built decades apart and bear no resemblance whatsoever to one another. In one instance, the Sunday School building (Site 687) of a Baptist Church at 1304 Doherty was built about the same time as the church but, while the church was extensively remodeled in the 1970s, the adjacent education center retains its original 1935 appearance. It displays exposed rafter beams on the low-pitched roof sheltering an arched portico that extends along two walls of the otherwise nondescript L-shaped building. While the portico, and the interior courtyard it defines, conveys an overall sense of Spanish Colonial Revival influence, the exposed rafter ends are typical of Craftsman design.

EDUCATIONAL BUILDINGS

Educational Buildings are unified by their common function, and as with Religious Buildings, the plan, form and stylistic influences (or lack thereof) provide a framework for creating groups within this subtype. Their forms may vary from the sprawling 1-story North Mission Grammar School built in 1948, to the 2-story, cube-like Roosevelt Primary School Auditorium built in 1929 to serve the city's Hispanic children. Mission's earliest schools were 1-story masonry buildings with roughly U- or H-shaped plans, block massing, and symmetrically composed facades. Mission High School, built in 1927, and two Mexican elementary schools, Roosevelt Primary School (1921) and East Side Grammar School (outside survey boundaries), followed that format. The high school was razed and a junior high built on its site about 1955. Only the auditorium survives from the original pre-war Roosevelt School complex. It is the oldest extant school building inside the original townsite

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boundaries. Sharyland, a suburban satellite of Mission had its own public elementary school, a 1-story, E-shaped masonry building (outside survey boundaries). A new high school has been built to the northwest of the original townsite and other public elementary schools were constructed in suburban settings, as well.

In the post-war era, school design departed from the symmetrical facades and massed plans of earlier construction. In parts of the country where good weather prevailed throughout the school year, as in the Southwest and South Texas, many schools were built in L-shaped plans or as a series of free-standing classroom wings that were only one-room deep with doors leading directly to the outside. Administrative offices occupied the first wings, generally fronting onto parking lots, while classroom wings trailed behind, connected by walkways or covered ramadas. One such wing (120B) was added to the more traditional Roosevelt Primary School in 1948. While the original school has been razed, the classroom wing survives on the grounds still occupied by the auditorium. The same year, North Mission Grammar School (Site 20), a sprawling 1-story L-shaped school was built. It has suffered multiple additions and alterations since its construction and little resembles its original design. Two parochial schools, one built in 1955 (Site 144) and affiliated with St. Paul's Catholic Church in the city's northeast quadrant, and the other built in the 1960s and affiliated with Our Lady of Guadalupe Catholic Church in the southwest quadrant, retain their original design to a large extent. Although neither are currently eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, they are noted for future study and comparison. Included in the 1996 survey, the earlier school (Site 144) is noteworthy for its use of glass block, sleek design and courtyard plan.

Unlike other Institutional Buildings, schools are found exclusively in residential areas, well beyond the downtown. Most are prominently sited and stand on parcels that encompass most if not an entire city block. Many local schools have been remodeled over the years, and the most common alterations have been the construction of new wings for additional classrooms, or the replacement or covering of original windows often in the spirit of "improving" the building's learning atmosphere or for energy conservation. Many of the city's historic schools have ancillary buildings, usually of masonry construction, to the side or rear of the main building that, depending on the date of construction, detailing and integrity, may contribute to the overall historic character of the site.

GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS

Buildings originally placed in use as government offices, courtrooms, fire stations and libraries are organized as the subtype, Government Buildings. The common quality unifying this group is the use of the property as a public, non-educational city, county, state or federal office. Government buildings built before 1951 tend to be substantial construction, utilizing masonry and incorporating varying degrees of stylistic ornamentation. Conversely, the forms and plans of public buildings vary considerably. These buildings are conspicuously located near the heart of the downtown, serving as a

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significant component of the town's core. Government buildings usually are large, masonry edifices that are conspicuous landmarks in the community. Most are designed by professional architects and, consequently, display "high-style" architectural ornamentation and features. However, Mission is not a county seat and does not have a courthouse or courthouse square. Its current City Hall (Site 692) is the former Shary Office building, discussed under Commercial Properties. The earlier city hall building (built in 1947) and an associated fire station (built in 1941), stood at the northwest corner of Conway and Eleventh Street, at the center of the downtown business district. Mission's only surviving building built specifically for governmental use and following the traditional type, is the 1938 Spanish Colonial Revival style Post Office (Site 168). The infill of its distinctive arched fenestration has adversely affected its historic appearance. Two military-related properties in the city can also be categorized as Government buildings. Built about 1945, both exhibit the distinctive arch-ribbed construction of the Quonset Hut. One (Site 2) was built originally as a National Guard Armory at the end of World War II. It was remodeled about 1960 with a brick facade attached to the front. It is currently used as a recreational center. The second military related building is the U.S. Army Tank Depot (Site 643) at 1108 Cummings. It is a typical Quonset Hut.

HOSPITALS

Another, distinctive and quite specialized type of Institutional building is Hospitals and related properties. The historic resources survey conducted in 1996 identified only one such building, the Spanish Colonial Revival style clinic (Site 336) at Conway, within the original townsite boundaries. It is unusual in that it appears little different from similarly styled Spanish Colonial Revival dwellings of the same period.

SOCIAL

The final Institutional property found in Mission can be categorized as a Social type. The only example identified in the 1996 survey is the imposing 2-story Masonic Lodge (Site 324), built about 1930 and remodeled about 1970, at 1404 Conway Boulevard.

SIGNIFICANCE

Although they constitute only 2.5 percent of the number of extant historic resources in the city, Institutional Buildings are an integral part of Mission's historical development because they fulfilled vital social, political, religious and cultural needs of local residents. These buildings are often important as much for their symbolic aspects as for their physical characteristics; consequently, they may be significant for their historical associations (Criterion A) or for their architectural merits (Criterion C). Schools, for example, are associated with the public-school system and are indicative of local efforts to improve and upgrade public education in the community. Institutional buildings

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may also be reflective of the city's prosperity and expansion during the early 20th century, and their locations can reveal much about historic growth patterns and residential development. The types of schools provided for Mexican children, for example, reveal much about segregation policies and how this minority group was treated by the influx of Anglo farmers and merchants in the early 20th century. Moreover, schools can also demonstrate local support for the educational program of the district. The passage of several bond packages during the early 20th century, for example, can reflect much about local citizen's commitment to public education. Historically significant institutional buildings are likely to be nominated under the following Areas of Significance: Education, Government/Politics, Religion, and Planning and Community Development.

While typically important because they reflect broad trends in local history, Institutional Buildings may also be significant for their physical attributes. They often are among the city's most substantial buildings and may represent the work of a locally prominent architect, builder or contractor. Churches, for example, are most likely to be eligible for listing in the National Register under Criterion C because they may be an outstanding example of a style or type, display noteworthy craftsmanship. Therefore, they would be nominated under the Area of Significance of Architecture.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

To be eligible for the National Register, an institutional building must be pre-date 1951 and meet at least one of the National Register Criteria for Evaluation. They may be nominated on an individual basis or as part of a historic district, although they may not necessarily be representative of the kinds of properties that predominant in the district.

An institutional building can be considered for the National Register under Criterion A if a strong argument can be made to demonstrate how it is representative of a broad trend or pattern in the city's development of the early 20th century. The property does not necessarily have to be a particularly noteworthy example of an architectural style or form, but should retain sufficient integrity to be recognizable to the period when the building achieved significance. Distinguishing architectural features must be intact, as the removal of such elements can compromise the building's historic character.

Institutional buildings can also be considered for listing in the National Register under Criterion C as noteworthy examples of an architectural style or type. To be eligible for the National Register in this manner, a building must retain its integrity to a very high degree. The removal of important architectural features — a classically inspired cornice, for example — or the replacement of historic fabric with incompatible modern materials can detract from the building's overall historic character and can keep a building from being listed under Criterion C. Common alterations that can detract from a building's integrity include the removal of original doors and windows and the

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installation of metal-frame replacements. In Mission, several historic churches underwent renovations ranging from the late 1950s through the early 1970s to modernize their appearances. Alterations included the removal of any distinguishing historic features, boarding over windows and doors and the application of cement stucco over the facades to achieve a smooth, uninterrupted surface. The Baptist Church (Site 688) at 1304 Doherty experienced such a renovation about 1970 with the result that it now imparts no historic stylistic references. The former City Post Office (Site 168) built in 1940 at 200 E. Tenth Street, retained some of its original Spanish Colonial Revival features such as the arched entries and wrought iron exterior light fixtures in a recent renovation effort. However, the enclosure of the arches, replacement of original fenestration and application of a smooth cement stucco over the original finish, greatly diminishes the building's architectural significance.

INDUSTRIAL BUILDINGS

DESCRIPTION

Those properties built primarily for the manufacture, processing and refinement of raw goods, or which are structures that assist in those endeavors, fall within the Property Type category of Industrial Buildings. Many of Mission's industrial properties, including the fruit packing and canning factories and irrigation-related properties such as the pump house at Chimney Park, reflect the city's importance as a regional agricultural center in the first half of the 20th century. While less numerous than residential or commercial properties (the historic resources survey identified only twenty-six buildings and three engineering properties as examples), Industrial buildings nonetheless played a pivotal role in the local history. Their construction, as well as the operation of the primarily agriculture-related businesses within them, contributed greatly to the local economy and, in fact, helped define Mission's character as an agricultural leader in the Lower Rio Grande Valley throughout its historic development period.

Because the definition is broad, the Property Type category of Industrial buildings includes a diverse collection of buildings such as cotton seed oil gins, fruit packing and canning factories, water retention and purification facilities, machine shops and warehouses, and their respective ancillary buildings. These buildings share many common physical characteristics and associative qualities despite obvious differences in scale, materials and function. The entwined relationships between Mission's agricultural industries, its irrigation and water retention technologies, and the extension of the railroad to aid in land development and crop transportation, resulted in the construction of most of the city's industrial buildings and, to a large degree, dictated their location within the city.

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The same infrastructural elements that outline the city's neighborhoods also define its industrial corridors (Figure 20). Of necessity, canneries and cotton gins, water treatment plants and irrigation pump houses, sprang up along Mission's main water and rail ways. Industrial properties related to water facilities lie between Fourth and Sixth streets, along the main irrigation canal that defines the western perimeter of the original townsite. Most of the fruit packing and canning facilities, as well as the cotton seed oil gin and various warehouses are found along the railroad tracks that bisect the city along Ninth and Tenth streets through the center of town or along the San Benito & Rio Grande Valley Railroad that travels along Cummings Avenue, near the city's western boundary.

While no industrial properties lie along the city's principal commercial thoroughfare, Conway Boulevard, the water retention and purification facilities lie within the southwest quadrant, in a neighborhood traditionally identified with Mission's Mexican American families, and along the railroad spur that passes through the northwest quadrant in a working-class neighborhood. Industrial properties are notably absent in the more exclusive northeast quadrant historically associated with the city's professional and middle-class Anglo families.

The common factor among all of Mission's industrial properties lies in their close proximity to rail transportation. Virtually all of the city's industrial concerns, whether water-related, canning, ginning or storage facilities, have direct rail access either on the main line or along the western spur. In fact, the mass of so many large industrial complexes in the center of town, conveys a stronger sense of Mission's industrial past than may be warranted. In many other Texas railroad towns of similar size, a string of substantial commercial buildings commonly front onto the railroad tracks within the downtown district. However, in Mission, the industrial properties occupy that position while the commercial district runs perpendicular to the rails. The pattern was established in Mission's early development when the town's founder was forced to deed 20 acres of land to the railroad company in exchange for a dedicated stop. The St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway Depot Grounds (Figure 4), formed the basis of the industrial corridor that eventually cut a swath through the heart of the townsite.

Beginning with a single line of track looped around a central depot, the depot grounds grew to encompass more than twenty city blocks of industrial development. By 1919, the railroad had expanded to six intertwined lines and a new passenger depot and platform. Industrial development in the subdivision included the Mission Ice Light & Water Company, Evans Grain Company, Mission Lumber Company, Valley Gin, and Gulf, Texas and Magnolia Oil Company warehouses, offices and storage tanks, all lying directly on the railroad. Also by that time, the San Benito & Rio Grande Valley Railroad had run a line from the south which passed along the western edge of town following Cummings Avenue. A secondary industrial corridor grew up along that route, as well. Near the end of Mission's historic development period which began with first of three devastating freezes in 1949, more than 30 industrial complexes lined a dozen spur lines that came off the main railway, all

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within the original townsite. These industrial properties, particularly the major canning and fruit-packing plants, with their numerous warehouses, packing and manufacturing facilities, represent the economic lifeblood of Mission for nearly half a century.

Industrial properties typically include a complex of buildings and/or structures within an enclosed and well-defined area. The largest and most important property often is a massive building that encloses a large space to accommodate machinery and crews. Ancillary buildings, such as offices and warehouse/storage facilities, are much smaller in scale. The threat and fear of fire resulted in the use of non-combustible fabric; therefore, corrugated metal or brick are common building materials used in the construction of industrial buildings where the most valuable equipment and inventories were stored.

Because of their utilitarian function, industrial buildings rarely display noteworthy stylistic features or architectural ornament that typically are seen on other contemporaneous properties. In older, 19th century cities, however, industrial buildings often have corbeled brick cornices, segmental-arched window openings and some type of ornamental treatment defining entrances. Because Mission is a relatively new city, its industrial buildings generally lack such detailing and their significance lies in their historic associations rather than their architectural merits. A good example of an industrial building with strong historic associations is the Second-lift Irrigation Pump house (Site 856) at Chimney Park. Irrigation was the essential ingredient in Mission's success and although the pump house lacks architectural distinction, its historic contributions to the city's growth and development are undeniable.

Of the 28 industrial buildings and engineering resources in this category, eight display some modest Mission Revival stylistic features, principally a stepped parapet or espadaña, in keeping with the city's Southwestern image and namesake, perhaps. Among the more noteworthy of these is the warehouse (Site 858) in the 300 block of W. Eleventh Street. Other good examples include the adjacent red brick and concrete buildings of the water treatment plant in the 200 block of W. Sixth Street. Built twenty years apart, in 1926 and 1946, the newer building (Site 217A) is a near replica of the older (217B), modestly detailed Mission Revival style plant.

Most of the city's other industrial buildings are large, front-gabled or arch ribbed, metal-sided buildings (36A and 36B) with open interior work spaces. Brick and concrete are the second most common siding materials, followed by hollow tile, a product that may have been manufactured for local use in Mexico and which appeared in the Laredo-Brownsville in the 1940s and 1950s. Seven factories and nine warehouses constitute the most frequent identifiable uses for industrial buildings in Mission but the city's also has a historic auto repair shop, the previously mentioned gin, and three machine shops. One of the machine shops (Site 251, 1001 Cummings), is noteworthy for its ventilation cupola that follows the full ridge line of the gabled, metal building.

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SIGNIFICANCE

Industrial buildings symbolize early 20th century aspirations and prosperity in Mission, and the operations within them are among the most significant and influential factors in the city's historical development. Despite their small numbers (the historic resources survey identified only 26 buildings and 3 engineering structures in this category, constituting less than four percent of the historic building stock), industrial buildings are often imposing physical landmarks, encompassing entire city blocks, in some cases. Because the city of Mission virtually owed its existence to irrigation, the city's historic pump house at Chimney Park is among its most important resources. The businesses that used these industrial buildings comprised a major component in the city's economic development, providing jobs for a significant portion of the local population. Their successful operation can be attributed directly to the monumental efforts of early 20th century developers to finance a wide scale irrigation system to facilitate agriculture in the formerly barren land and to build a railroad to make it possible to transport crops to market.

Most of the city's industries are closely related to agriculture or the irrigation system that made agriculture possible. The packing and canning plants historically provided an alternative to field labor that helped Mission retain a stable working population. Some of Mission's citizens became wealthy through a combination of successful citriculture, agricultural land development and sales, and the packaging and shipping of their produce. Among the most prominent was John Shary, who became known as the Citrus King for his successful development and promotion of citriculture in the Mission area. Shary exploited the region's natural resources, provided industrial occupations in his packing and canning factories, developed his own suburban subdivision and reaped the benefits of his industry. These industrial concerns helped diversify the local economy and contributed a period of rapid growth and prosperity during the first half of the 20th century.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

An industrial building must pre-date 1951 and retain sufficient integrity to be listed to the National Register. Most industrial buildings will be considered on an individual basis for their contributions to the city's historical and economic development (Criterion A) and/or for their physical and architectural qualities (Criterion C). If nominated under Criterion A, an industrial building does not necessarily need to be virtually unaltered, but it should be recognizable to its original date of construction or to the period when it achieved significance. Indeed, by their very nature, historic industrial buildings still in use are likely to have been altered, modernized or upgraded to allow for more efficient and productive, or in some cases, different operations. Most of these changes involved equipment replacements, but some new additions or ancillary buildings may have been built. If significant for its historical associations, an industrial building will be nominated under the Areas of Significance of Commerce/Trade or Industry.

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If, on the other hand, an industrial building is nominated under Criterion C, the exterior must be virtually unaltered and its overall architectural character must be intact. The property would be listed under the Area of Significance of Architecture. For all industrial buildings, whether nominated for their historical associations or for their architectural merits, ancillary buildings that contributed to the success of the industrial concerns should also be examined and catalogued, and their status as contributing or noncontributing elements be determined.

Industrial buildings nominated as part of a historic district in most Texas cities are likely to be the centerpiece of that district. In such instances, the industrial complex may attract a concentration of dwellings whose residents all work at the plant. Office buildings are built in the vicinity to house the industry's business operations. Grocery stores that cater to the workers may be owned by the company. Sometimes institutional buildings such as schools and churches are provided by the owners for the workers. Infrastructural elements such as roads are built to facilitate the operation of the plant and not necessarily the convenience of workers or commercial entities.

In Mission, however, industrial properties are apt to define the boundaries of residential districts rather than serve as a focus of the area's development. Seen from the air, Mission would appear to be divided into quarters by a nearly solid line of commercial development along Conway Boulevard, north to south, and an equally homogenous line of industrial development cutting a swath through the blocks between 8th and 9th streets from east to west. This quartering of the city by its commercial and industrial ribbons, provides logical visual and physical borders for the residential districts that lie within the quadrants.

Virtually all of Mission's historic industrial development occurred along the G.H. & S.A. Railroad line or its spur near the western edge of the original townsite. Historically, the G.H. & S.A. main line (formerly St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexican Railroad) that passed between 8th and 9th streets, bisecting the town from east to west, was the primary industrial corridor through the city. A few years after its construction, the north-south running San Benito & Rio Grande Valley line was laid near the city's western edge, spawning or facilitating industrial development primarily in the northwest quadrant and a water works facility in the southwest quadrant. A less significant industrial track, on a much smaller scale, the spur extends to the north of the of the main line on Cummings and to the south on Perkins. This north-south rail line leads past several canneries and other industrial facilities in the midst of the northwest residential district and past the water works in the southwest residential quadrant. Although the industrial operations along the spur are quite large, comprising most of several city blocks, they appear to be secondary to the overall residential nature of the communities in which they lie.

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As a consequence of their proximity to one another and their functional similarity, industrial buildings may be grouped within their own historic district. Together, the rail lines and industrial properties serve as a visual and actual physical boundary between the northern and southern halves of the city. The extant warehouses, gins, and fruit packing and processing plants that line both sides of the main railroad tracks, stretching from the eastern to the western boundary of the original townsite, and the smaller but more active spur-line industrial node, constitute groupings of functionally similar properties that may be evaluated as a potential historic district in the future.

INFRASTRUCTURAL ELEMENTS

DESCRIPTION

The historic resources survey identified only three properties (a landscape feature, a water retention pond and a water tower) that can be categorized as Infrastructural Elements. Although not surveyed, at least two additional properties -- the irrigation canal system and the railroad tracks -- should be included in any discussion of Mission's infrastructure. Rather than providing shelter or enclosed spaces for people, infrastructural properties were built to enhance the quality of life in Mission. In fact, Mission and more than a dozen other communities that sprang up along their routes, owe their existence to the railroad tracks and irrigation canals that spawned widespread development of the Rio Grande Valley after 1904.

Infrastructural elements support the means and modes of transportation for the townspeople, or they store materials, such as water, for the benefit of the entire community. As such, these historic resources are structures or sites, rather than buildings which comprise the rest of the identified historic properties in Mission. Metal, concrete and rammed earth are the primary construction materials, and the specific functions or intended uses of the structures dictated the design, shape and form of these infrastructural elements.

SIGNIFICANCE

Infrastructural elements are significant because they reveal much about the foundation and overall growth patterns within the city and thus relate to community and regional development in Mission. Since many such resources were built with public monies, infrastructural elements can indicate the role that government played in the lives of local residents. During the mid-19th century, the only types of government sponsored infrastructural elements that one would typically find in Texas were the roads and bridges that were deemed essential to the functioning of society. Otherwise, a laissez-faire attitude prevailed. By the late-19th century, cities and counties throughout Texas provided water and sewer systems in addition to roads and bridges, but private developers often went

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beyond the essentials to entice prospective buyers to their projects. As suburban additions grew away from the central business districts, developers helped fund the construction of streetcar lines to bring buyers to their projects and assure them of transportation to and from their downtown jobs. Developers also provided sidewalks, parks, ponds, entry gates, curved streets and other aesthetic amenities to attract new homeowners. The Oblate Addition (1916) featured one of the city's only dedicated parks to attract buyers to the new residential neighborhood. Oblate Park remains at the center of one of Mission's most substantial and best-preserved historic residential additions, reflecting the benefit of such amenities to their long term survival.

Development in South Texas lagged behind other areas of the state until the first decades of the 20th century because the region lacked the most primary infrastructural elements required by prospective settlers: water and transportation. Cameron, Hidalgo and Starr counties, in far South Texas, were isolated from the rest of the state by long stretches of barren desert and they were among the last counties to be connected to major Texas cities by railroad. Before the railroad extended from Corpus Christi to Brownsville in 1904, and thence to the site of Mission, 60 miles to the west in 1908, only a handful of scattered ranchers eked out an existence in the desert landscape that lay north of the Rio Grande and south of the Nueces River. Furthermore, the region promised few opportunities to make a living. It was too arid to dry farm and because the banks of the Rio Grande were much higher than the adjacent lands, forming a delta rather than a valley, gravity flow irrigation was almost impossible. As a result of its isolation and arid climate, South Texas land developers in the early 20th century had to go beyond the conventional enticements to bring prospective buyers to their property. They entered into elaborate land-railroad-irrigation partnerships through which they purchased huge parcels of land, helped finance railroad transportation to the region, and then to their specific parcels, nearly all of which included a new townsite. At the same time, they constructed elaborate irrigation pump house and canal systems to pump water from the Rio Grande to the 20- to 40-acre farm lots and townsites. Of necessity, land promoters had to also be railroad men and irrigation developers to successfully sell their property. In fact, both the St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railroad (1904) and the initial Lomita Cooperative Irrigation Company canal construction (1907), preceded the platting of the Mission townsite (1908). Thus, the railroad and irrigation systems are more than amenities for the city of Mission; they provided the basis for the city's existence.

Mission's street layout, platted on a grid plan with irrigation canals nearly encircling the townsite and the railroad tracks bisecting it from east to west, was the city's next infrastructural element. Among the city's earliest infrastructural improvements were the acquisition of a private water tank and the installation of a water pipe network in North Mission. South Mission relied on a private windmill for water for some years afterward. The development of a comprehensive municipal water work systems, including water towers, retention ponds, sewage plant and irrigation

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improvements, were considered essential to Mission's well-being and were among the earliest amenities addressed by the city. Such a system enabled residents to install indoor plumbing in their homes and work places and changed the way houses were designed and built.

As Mission grew and its citizens became more cosmopolitan, the demand for more government involvement increased and with it the need for increased taxes. Residents were not satisfied simply with the bare necessities, they wanted improvements such paved streets, sidewalks and parks, and they approved bond elections to finance such projects. The decision of when and where to undertake the construction of public-financed infrastructural elements, therefore, sheds light onto the priorities of the people and government at that time, as well as their vision of the future. If considered for National Register designation individually, an Infrastructural element will probably be nominated under the Area of Significance of Community and Regional Planning.

REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS

Infrastructural elements in Mission will rarely be nominated to the National Register on an individual basis and are most likely to be listed as contributing properties in a historic district for their historical associations under National Register Criterion A. Their significance may not be obvious, but they often played supportive roles in the history and development of an area, and they should be acknowledged. Infrastructural elements should be pre-date 1951 and should be recognizable to the district's or property's period of significance. The most important concern for assessing the significance of infrastructural elements is integrity. Alterations, if any have occurred, should be documented and the extent to which these changes affect the resource's historic character should be determined. If unaltered or if the changes fall within the applicable period of significance, the Infrastructural Element may either be individually eligible for listing in the National Register or, as is more likely to be the case, may be a contributing property in a historic district

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SUMMARY OF IDENTIFICATION AND EVALUATION METHODS

The preparation of this multiple property nomination is the result of a two-phased effort to identify, evaluate, and protect Mission's historic resources. The initial phase consisted of a 1996 historic resources survey of pre-1950 resources within Mission's c.1940 city limits. The survey report for this phase included an inventory of Mission's historic resources, provided a brief historic background, and identified 4 potential historic districts and 62 properties individually eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The second phase is presented herein as a Multiple Property Nomination for an initial selection of Mission's historic and architectural resources.

PHASE ONE: 1996 HISTORIC RESOURCES SURVEY

BOUNDARY DELINEATION

Working in conjunction with representatives of the Texas Historical Commission's (THC) National Register Department, and Mission's Main Street Director/Historic Preservation Officer, HHM staff determined that Mission's c. 1940 city limits constituted logical project area boundaries for the survey. Most of the city's historic properties were likely to be found within the 1940 city limits and the projected number of historic resources within those boundaries could be minimally documented within the project budget. An estimated figure of 950 surviving historic resources was derived from a study of Sanborn Fire Insurance maps, historic and current population figures, and likely demolition and redevelopment since the end of the historic period.

According to the Sanborn maps, the ca. 1940 city limits encompassed an area roughly bounded by the Mayberry Avenue/Kika de la Garza Loop on the east, the irrigation canal and/or Slaubough on the west, First Street on the south, and Kika de la Garza Loop and/or the irrigation canal on the north. These streets served as the project area boundaries with two exceptions; the second lift irrigation pump house and a handful of domestic properties lying immediately west of the irrigation canal, in the vicinity of West Fifth and Sixth streets, and the National Guard Armory, on city park grounds east of the canal at approximately East 16th Street. These properties were included in the survey because of their proximity to the city limits and their historic associations with the city's development.

PRELIMINARY HISTORICAL RESEARCH

Before any field investigations were undertaken, HHM staff reviewed general background information about Mission and its role in the history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley to better understand the context of the city's historic development. In Austin, staff members obtained historical

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information from the Center for American History at the University of Texas, National Register and Texas Historical Marker files at the Texas Historical Commission (THC), and photographic and vertical files at the State Library and Archives. HHM staff also utilized the Rio Grande Valley collection and newspaper articles on microfilm in the archives at The University of Texas Pan American in Edinburg, Texas. Concurrent with field investigations, the survey crew collected additional resource materials on Mission's history and on specific buildings, particularly churches, schools and public buildings. Especially helpful was an unpublished manuscript, *The History of Mission, Hidalgo County, Texas: An Historic Lower Rio Grande Valley City*, written by Dick D. Heller, Jr., chairman of the Mission Historical Commission.

HHM staff compiled a brief historic background section for the survey report from the gathered historical information. HHM examined fire insurance maps published by the Sanborn Fire Insurance Company of New York for specific building information. Map collections at the National Archives in Washington D.C., contained the original maps created in 1933 for the city of Mission. Later maps, based on the 1933 versions but updated and augmented to 1949, presented broader coverage of the project area.

PREVIOUS SURVEY RESULTS

In addition to examining local archival collections for information on Mission's history, HHM staff examined the products of previous historic resource investigations in the Mission area. While no previous comprehensive surveys had been conducted in the project area, an inventory of historic sites in the Lower Rio Grande Valley was compiled in 1990-1991 under the auspices of the THC's Los Caminos del Rio Heritage Project. A review of the Los Caminos findings, along with a search of other THC files, revealed that a number of Mission area sites are commemorated by Texas State Historical Markers (SM), and several others are Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (RTHL). Marker sites include the Mission Canal Company pumping plant at Chimney Park (SM 1985), the Spiderweb Railroad (SM 1982), Oblate Park (SM 1984), Our Lady of Guadalupe Church (SM), the Texas Citrus Fiesta (SM 1989) at Lions Park, the John H. Shary Home (SM 1964), and the William Jennings Bryan Home (TCM 1936). Three properties, the chapel at La Lomita (RTHL 1964), about five miles south of Mission, the Gregg Wood Home (RTHL 1984), and the Rio Theater (RTHL 1982), are designated Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks. In addition to these individual sites, La Lomita Historic District, an early- to mid-19th century mission/farm complex located about five miles south of Mission, has been listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP 1975). A number of these sites, including Oblate Park, Lions Park, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, the Rio Theater, and the Gregg Wood Home, were within the planned survey boundaries.

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FIELD INVESTIGATIONS

HHM Project Director Terri Myers conducted all field investigations. James T. Jones, an HHM contractor, assisted in the initial identification and documentation phase of the survey and volunteer Paula Moreland assisted with the photography. A total of 871 historic properties within the c. 1940 city limits were identified and minimally documented during field investigations. The 162 properties determined to have historic or architectural significance were photographed with 35 mm black and white and color slide film.

Field investigations began in March, 1996. Using copies of the 1933 and (updated to) 1949 Sanborn Fire Insurance maps of Mission, along with a current map provided by the city, the field crew first conducted a windshield survey of the project area to confirm the relevancy of the boundaries and determine the kinds of properties located within them. The field maps subsequently served as a base map for the preparation of the survey area map included in the survey report. Following the windshield survey, the field crew then systematically identified and minimally recorded every extant historic resource visible from the public right-of-way, within the project area boundaries. The survey crew noted the address of each property. A unique site number was assigned to each identified property and noted on the field map and in the field forms. Additional property information was gathered on site. Factual or estimated dates of construction and major physical characteristics of each identified historic resource were noted on field forms. A small number of buildings, usually churches, schools, and major commercial buildings, had cornerstones that confirmed construction dates; however, the majority of construction dates were estimated in five-year increments. Some dates were derived from research materials such as National Register or State Marker files, published histories, brochures and pamphlets, or by their appearance on Sanborn maps in a particular year.

Physical and descriptive information such as property type classification, architectural plan type, exterior materials, condition and stylistic influence, if any, was recorded on field forms. An initial preservation priority classification of HIGH, MEDIUM, or LOW was assigned to each documented building based on several criteria: the surveyor's professional impression of the property, how well the property maintained its original design and materials, how the property contributed to or detracted from the historic character of the area, and its condition. As the survey progressed, the field crew noted concentrations of relatively intact historic neighborhoods and commercial districts.

Following the field investigations, all of the field data was input into the HHM database software, and a map of the project area identified all surveyed properties by site number, according to their street address. Sites were also coded on the map according to their individual preservation priority. HHM generated a preliminary list of HIGH, SELECTED MEDIUM and MEDIUM

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preservation priority properties. All photographic and revised field data was encoded into the HHM database software. Film was processed and 8" by 10" contact sheets were produced from the black and white film. Photo Index Sheets were generated to locate and identify historic properties by site number and address. Labeled slides were organized alphabetically and numerically according to address. Corrections were made to the survey map and potential historic districts were indicated on the map through shading.

SURVEY RESULTS

A total of 873 properties considered to have been built before 1950 were identified within the project area boundaries. Of that number, 62 were determined to be HIGH preservation priorities due to their outstanding architectural merit, their significant historic associations, or both. Such properties were considered to be individually eligible for listing in the NRHP. HIGH priority properties in Mission include the John Shary office building (City Hall), the second lift irrigation pump house, Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, the Rio Theater and its adjacent commercial complex, the Border Theater, and a number of other outstanding commercial and residential resources throughout the city. These properties may also qualify for local, state or federal historic designations either individually or as part of a historic district.

In addition to the 62 HIGH preservation priority properties, 100 SELECTED MEDIUM, 382 MEDIUM and 329 LOW preservation priority properties were identified in the survey for a total of 873 documented historic properties. While the majority of these properties are not individually eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, the SELECTED MEDIUM and MEDIUM priority properties are likely to be Contributing elements within local or National Register historic districts and should be evaluated in that context.

Several potential historic districts were identified within the project area boundaries, including a commercial district in the 400-800 block of Conway Boulevard, south of the railroad right-of-way, residential districts in both the northeast and northwest quadrants of the city and the Rio Theater commercial complex which, although encompassing less than a single city block, represents significant historic contributions of Mission's Hispanic community.

PRESERVATION PRIORITY EVALUATION

Upon completion of investigations, the Principal Investigator (PI) assigned a preservation priority rating base upon current integrity and known historical associations. This evaluation reflected an assessment of each property's relative significance and was intended to provide some guidance in planning decisions that may affect Mission's irreplaceable historic properties. The criteria guiding these assessments follow.

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Buildings placed in the HIGH category contribute significantly to local history or broader historical patterns. They are considered outstanding, unique or good representative examples of architecture, engineering or crafted design. They remain on their original sites and experienced only minimal alterations since their construction, or were altered in a manner compatible with their original design, materials, scale and workmanship. They are excellent examples of a common local building form, architectural style or plan-type, and they retain a significant amount of their original character and contextual integrity. They meet, in some cases, criteria for inclusion in the National Register as individual properties. If located within a historic district, they almost always will be classified as Contributing. They are considered the most significant resources in the project area.

As previously mentioned, the PI assigned HIGH preservation priorities to 62 resources within the survey area. They are some of the oldest, rarest, or best examples of building forms or architectural styles in Mission. These resources may be significant because they exhibit unique or rare design features or because they are excellent local examples of widely built architectural forms popular in the early 20th century. Some are significant because of their associations with individuals important in the development and history of Mission. In a few cases, sites that held historic properties, or buildings that have been altered with major changes in scale or materials also have been included in the HIGH category because the buildings were associated with individuals or events of importance in the history of Mission or because they represent a rare or unusual property type worthy of preservation despite alterations.

In addition to these individually significant properties, another 100 properties were determined to be of MEDIUM to HIGH preservation priorities. For the purposes of this survey, they have been designated as SELECTED MEDIUM preservation priorities. Such properties are generally considered good examples of a particular architectural type or style and retain their historic architectural fabric to an outstanding degree. They may also have important historical associations.

The largest number of historic resources in Mission are those designated as MEDIUM preservation priorities. The 382 historic resources in the survey area that received a MEDIUM preservation priority were identified as contributing moderately to local history or broader historical patterns. They display fewer character-defining architectural elements than those in the HIGH category. Although less developed in their architectural treatments than buildings in the HIGH priority group, the MEDIUM category includes buildings that are representative of building forms, architectural treatments or plan-types common in Mission and reflective of popular trends. While they are unlikely to meet eligibility criteria for National Register listing on an individual basis, they may qualify for a state or local designation. This category includes those buildings that have been subject to alterations or deterioration that have diminished their architectural integrity, as well as those historically or architecturally significant buildings that, but for incompatible alterations, would have been designated HIGH priorities.

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Resources designated as LOW preservation priorities were historic period properties - 50 years old or older - but with such extensive alteration that they no longer convey a strong sense of their original historic architectural character. Such properties are not eligible for listing in the NRHP and would be categorized as Noncontributing elements within a historic district. Within the Mission survey area, 329 properties were determined to be LOW preservation priorities. The 329 buildings in the project area classified as having a LOW preservation priority designation generally typify more recent common local building forms, architectural styles or plan-types, with no known historical associations. Buildings in the LOW priority classification also are examples of distinctive building forms, architectural styles or plan-types that are of minor historical significance or are moderately to severely altered using inappropriate methods, materials or scale, or are deteriorated beyond repair. Typically, because of limited integrity, lack of historical associations or both, such LOW priority buildings do not meet the eligibility criteria for National Register listing on an individual basis. When located in a historic district, the severity of alterations may make the property a candidate for a Noncontributing classification.

ANALYSIS OF DATA AND REPORT PREPARATION

The final step of the survey was the preparation of the survey report. The data was compiled and analyzed. Discussions of the survey scope, methodology, data, findings and recommendations were developed and the historic overview was edited and finalized. The survey materials were processed and finalized. The survey report included recommendations regarding the designation of properties deemed to be eligible for the National Register of Historic Places.

PHASE TWO: 1997 MULTIPLE PROPERTY NOMINATION

The preparation of the multiple-property nomination served as the primary focus of this phase. The historic resources survey identified a large number of individual properties and historic districts as likely candidates for listing in the National Register. A limited budget constrained the number of resources that could be nominated at this time, however. The City of Mission, in consultation with HHM, limited the scope according to funding, and directed HHM to nominate one historic district and one individual property. Once funding is obtained, and local enthusiasm is harnessed, it is hoped that other properties will be included in the multiple-property nomination.

RESEARCH DESIGN

At the outset of phase two, HHM staff submitted a research design to the THC and to the City of Mission. This step both clarified the scope of work and helped to focus research efforts. The initial task of the research design called for the preparation of the historic context. Such a narrative provides the framework for evaluating the city's extant historic properties. The historic context for

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Mission relates directly to *Community and Regional Development in Texas: 1690 - 1945*, one of nine statewide historic contexts that the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) considers to be of primary importance for preservation planning purposes in Texas. Specifically, the historic context for Mission is entitled *Grapefruit's Lone Star Home: the Development of Mission, Texas, 1908 to 1951*. In the city's development, 1951 appeared to be a logical break for the historical discussion. The date was chosen because the last of three sequential hard freezes destroyed the citrus crop that year. Afterward, citrus never again achieved the economic importance it had maintained for the previous three decades, during historic Mission's years of prosperity-driven growth. Subthemes within the context explored:

- the railroad and its impact on the city's development
- Mission as a local commercial and trade center
- the role of irrigation in Mission's development
- land development efforts in and around Mission
- industrial development
- the exploitation of natural and agricultural resources.
- Mission's Hispanic heritage

The development of these and other subthemes within the broader Historic Context, as well as the preparation of Associated Property Types, proved essential to making informed decisions regarding National Register determinations of eligibility. To aid in the preparation of the Historic Context and Associated Property Types, the following objectives guided subsequent research and field investigations:

- Analyze the role the surrounding topography played in the city's physical development.
- Provide written and/or graphic documentation that substantiates active periods of growth and development in Mission. Discuss those factors that sustained these periods of growth and prosperity.
- Discuss the types of social, governmental and religious institutions founded in Mission and how they reflected important patterns in the community's history and development.
- Discuss the importance of Mission's location along the border between Texas and Mexico, and how that influenced the city's economic and social development.
- Determine the railroad's involvement, or lack thereof, in local real estate speculation.

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- Discuss how the city's residential neighborhoods developed. Determine if there are many large-scale additions, or if the land developed in a somewhat random fashion largely controlled by individuals who subdivided their property for speculative purposes.
- Briefly examine the history of the local building trades industry — lumber yards, brickworks, builders, contractors, architects and skilled craftsman. Relate historical changes and trends to the kinds of buildings that were constructed.
- Discuss any historically important or influential persons associated with Mission and how they affected the history of the city and its development.
- Analyze those factors that contributed to the development of geographically separate residential and commercial sections of Mission. Identify past leaders in the Hispanic community and discuss their contributions to local history.
- Determine how and where local Hispanics shopped — in the historic downtown or in separate areas away from the central business district. Explore whether the agricultural harvest seasons impacted shopping patterns.
- Examine the types of historic (pre-1951) industrial concerns that operated in Mission and discuss how they reflected the exploitation of nearby natural and agricultural resources
- Discuss the present character of the city's downtown, residential neighborhoods, and industrial centers and how they reflect the heritage, ambiance and feeling of Mission's history.

These objectives directed subsequent investigations and focused research efforts on selected subjects. As the Project Historian and the Architectural Historian conducted their investigations, the above-referenced objectives were somewhat modified to reflect available data on Mission's historic built environment.

PREPARATION OF HISTORIC CONTEXT AND PROPERTY TYPES

The Project Director/Historian and Architectural Historian examined a variety of sources while gathering information to develop the historic context. As much as possible, research focused upon primary source materials, such as oral histories among Mission's Hispanic community members, fire insurance maps by the Sanborn Map Company, and old telephone directories. The Project Director/Historian investigated the local history collection at Mission's Speer Memorial Library, the archives at the Lower Rio Grande Valley Collection at the University of Texas, Pan-

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American, and the photographic archives at the Hidalgo County Historical Museum. The holdings and collections at the Center for American History at the University of Texas, and the State Library and Archives, both in Austin, were examined for materials on Hidalgo County and Mission. Other information was gleaned from secondary source materials, such as published histories and newspapers. At the conclusion of this research phase, the Project Director/Historian prepared an outline of the historic context that was also submitted to the THC. Revisions were made, as necessary, and the historic context was prepared.

HHM staff achieved most project goals and met objectives, however some research topics could bear further research and analysis. Both the city's religious and agribusiness heritage are underrepresented in the context and warrants further study. Limited oral histories conducted with a few of Mission's Hispanic residents illuminated many topics. Additional oral history efforts among Hispanic citizens would be essential to achieve a more balanced view of Mission's past.

PREPARATION OF NATIONAL REGISTER NOMINATIONS

Concurrent with the preparation of the historic context, the Project Director/Historian evaluated the commercial district in the south part of historic downtown Mission, along with the Border Theater. The south commercial district is being nominated to the National Register as a historic district, while the Border Theater is being nominated as an individual property. The Project Director/Historian made preliminary determinations as to the architectural integrity of extant historic properties and whether they contributed to, or detracted from, the commercial district's historic character and ambiance. The Project Director/Historian also assessed non-historic (post-1951) properties and how they affect each area's overall integrity. This information was used to help delineate the boundaries of the historic district.

Following determination of the historic district boundaries, the Project Director/Historian prepared a comprehensive inventory of properties in the district. Important physical characteristics were noted and supplemental photographs were taken, especially of streetscapes and contextual views of entire blocks. National Register nominations and supplemental documentation were then prepared for the commercial district, and for the Border Theater.

This multiple-property nomination also includes a list of potentially eligible properties that can be used as guide for future registration efforts. This list will be based on the current (1996) condition of the resources and known historical information. The list can and should be revised as physical changes affect the architectural integrity of the historic properties and/or research uncovers supplemental data about important historical associations. Rather than an end product, the multiple-property nomination should be considered the beginning of an ongoing effort to identify and protect Mission's historic architectural resources.

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FIGURE 1: LA LOMITA CHAPEL, c.1905
(SOURCE: TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN)



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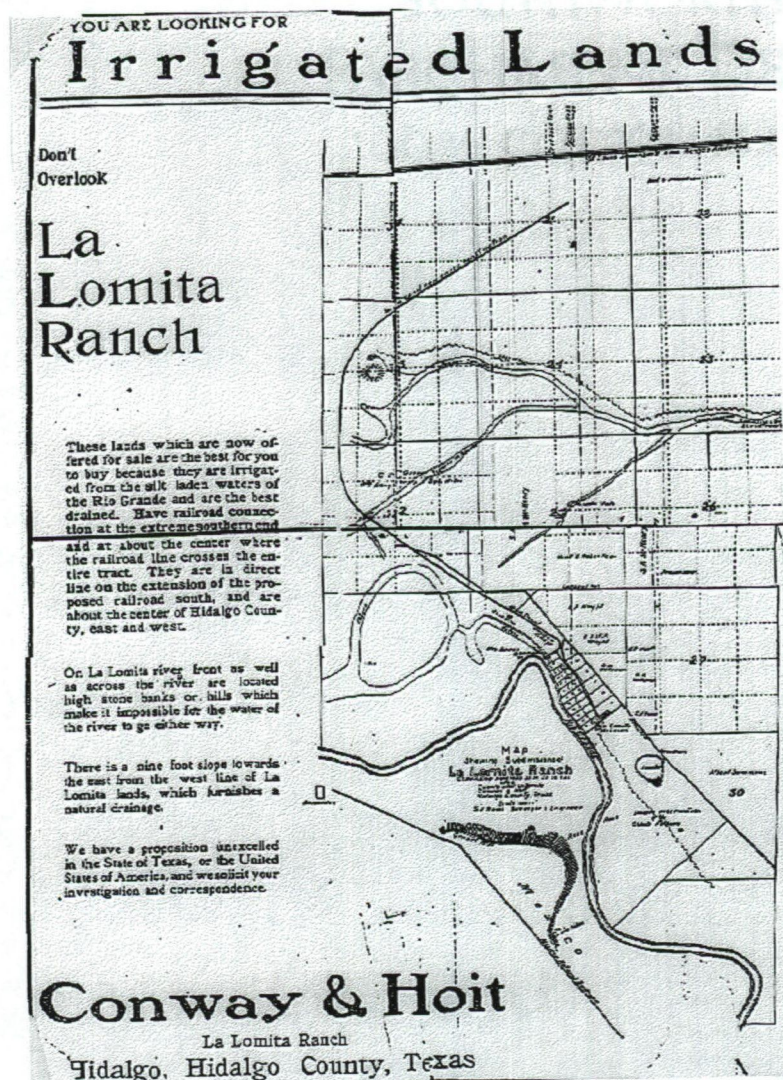
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FIGURE 2: EXTENT OF LA LOMITA RANCH LANDS, c.1907

(SOURCE: *HIDALGO COUNTY ADVANCE*, NOVEMBER 1907)



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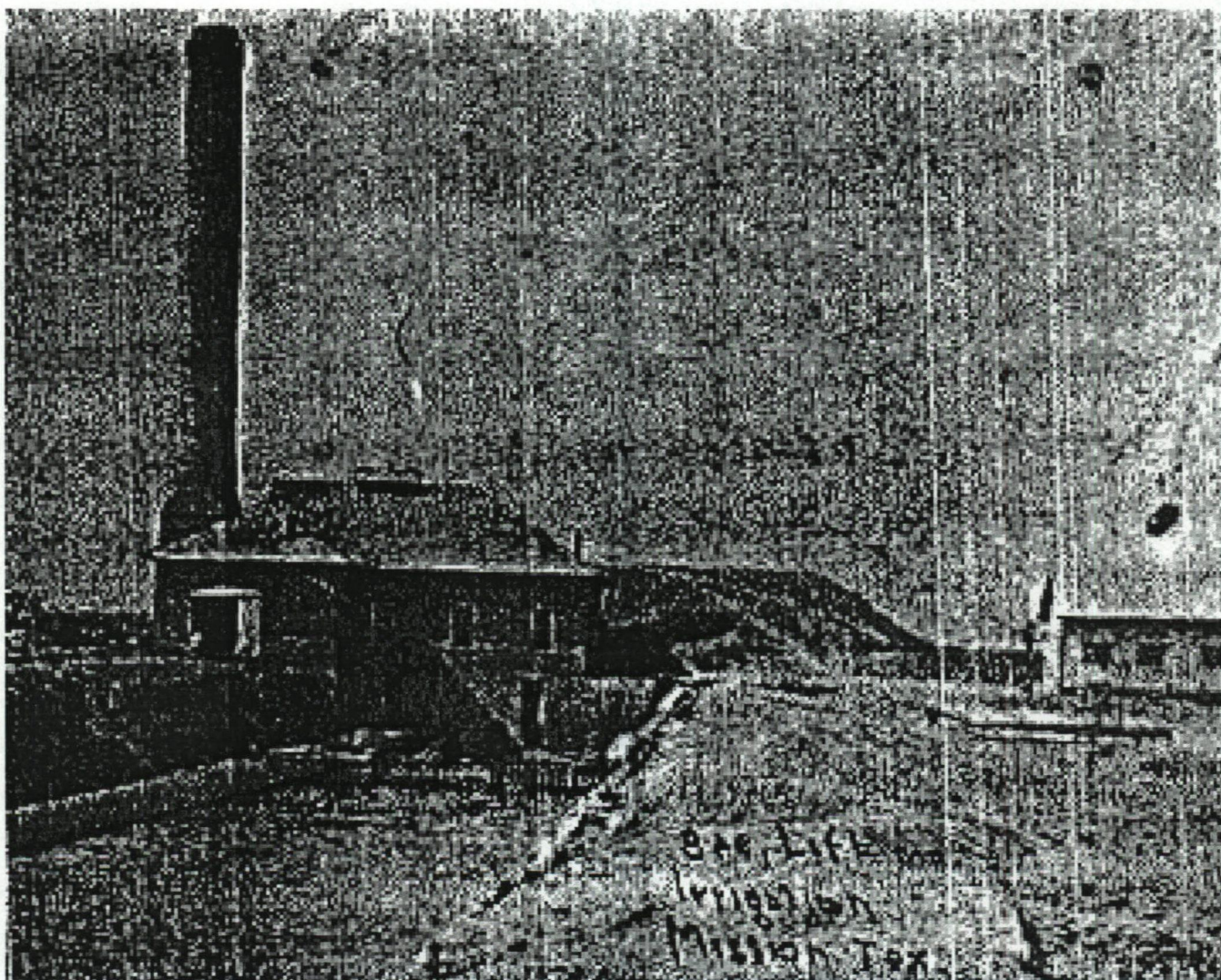
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FIGURE 3: MISSION CANAL COMPANY LIFT STATION NO. 2, c.1912

(SOURCE: HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, EDINBURG)



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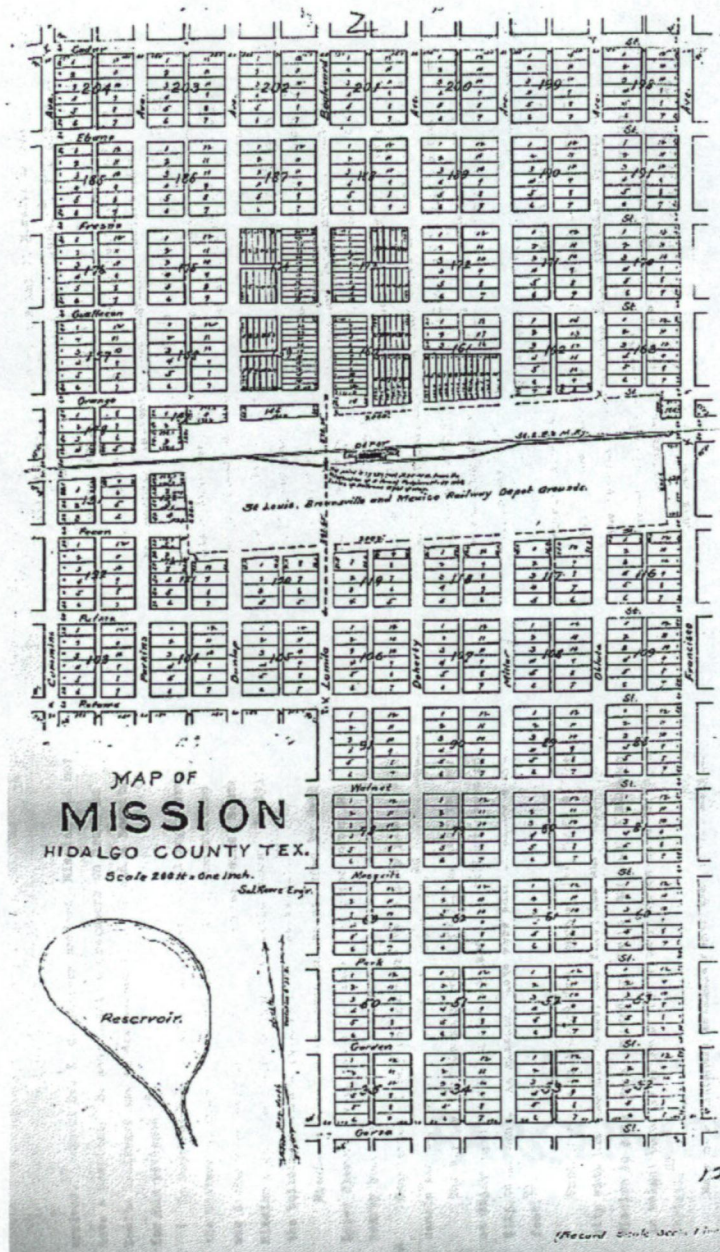
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FIGURE 4: PLAT MAP OF MISSION TEXAS, 1908

(SOURCE: DAVIS, 1984)



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FIGURE 5: WATER DELIVERY IN SOUTH MISSION BY *BARRILEÑO*, c.1910

(SOURCE: HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, EDINBURG)



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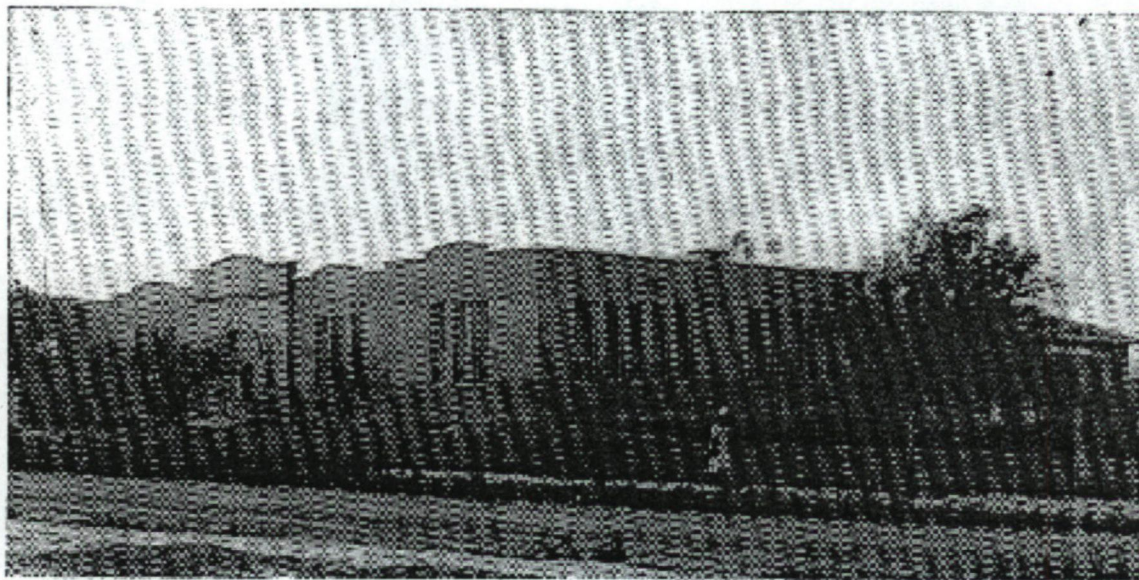
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FIGURE 6: MEXICAN SCHOOL IN SOUTH MISSION, c.1925

(SOURCE: *THE PLAIN FACTS*, 1925)



MEXICAN SCHOOL BUILDING IN SOUTH MISSION

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FIGURE 7: SOUTH MISSION, c.1912

(SOURCE: HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, EDINBURG)



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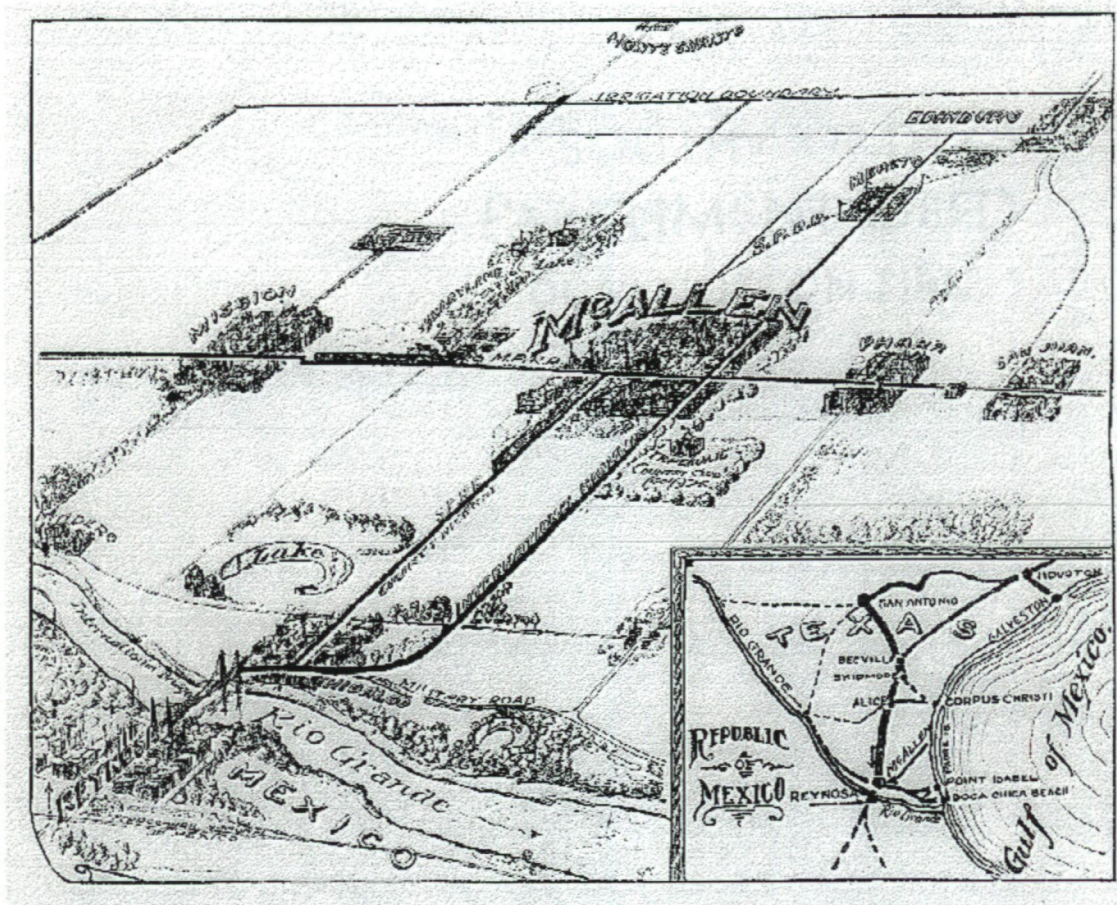
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FIGURE 8: BIRD'S EYE VIEW OF HIDALGO COUNTY, c.1920

(SOURCE: *GULF COAST LINES*, 1922)



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FIGURE 9: JOHN SHARY AND JOHN CONWAY IN GRAPEFRUIT GROVE, c.1925
(SOURCE: HIDALGO COUNTY HISTORICAL MUSEUM, EDINBURG)

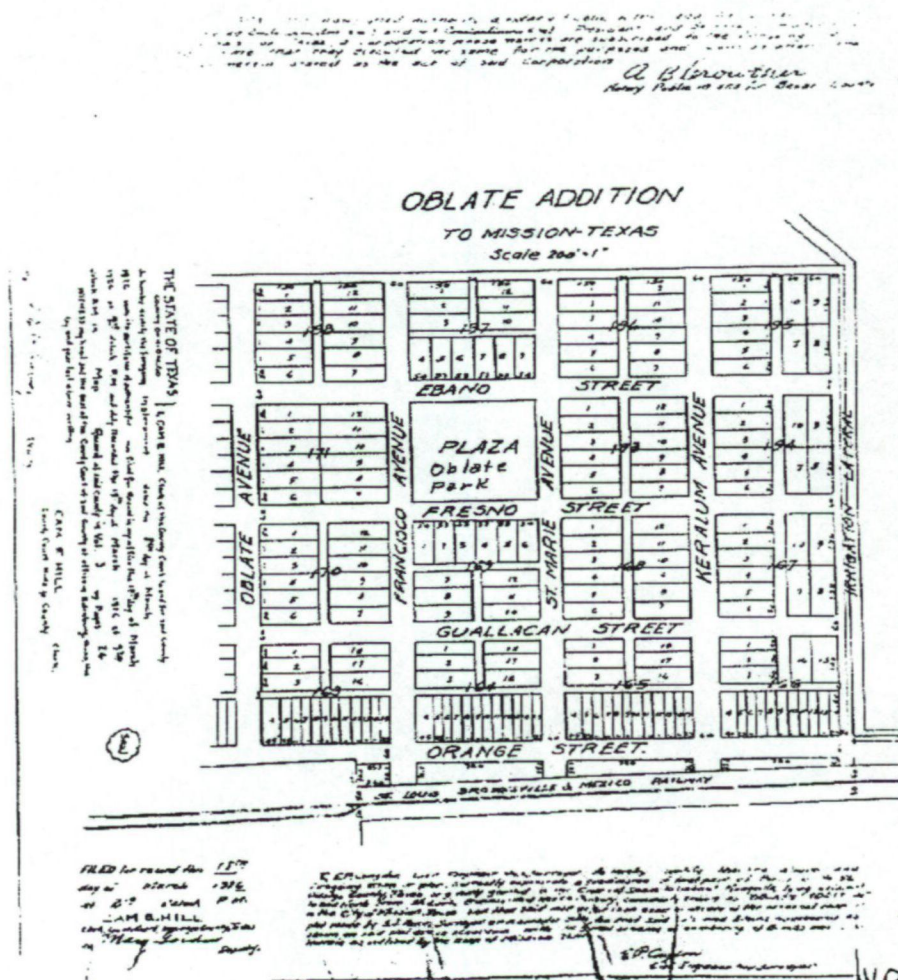


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(SOURCE: TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION MARKER FILES, AUSTIN)



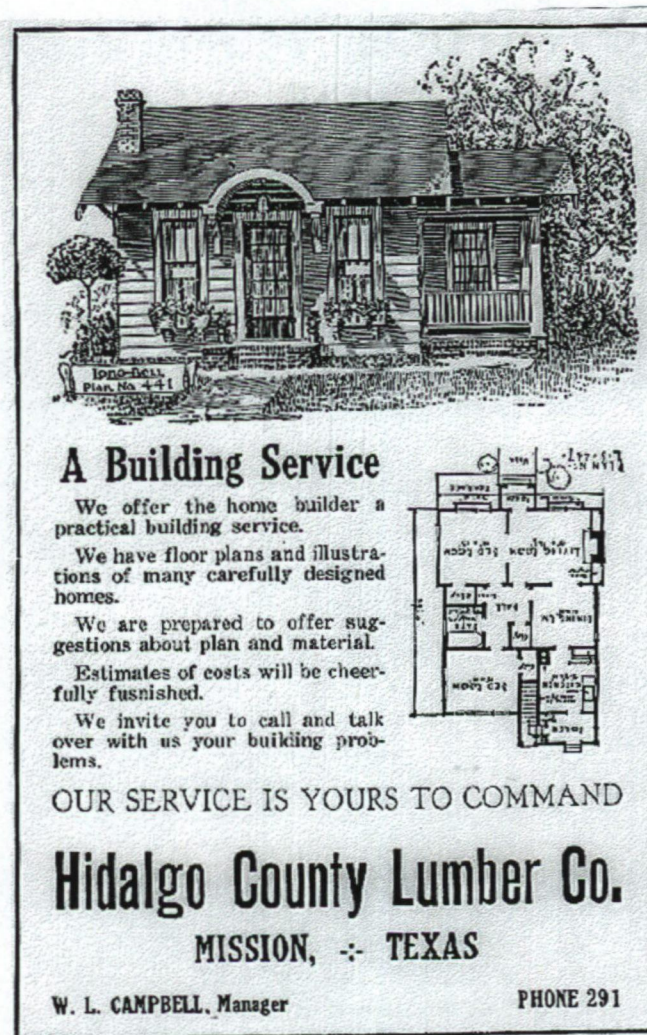
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FIGURE 11: HOUSE PLANS ADVERTISED BY A LOCAL LUMBER COMPANY, c.1924
(SOURCE: *MONTY'S MONTHLY*, MAY 1924)



A Building Service

We offer the home builder a practical building service.

We have floor plans and illustrations of many carefully designed homes.

We are prepared to offer suggestions about plan and material.

Estimates of costs will be cheerfully furnished.

We invite you to call and talk over with us your building problems.

OUR SERVICE IS YOURS TO COMMAND

Hidalgo County Lumber Co.
MISSION, TEXAS

W. L. CAMPBELL, Manager

PHONE 291

long-hill
PLAN No. 4-4-1

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IN N.Y.

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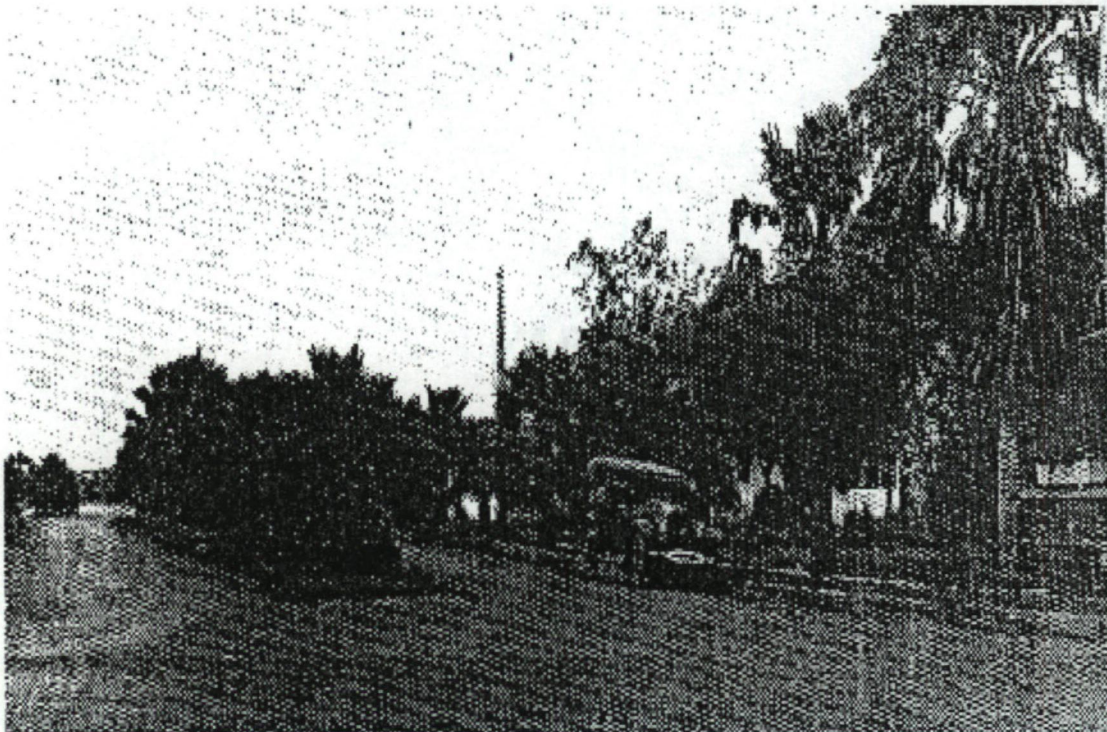
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FIGURE 12: RESIDENTIAL STREET SCENE IN NORTH MISSION, c.1925

(SOURCE: *THE PLAIN FACTS*, 1925)



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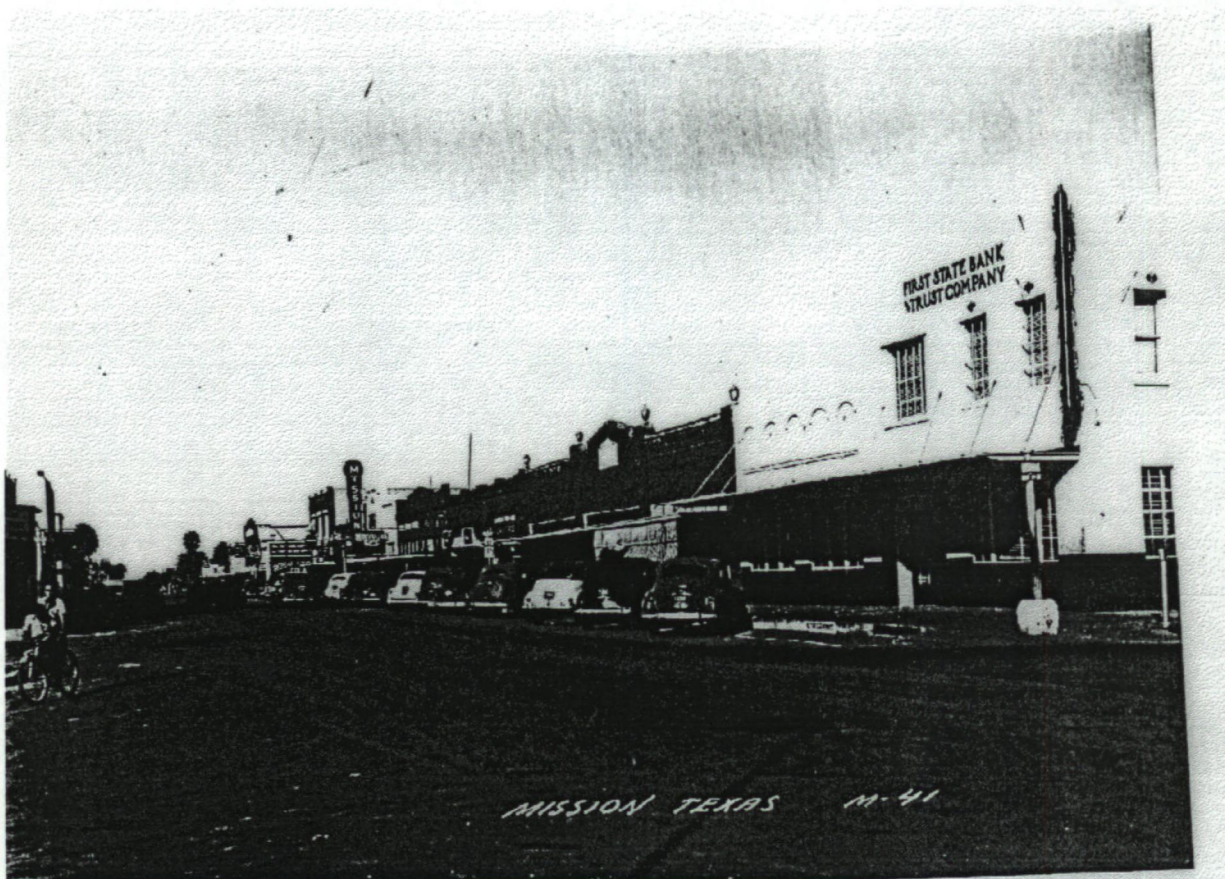
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FIGURE 13: NORTH MISSION COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, c.1930

(SOURCE: TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN)



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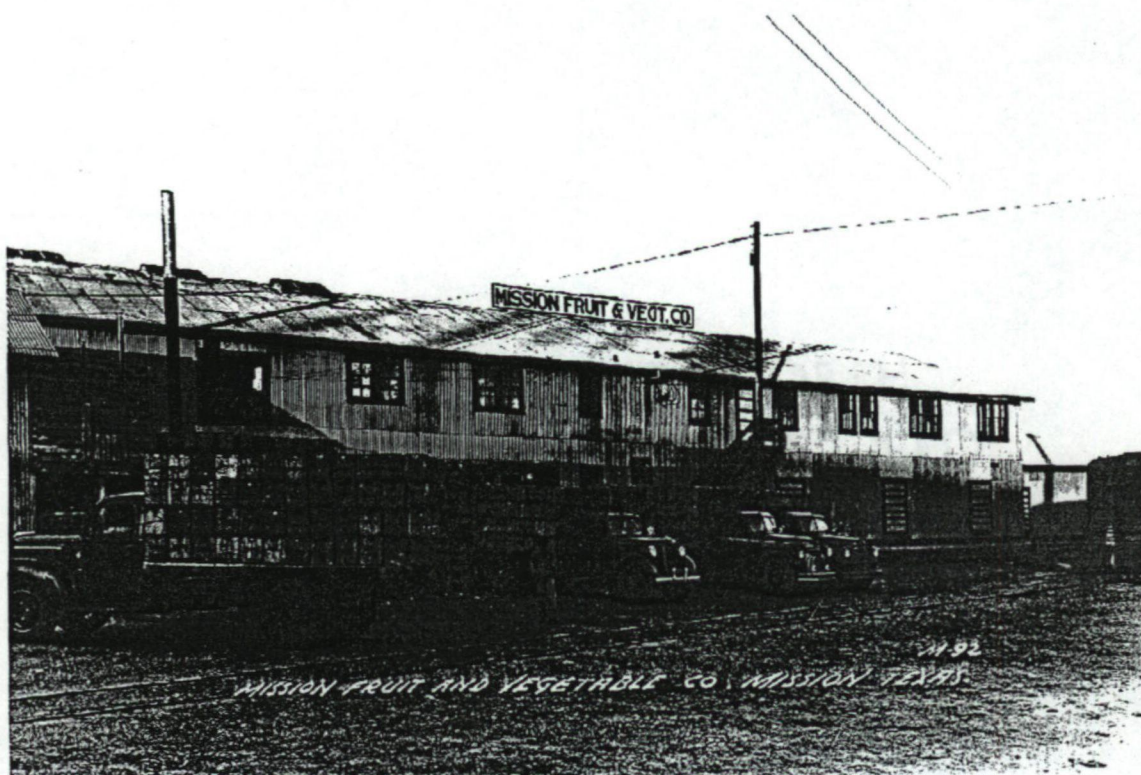
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FIGURE 14: MISSION FRUIT AND VEGETABLE COMPANY, c.1940

(SOURCE: TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN)



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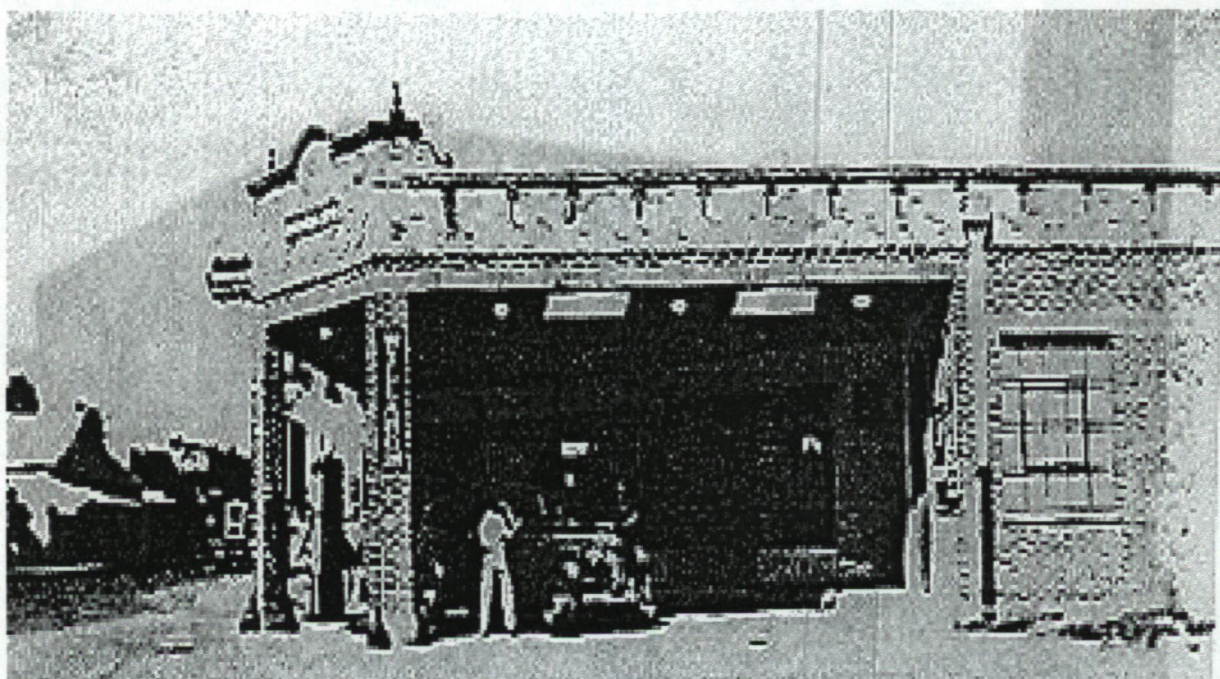
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FIGURE 15: BARRERA SERVICE STATION, c.1930

(SOURCE: BARRERA SUPPLY COMPANY SCRAPBOOK, MISSION)



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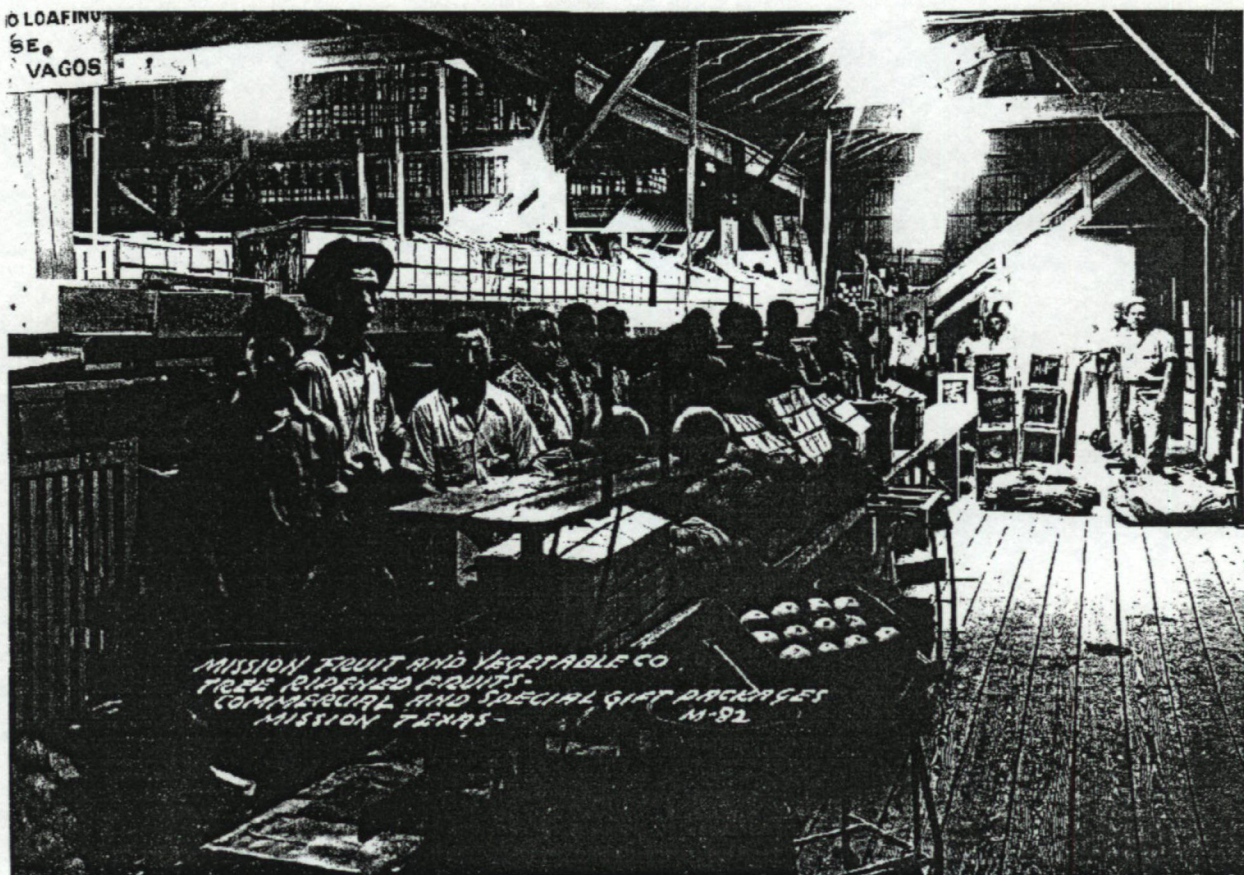
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FIGURE 16: FRUIT AND VEGETABLE PACKING PLANT WORKERS, c.1940

(SOURCE: TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN)



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FIGURE 17: BARRERA SUPPLY COMPANY, c.1945
(SOURCE: BARRERA SUPPLY COMPANY SCRAPBOOK, MISSION)



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FIGURE 18: WARTIME ADVERTISEMENT FOR MISSION BOTTLING WORKS, 1942
(SOURCE: *MISSION TIMES*, 18 DECEMBER 1942)

KAS


which election shall be held the pur- very poisonous casualties from the
pose of electing two Directors for stings are rare.

**I CAN SEE HITLER
IN MY REAR-VIEW MIRROR**

When you're pushing one of these big babies over a long stretch
of road, you have a lot of time to think about the stuff you're
hauling; how badly the boys need it and what might happen if
it got there too late. Then you grab that wheel tighter, and stop
worrying about all the little things you used to beaf about.

I don't know what your job is, but if you'll get the stuff made, I'll
deliver it. I can see Hitler and Hirohito in my rear-view mirror.
They're right behind you, too, brother, but don't stop to look around.

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FIGURE 19: THE BORDER THEATER, C.1943

(SOURCE: TEXAS STATE ARCHIVES, AUSTIN)

