Tribal Histories

Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Research Report

July 2021

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Introduction

The TxDOT Tribal Histories Project involves creating a set of geographic historical narratives of tribal presence in Texas through collaboration with participating Tribes. Taking a statewide approach, these histories will serve as resources to inform future statewide transportation planning, project development, tribal consultation activities, and public engagement by TxDOT.

The following research report focuses on the physical locations and specific time periods during which the Tigua Tribe of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo was present in Texas. This history reflects the Tigua Tribe's perspectives because the historical and archeological data sources used to construct it were recommended and approved by Rick Quezada, the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo's Director of the Department of Cultural Preservation and their Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) representative. Mr. Quezada also provided comments on the draft report that are addressed here in the final report.

The COVID-19 pandemic prevented the research team from visiting the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo and the surrounding area, but several internet conferences were held to discuss the sources used for this research report and the GIS data portion of the project. The Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Director of the Department of Cultural Preservation graciously provided numerous photographs for the report.

Ethnographic archival and documentary research for this broad overview focuses on providing background context and setting for Tigua peoples, tribes, and cultures associated with the region encompassing Texas. The following research report is organized chronologically and was compiled in consultation with the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo's Department of Cultural Preservation from both historic works and contemporary sources. Works consulted include ethnohistories, tribal history compendiums, oral history, and folklore from both historic and contemporary contexts.

This research report was designed to facilitate the extraction of geographic data, along with calendar and event information, to populate a GIS dataset for use by transportation planners and the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo (Appendix). Information from the narrative and GIS dataset (to the extent permissible by Ysleta del Sur Pueblo) is also intended to be readily adapted for use in archeology reports and for educational outreach materials.

History and Territory

Pre-Contact

The Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo near El Paso (**Figure 1**) arrived in what would become Texas when they were forced southward by the Spaniards during the 1680 Pueblo Revolt in New Mexico (Hodge 1907). "Tigua" is an older spelling of "Tiwa" (Eickhoff 1996:3). Ysleta, Texas has been home to the Tigua people for more than 300 years, but their history in Texas actually stretches back several millennia. The Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo consider the cultural landscape of Hueco Tanks a place of special significance for religious purposes. They have used it as a summer camp and many of the caves at Hueco Tanks have

the names of Tigua members painted on the sides (Diamond 2000:236). Today, Indian names are given to Tigua children at special ceremonies held at Hueco Tanks (Diamond 2000:252).

Figure 1. Tigua tribe members in 1973 (photo courtesy of *Texas Highways* magazine).

The Tigua are descendants of the Tiwa Pueblo Indian tribe of New Mexico whose cultural artifacts have been dated to 1500 B.C., although their oral traditions go back even further to their origin (Eickhoff 1996:3). Their language is Southern Tiwa, and their name for Ysleta is Tchiawipia (Gerald 2000:46)

According to oral history, the Tigua lived in a deep hidden valley within the Hueco Mountains (**Figures 2 and 3**) before moving to Gran Quivira (Eickhoff 1996:56). For generations, Hueco Tanks was a landmark and waystation along an ancient Indian trail emanating from a gap in the Hueco Mountains and traversing westward across the desert to the El Paso area (Sharp 1987). This trail eventually became part of the Butterfield Stagecoach route.

Figure 2. Hueco Tanks is west of the Hueco Mountains.

Figure 3. Hueco Mountains (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Hueco Tanks (**Figure 4**) is an area of low mountains in a high-altitude desert basin between the Franklin Mountains to the west and the Hueco Mountains to the east. Hueco is a Spanish word meaning hollows and refers to three large geologic formations made of eroded syenite rock outcroppings with numerous cracks, fissures, and depressions that trap and slowly release water into the surroundings (Greenberg 2000:322). This seepage supports species not typically found in the region.

Tigua oral history is rich with references to the everday use of Hueco Tanks as camp sites, and for hunting and gathering, food processing, preservation, and storage (Greenberg 2000:320). Their creation story tells of the Tigua emergence from a cave at Hueco Tanks. Oral tradition attributes many of the pictographs found at Hueco Tanks to the Tigua ancestors who created these sacred symbols.

The pictographs at Hueco Tanks State Park and Historical Site were influenced by ancestral Puebloan cultures (**Figure 5**), who lived principally in Arizona and New Mexico, but whose influences reached into far western Texas (Howard et al. 2010; Wickman 2020). The Tigua consider the Hueco Tanks area in present-day El Paso County to be guarded by kokopelli, an ancient Pueblo god. Pictographs among the obscure water holes of this sacred place illustrate traditional stories and songs. For example, a pictograph depicting a Tigua shield with arrows of fire flying earthward from an eagle/sun illustrates one of their origin songs (Eickhoff 1996:56-57).

Figure 4. Hueco Tanks (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

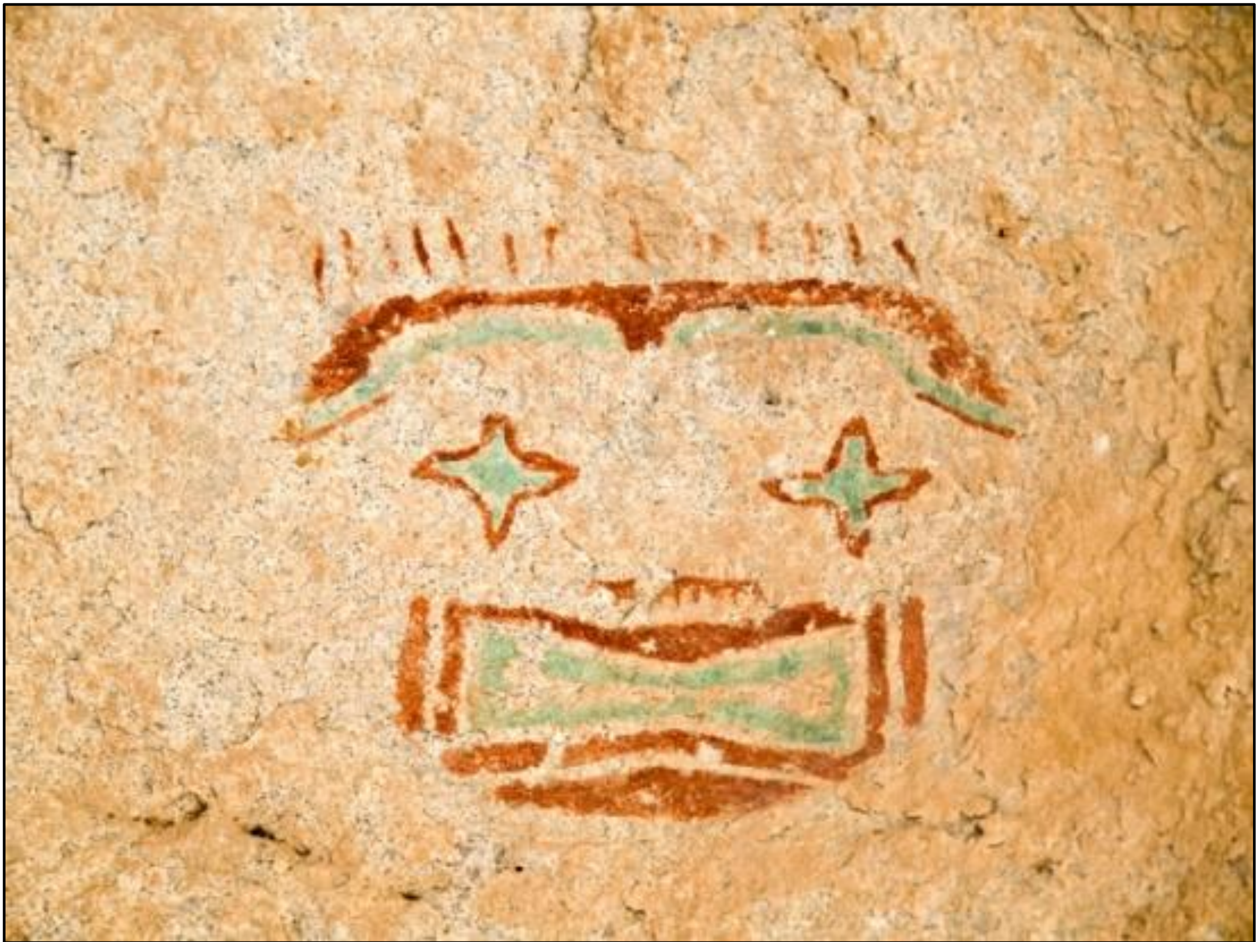

Figure 5. Mask pictograph at Hueco Tanks State Park and Historical Site (photo courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department).

The Hueco Tanks State Park and Historic Site has more than 5,000 pictographs on boulders and rock shelters. Pictographs include drawings made by indigenous people in the course of marking their religious experiences. These sacred sites and symbols continue to rejuvenate Tiguan worshipers who understand the power that has accrued at Hueco Tanks and the oral traditions that keep spiritual ties alive. While this cultural legacy is regularly called upon by the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo during their religious pilgrimages to Hueco Tanks, the site also holds historical and symbolic meanings for other Indian people of the region.

The sun symbol used by the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo today is based on a pictograph at Hueco Tanks (**Figure 6**). Hueco Tanks has plants, animals, and good water sources even though it is in the desert (**Figure 7**), which makes the area a sacred place to the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. The Tigua Indians continue the tradition of gathering plants at Hueco Tanks and using the place for prayer and gatherings. The Tigua ancestors established trails through Hueco Tanks towards water and salt sources to the east. Beginning in 1692, Tigua descendants guided military scouts and travelers through the area.

Figure 6. Hueco Tanks pictograph (photo by Rupestrian Cyberservices, courtesy of Texas Parks and Wildlife Department).

Figure 7. Ramona Paiz gathering medicinal plants at Hueco Tanks in 1966 (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Tigua Indians use 72 species of plants, of which 39 species are found in the Hueco Tanks area (Greenberg 2000:324). Some of the plants that occur naturally at Hueco Tanks include mesquite trees (*Prosopis*), screwbean or tornillo trees (*Prosopis pubescens*), flora mimbre trees (*Chilopsis linearis*), soap tree yucca (*Yucca elata*), lechuguilla (*Agave lechuguilla*), prickly pear cacti (*Opuntia englemannil* and *Opuntia phaeacantha*), cholla (*Cylindropuntia*), creosote bush (*Larrea tridentata*), and Mormon tea (*Ephedra torreyana*), Conversely, other plants important to the Tigua like the jara plant (*Salix*) and cottonwood trees (*Populus deltoides wislizenii*) grow along the Rio Grande. The Tigua have been conducting religious ceremonies and collecting materials at historic sacred sites along the Rio Grande in the vicinity of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo since 1682 (Greenberg 2003:403).

Various parts of the mesquite tree (**Figure 8**) are used by the Tigua. The roots are dried and used for firewood. The mesquite pods are a good source of sugar and its branches are used to make hunting bows. Likewise, the screwbean or tornillo tree (**Figure 9**) branches make excellent bows. The Tigua grind the dried screwbeans into flour, add hot water, and make an *atole* or type of oatmeal.

Figure 8. Mesquite tree (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 9. Screwbean or tornillo tree (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

The flora mimbre tree (**Figure 10**) is a desert willow that produces a purple flower, which the Tigua boil and serve as a tea to treat bad colds. They use the roots of the soap tree yucca (**Figure 11**) to make shampoo. The Tigua use the yucca's long leaves as paint brushes and the tall white stock of its bloom is used for gourd rattle handles. Lechuguilla (**Figure 12**) leaves are similarly used as paint brushes for pottery designs.

Figure 10. Flora mimbre tree (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 11. Soap tree yucca (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 12. Lechuguilla cactus (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

The people of the pueblo collect and eat prickly pear cactus pads and its fruit (**Figure 13**). The fruit is made into a jelly, while a pigment derived from the colorful fruit is used as a dye for painting pottery designs. The yellow fruit of the cholla cactus (**Figure 14**) is also gathered and eaten by the Tigua.

Figure 13. Prickly pear cactus (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 14. Cholla cactus (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

The creosote bush (**Figure 15**) serves many medicinal purposes for the Tigua. When its leaves are boiled and served as a tea, it is a remedy for allergies. An antibiotic ointment can be derived from the plant and used to treat wounds. The versatile plant is also an air fresher. The Mormon tea plant (**Figure 16**) is boiled and consumed for energy. The Tigua also use it to improve kidney function.

Figure 15. Creosote bush (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 16. Mormon tea plant (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Other plants that the Tigua rely on include some found along the Rio Grande, including the leafy jara plant (**Figure 17**), which is used to construct ramadas for shade during the Saint Anthony feast at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. Its stalks are used to make arrow shafts. The shade of a cotton wood tree (**Figure 18**) is invaluable to the Tigua, who use the tree's trunk to make drums. The water in the Rio Grande is sacred to the Tigua, and it is essential that clean water be available for drinking, irrigating crops, daily activities, and ceremonies.

Figure 17. Jara plant (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 18. Cottonwood tree (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Hunting parties from Ysleta ranged to the northeast, east, and southeast, and included an area from the Cerro Alto Mountain, which is about 1 mile northeast of Hueco Tanks, to Small Station along the Southern Pacific railroad and just south of the Finley Mountains (**Figure 19**) (Gerald 2000:47-48). The hunting parties included both men and women because women maintained the camp at Hueco Tanks and worked to process the bison meat and later venison into thin strips to dry and preserve it.

Hunting parties often traversed the entire area, commemorating these events by writing their names on the shelters at Hueco Tanks. One such shelter on the east mountain of Hueco Tanks bears the names of Tigua men and women, including Lus Pedrasa, Panchita Paiz, Lus Granio, Domacio Colminero, Bibian Granillo, Alfredo Olguin, Meleton Olguin, Frank Olguin, along with the date of September 8, 1894 (Gerald 2000:48). Tiguas commonly assembled at a large rock shelter with three mortar holes in a large boulder in the northwest corner of the Hueco Tanks area. Close by is another shelter where Miguel Pedraza and five hunting companions camped in 1922 when three older men took three younger men on a hunt that encompassed the area from the Finley Mountains to Cerro Alto and Hueco Tanks. Miguel Pedraza and Adolfo Ortiz also camped at Small Station while hunting (Gerald 2000:48).

Figure 19. Tigua hunting camps and residences (adapted from Gerald 2000:97).

Other places where Tigua people hunted or camped include Mt. San Felipe (Tapo de Borrego), Cuchillo de Favian Granillo, La Zapateria de José Tolino, Los Cozedores, La Cueva de Beatriz Guerra, Canyon Ancho, and La Casa de Piedra (Gerald 2000:48). These places are within an area from Ysleta to Cerro Alto and Small Station (see Figure 19). Several places at Hueco Tanks were occupied for months or even years at a time. The family of Beatriz Guerra lived in a shelter on the east side of Hueco Tanks for a few years while herding goats and making cheese. La Casa de Piedra was occupied for months at a time by Mariano Colmenero and his step-daughter Ramona Paiz (see Figure 7) (Gerald 2000:48-49).

The terraces east of Ysleta and the Rio Grande were once dependable sources of firewood for the Tigua people until the 1920s when non-Indians acquired title to the land and prohibited any gathering (Gerald 2000:49). Firewood was also collected on trips to Finley Mountain, Tapo de Borrego, and Hueco Tanks. Salt was formerly collected from the Salt Flats south of the Guadalupe Mountains, while almagre (red ocher face paint) and gympsum are still collected in the Hueco Mountains and Los Cozedores, and White Sands, New Mexico respectively. Gypsum sand is burned and used as plaster for modern Tigua houses (Gerald 2000:49).

Tigua tribal territory included their grant lands and those lands encompassed by the Franklin Mountains east to and including the Hueco Mountains backslope, and south including the Rimrock Escarpment, Finlay Mountains, Sierra Blanca Mountains, Quitman Mountains, Eagle Mountain, Van Horn Mountains, and Sierra Viejo (Greenberg 2000:299). This area is

comprised of all of present-day El Paso County, and parts of Hudspeth, Culberson, Jeff Davis, and Presidio counties.

New Mexico Pueblos

The Tigua story begins in New Mexico with events that led to them relocating to Texas. Gran Quivira in the Manzano Mountains is the ancient home of the Tigua people and was one of the so-called cities of gold sought by Francisco Vásquez de Coronado (Figure 20). Prior to Spanish contact, Gran Quivira was a city with multiple pueblos and kivas. By A.D. 800 the city encompassed 17 acres and was comprised of more than 20 apartment buildings constructed with stones cut so precisely that Tigua masons needed no mortar (Eickhoff 1996:58). Likewise, Tigua carpenters carefully mortised the pueblo’s beams without using nails. The valleys surrounding the city were planted with corn, beans, and squash. By 1672 a combination of disease, drought, famine, and Apache raiding led to the final abandonment of Gran Quivira.

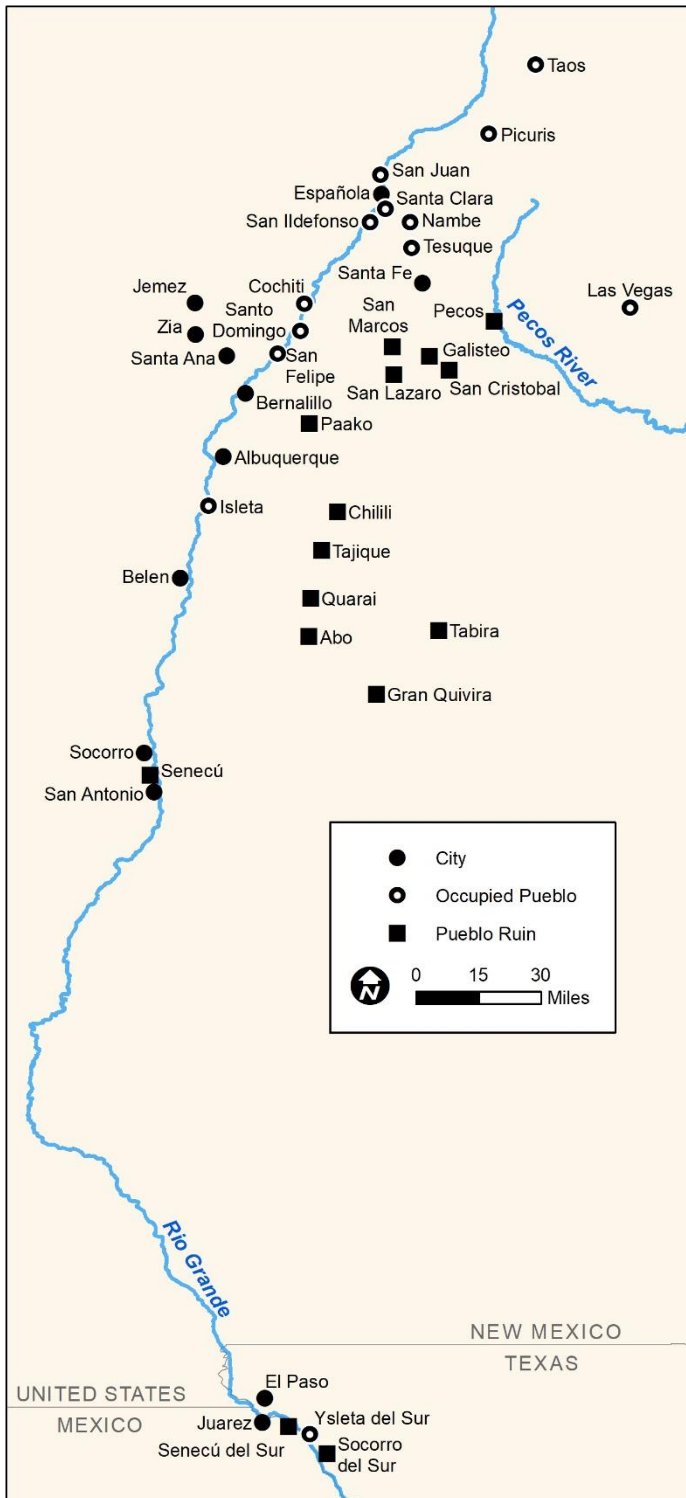

Figure 20. Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico and Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in El Paso (adapted from Wright 1993:2).

The first Spaniards to meet the Tigua Indians at Gran Quivira came with Francisco Vázquez de Coronado's expedition in 1540. The Tigua gave the Spaniards shelter in their multi-storied pueblo and provided food they had grown in irrigated fields (Eickhoff 1996). Mistaking hospitality for weakness, the Spanish seized control of these peaceful people, raping and killing many before moving on in search of the golden cities of Cibola. The Tigua sent runners to other pueblos warning of Coronado's approach, but when the Spanish met resistance, they burned two pueblos before the Indians surrendered. Two Catholic priests remained at Gran Quivira and Pecos pueblos where they forced many Tigua to convert to Christianity and pay tribute with goods or labor. In all, Coronado documented 71 Pueblo Indian villages (Eickhoff 1996).

Next, a 500-person expedition led by Father Agustín Rodríguez and Francisco Sánchez Chamuscado arrived in 1581 (Eickhoff 1996). They reported that the Tigua were peaceful and supplied the Spaniards with plenty of food. Chamuscado returned to Mexico, leaving Rodríquez along with two other priests, Francisco López and Juan Santa María. Shortly after, the Tigua killed Rodríguez and López at Puaray Pueblo, while Santa María was killed at Isleta Pueblo as he traveled south to Mexico (Eickhoff 1996).

In retaliation, Captain Antonio de Espejo attacked the Tigua Pueblo of Puaray in 1583, executing 16 Tigua by public hanging. Many more were burned alive after being forced into their semi-subterranean kivas, which the Spaniards then torched (Eickhoff 1996). Gaspar Castaño de Sosa then forced a Tigua named Miguel to guide an unauthorized expedition in 1590 by threatening to execute his family. De Sosa had singled out the Tigua for extermination, but they fled their pueblos and hid in the mountains. Frustrated, de Sosa attacked 33 other pueblos before he was arrested and returned to Mexico City in chains (Eickhoff 1996).

Spanish colonization of Pueblo Indians in New Mexico began in 1598 when Juan de Oñate gathered all the Pueblo leaders and forced them to take an oath of allegiance (Eickhoff 1996). Four days later, Oñate seized a Tewa pueblo, forcing the Tewa to leave their homes and all their stored food. Acoma Pueblo refused to cooperate with the invaders' demands. The Spanish destroyed Acoma and inflicted overwhelming casualties with their European weaponry. They also enslaved 500 Indians from Acoma (Eickhoff 1996).

Using these terroristic tactics, 11 mission churches were built in New Mexico in seven years, through forced Indian labor (Eickhoff 1996). The mission priests condemned Pueblo people into slavery under the guise of enlightenment and saving their souls from eternal damnation. Every month, Oñate sent soldiers to collect maize and other supplies from the Pueblo people. Whenever Spanish demands became oppressive and provoked a rebellion, the village was attacked, and all the people enslaved (Eickhoff 1996).

Nevertheless, resistance by the Pueblo people persisted. Pedro de Miranda, the priest at Taos Pueblo, was killed in 1632 along with two soldiers who were his bodyguards. The Pueblo people of Jemez, Alameda, San Felipe, and Chochiti followed the leadership of the Tigua at Isleta Pueblo, and conspired with the Navaho to revolt and expel the Spanish in 1640 (Eickhoff

1996). When their plot was discovered, nine of the leaders, including four Tigua, were hanged. The others involved in the planned revolt were sold into slavery.

The missionaries used corporal punishment and the military to enforce bans against kachina dances and to raid places of Indian worship. The priests confiscated sacred masks and religious items to burn them publicly while whipping the Pueblo leaders and enslaving their followers (Eickhoff 1996). A general revolt was outlined in 1650 at Taos Pueblo by Tigua leaders using a deer skin to circulate to other villages. The plot failed when the Hopi refused to supply the needed weapons. Most of the Tigua leaders of the planned revolt escaped to Pueblo Quarterlejo in Kansas, evading their Spanish pursuers.

In 1669, Governor Juan de Medrano y Mesía ordered the Pueblo people to assemble at Isleta Pueblo to help the Spanish fight the Apache. To refuse would have given the military permission to attack their villages (Eickhoff 1996). Despite their help against the Apache, Pueblo people were still treated like slaves by the Spanish.

Half of the Pueblo population was decimated in 1670 during a great famine (Eickhoff 1996). Regardless, the Spanish priests still demanded their taxes and tithes. They reluctantly accepted in-kind labor. The following year, a great pestilence killed more people and many cattle. The priests demanded even more slave labor. In 1672, the Apache descended upon the Pueblo land, robbing the Tigua and driving off their remaining sheep and cattle. When the Pueblo people realized that the Spaniards were vulnerable to the Apache, they began ignoring their demands for taxes and tithes. In 1675, four Indians were hanged while dozens were whipped and enslaved because they refused to increase their amount of tribute during a famine year (Eickhoff 1996).

The priests complained to the governor of a resurgence of "idolatry," and accused the Pueblo priests of bewitching Spaniards and causing their deaths. Governor Juan Francisco Treviño responded by arresting Indian leaders, confiscating masks and religious items, and destroying kivas. Three Tiwa leaders were publicly hanged, while another 43 were whipped and condemned to slavery (Eickhoff 1996). A large number of angry Tiwa descended on Santa Fe and demanded the release of these prisoners. Treviño feared for his life and gave into their demands. Among those released was Popé, a highly respected Tewa who was a gifted orator and who had already evaded Spanish patrols several times while spreading word of a revolt (Eickhoff 1996).

Popé claimed supernatural powers that would help the Pueblo Indians return to their old ways by expelling the Spanish from their lands. Together with Pueblo war leaders including Tilagua from Isleta Pueblo, Popé prepared for the revolt during five years of secret meetings (Eickhoff 1996). Their plan hinged on fortuitous timing and simultaneous uprisings throughout the area to seize weaponry from unsuspecting Spaniards. Santa Fe would be left isolated after all roads were blocked with help from the Apache. Tilagua was responsible for sealing off the southern routes and using deception to funnel Spaniards southward while blocking any passage northward. Finally, Popé planned to strike just before the arrival of a caravan that came every three years to resupply the Spanish (Eickhoff 1996).

The caravan was due in 1680, but Tilagua found out that it would be late because bad weather had caused delays at several river crossings. This information was withheld from the Spaniards, allowing more time to plan the revolt. After much prayer and deliberation, Popé set the date for rebellion on August 11, 1680. He sent cords tied with knots representing how many days until the revolt to the war leaders (Eickhoff 1996).

Governor Don Antonio de Otermín learned about the planned revolt on August 9, 1680 from the chiefs of Tanos, San Marcos, and La Cinega Pueblos, who did not want to participate because they feared what would happen to their villages. Otermín tortured two Tewa Indians, Catua and Omtua, who the chiefs said had information about the revolt until Otermín learned the meaning of the knotted cord (Eickhoff 1996). A Spaniard was killed at Tesuque Pueblo that evening in retaliation, his body bearing the same marks of torture that Otermín had inflicted on Catua and Omtua. Tesuque's resident priest decided to travel that night to Santa Fe for safety.

Popé's war council moved the rebellion forward by one day to August 10, 1680, sending messengers to the various villages with the news. The messenger sent to the southernmost Isleta Pueblo did not have enough time to arrive before the Pueblo Revolt began (Eickhoff 1996). The Pueblo Indians struck the outlaying ranchos and haciendas swiftly and hard, driving any surviving Spaniards towards Santa Fe. The Tigua at Alameda, Sandia, and Puaray Pueblos killed as many Spaniards as possible before driving any survivors south and east to Isleta, expecting Tilagua would be waiting at Isleta and able to trap them. But, the Spanish arrived ahead of Popé's messenger. They startled Tilagua's forces and before the Tigua could recover, the Spaniards had seized control of Isleta Pueblo (Eickhoff 1996).

Tilagua had already began trickling his people out of Isleta before the Spaniards arrived. He sent them into hiding in the surrounding mountainous terrain in preparation for the revolt. As they left, the Tigua took as much weaponry and supplies as they could carry. The Spaniards encountered only 317 Tigua Indians remaining at Isleta. The Spanish took them all as hostages and placed them under armed guard while more than 1,500 Spanish survivors gathered at Isleta Pueblo. When their caravan retreated south four days later, the Tigua were forced to carry the Spaniards' belongings as they walked more than 250 miles across the treacherous Jornado del Muerto desert to El Paso. The Tigua Indians near El Paso are descendants of these Pueblo refugees from New Mexico.

Tigua Land Use in Texas

Spanish Province of Texas

Otermín attempted to reconquer New Mexico in 1681, taking with him 30 Tigua warriors whose families were being held hostage in El Paso. Most of the New Mexican villages were deserted. Otermín burned what remained, destroying agricultural fields and any stored food. Upon arrival at Isleta Pueblo, Otermín took 385 more Tigua hostages who had returned to their village following the revolt. He used them as human shields when he retreated to El Paso ahead of Pueblo pursuers (Eickhoff 1996).

Believing that the rest of the Tigua from Isleta had been killed by the Spanish, the Tigua gathered at El Paso began building a new home (**Figure 21**). Their sacred drum (**Figure 22**), the statue of their patron saint (Saint Anthony), and the ceremonial canes for their officers and governor had been carried south with them. The Tigua people settled between the two Piro villages of Senecú and Socorro (Hughes 1914:323). Thus, the names of the former New Mexican villages Isleta, Senecú, and Socorro were transferred to the new settlements in the El Paso region (although Ysleta retains the archaic Spanish spelling and "del Sur" was added to distinguish it from Isleta Pueblo in New Mexico [Beckham 2000:iii]). After the Rio Grande's main channel changed, Socorro and Ysleta are now in Texas and Senecú is in Juarez, Mexico.

Tigua Indians built the Corpus Christi de la Isleta Mission in 1682 (Hodge 1907) (**Figure 23**). In 1692 the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo was granted 21 square miles of land centered around the mission church in southern El Paso (**Figure 24**). Ysleta del Sur Pueblo is one of the oldest continually settled communities in the United States, and the oldest Texas town (Houser 1970) (**Figure 25**). Likewise, the Tigua Tribal Council is the oldest government in the state, and the Ysleta Mission is the oldest continuously operated Catholic parish in Texas. Soon after arriving near El Paso, the Tigua constructed an acequia system to draw water from the Rio Grande to irrigate their agricultural fields. Some of these fields have remained in continuous cultivation to the present. The tribe's early economic and farming efforts helped pave the way for the development of the region (Paiz 2014).

Military Service

The Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo were essential to the frontier defense of the El Paso del Norte district during the Spanish (1680-1821) and Mexican (1821-1846) periods, as well as the early part of the statehood era (1846-1881) (Houser 2003:176). Tigua scouts frequently served with the Spanish military, providing protection to villagers and travelers along the stretch of Camino Real from the southern extent of the Chihuahua Province to Santa Fe, New Mexico (Jones 1966). The Tigua warriors protected the area from Apache raids during the Spanish and Mexican periods and continued to do so when raiding Comanche and Kiowa Indians arrived in the late 1700s (Houser 2003:176).

The journals of colonial Spanish military and church officials reveal the earliest written accounts of the Tigua at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. New Mexico's colonial Governor Don Diego de Vargas in 1691 (Kessell and Hendricks 1992), El Paso del Norte Presidio captain Pedro José de la Fuente in 1765 (Daniel 1956, 1980), Franciscan priest Francisco Atanasio Domínguez in 1776 (Adams and Chavez 1956), and Nicolás de la Flora in 1766-1768 (Kinnaird 1967) all provided accounts of the Tigua (Comar 2015:21). De la Flora worked as a mapmaker and engineer during the Marqués de Rubí's inspection of New Spain's northernmost presidios. His accounts capture New Spain's northern frontier between 1766 and 1768. Describing El Paso del Norte, de la Flora noted that the Tigua had a dynamic relationship with the region's diverse Indian populations (Comar 2015:21).

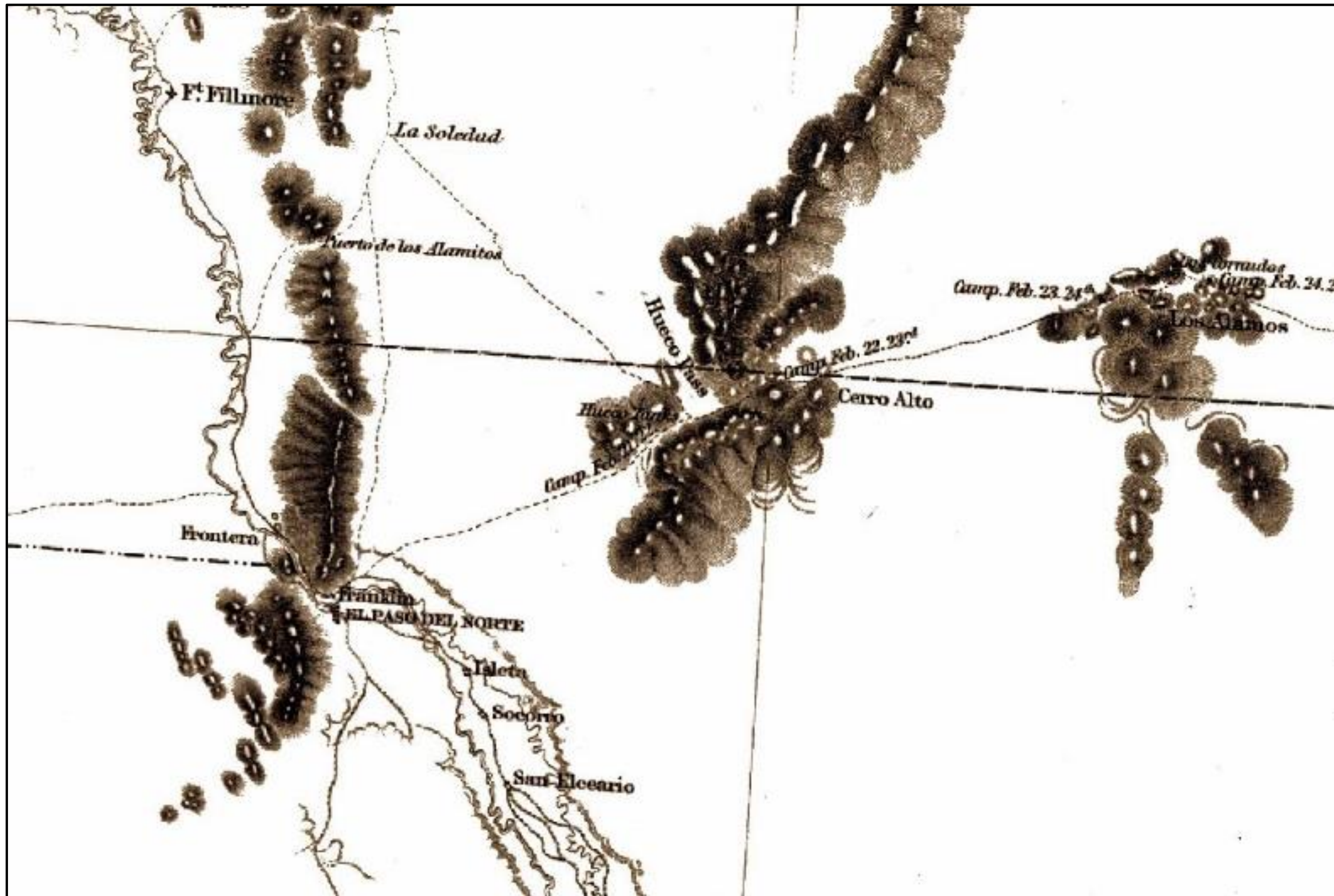

Figure 21. Ysleta del Sur Pueblo with the Franklin and Hueco Mountains and area trails on a portion of the 1865 map of the Red River to the Rio Grande by John Pope (Foster et al. 2006).

Figure 22. Tigua drum (photo courtesy of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Figure 23. Corpus Christi de la Isleta Mission (photo courtesy of *Texas Highways* magazine).

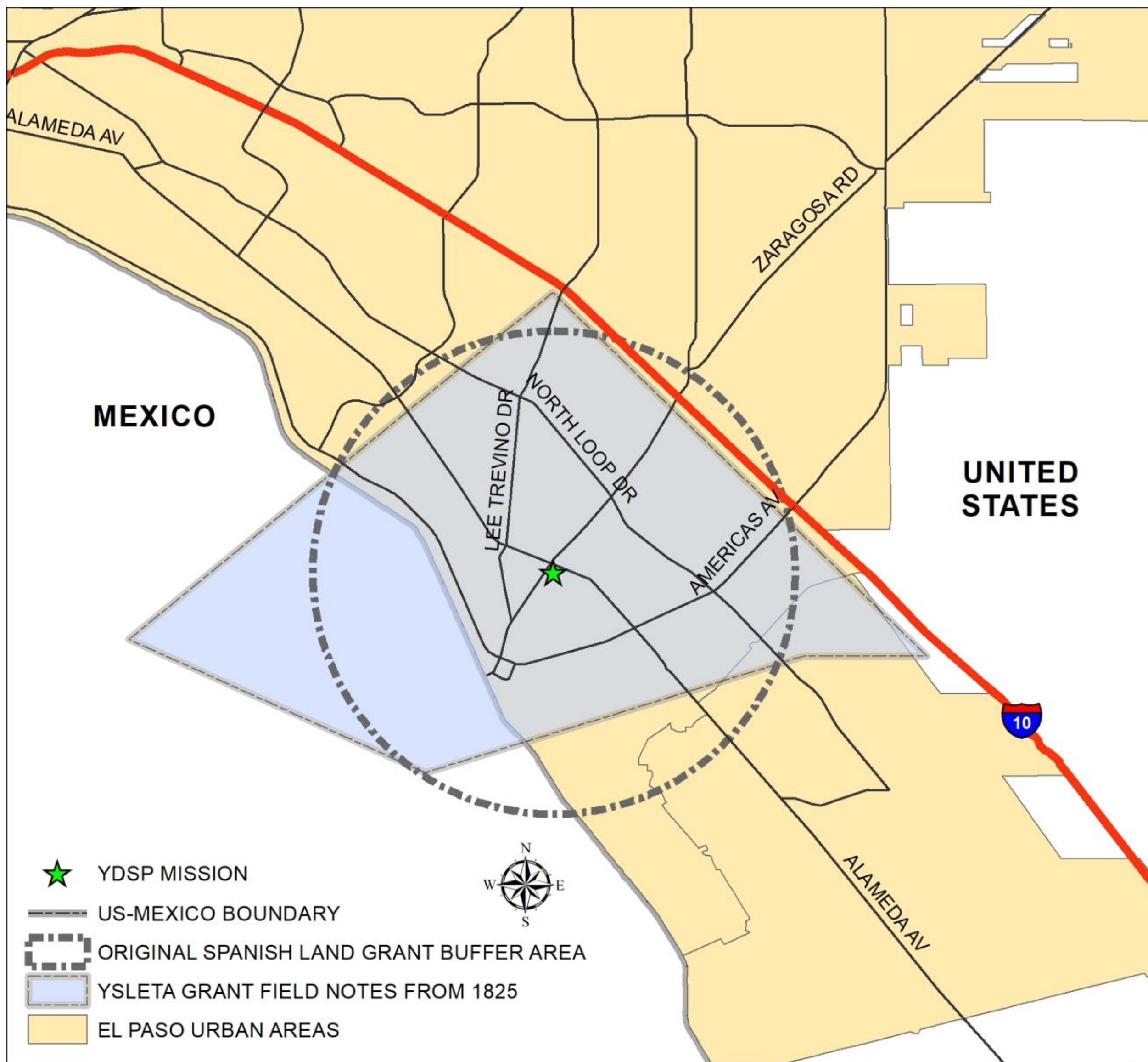

Figure 24. Ysleta del Sur land grant map.

Figure 25. Detail of Old Ysleta de Sur Pueblo with Tigua potter Nestora Piarote, ca. 1876 (photo from the Aultman Collection, El Paso Public Library and on display at the Tigua Cultural Center in Ysleta, Texas).

Tigua scouts served the local commanders at presidios El Paso del Norte and San Elizario, who referred to them as, "Indios exploradores" (Simmons 1968). Sixty Tigua warriors accompanied 50 presidio soldiers under Captain Rubín de Zelis during the Spanish campaign of 1747 against the Gila Apaches. The scouts guided the force into the Hueco Mountains, capturing 53 Apaches (Houser 2003:176).

Spanish King Ferdinand VI granted the Tigua Indians of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo formal title to a 36-square-mile (23,040-acre) area surrounding the mission in 1751, known as a Four League Grant (17,713.6 acres) (see Figure 23). This came more than 60 years after similar grants had been made by the Spanish crown to Pueblo Indians in New Mexico (Eickhoff 1996:9).

Prior to this grant, laws had been adopted in 1680 by Spain specifying that Indian grants of land, rivers, and other water sources could not be sold or taken away. Again in 1811, Spanish laws prohibited the sale of Indian lands. Then in 1821, after Mexico won its independence from Spain, the new government reaffirmed these laws and the protection of Indian rights and lands. By 1825, the boundaries of the Tigua grant had been reaffirmed four times through government action (Eickhoff 1996:71).

Besides the designated scouts, the Tigua were kept unarmed for their first century in Ysleta. The Spanish surveilled the Tigua to make sure they did not acquire arms and ammunition, lest they revolt (Eickhoff 1996:62). By the 1800s, however, Spain had created a Pueblo Militia to augment its frontier defense (Simmons 1968).

Mexican Province of Coahuila y Texas (1824-35)

Tigua warriors from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo often assisted the military commander at the San Elizario Presidio during Mexican rule (1821-1846). They protected El Paso del Norte from raiding Indian tribes and bandits, and accompanied Mexican soldiers and militia in military campaigns in the region (Houser 2003:176). After a series of court battles, the Mexican government reaffirmed Tigua ownership in 1834 of the 36-square-mile area granted them by the king of Spain (see Figure 23).

During the summer of 1837, a battle took place at Hueco Tanks between the Tigua and Kiowa (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo 2003:28-38). According to oral history, the Kiowa raiders had stolen a goat at the Pueblo. Tigua warriors pursued them to the sand hills where a fight ensued, and several Kiowa raiders were killed. The remaining Kiowa escaped to a cave at Hueco Tanks. The Tigua fired at them as they tried to get water from a spring near the mouth of the cave. They tossed live rattlesnakes and burning sacks of red chile peppers into the cave. Finally, after more than 10 days, all but one wounded Kiowa warrior escaped overnight through a narrow passageway to the surface (Houser 2003:176-177; Ysleta del Sur Pueblo 2003:28-38).

The Kiowa thought Mexican soldiers had pursued and attacked them. The Tigua thought they were fighting either Comanche or Apache Indians. Representatives of both the Kiowa and Tigua tribes met at Hueco Tanks in the 1970s and shared their respective oral traditions about the place, realizing that their ancestors had fought each other here (Ysleta del Sur Pueblo 2003:37-38). Together they located a pictograph depicting the battle at Hueco Tanks. It has

since been damaged by vandals, but the pictograph is still visible today on a rocky ceiling situated east of the mouth of the box canyon known as the amphitheater at Hueco Tanks (Houser 2003:177).

State of Texas (1845-present)

Military Service

Between 1846 and 1880, Tigua warriors served the U.S. Army as scouts. They enlisted at San Elizario, Frontera, and later at Fort Bliss, Fort Davis, and Fort Quitman. Tigua scouts also aided the Confederate forces during the Civil War. Afterwards, they once again served the U.S. Army, especially against Apache bands.

The Indian scouts from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo fought in some of the last battles with Indians in Texas, including brothers Bernardo Olguín (**Figure 26**) and Simon Olguín, who were with the Buffalo Soldiers' 10th Cavalry. They were both principal chiefs at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. Mescalero Apache warriors ambushed the 10th Cavalry at Paso Viejo near Valentine, Texas on June 11, 1880 (U.S. Government 1880[1]:149). The soldiers quickly retreated, but four stubborn Tigua scouts held their ground to protect the body of their fallen war chief, Sergeant Simon Olguín (Holguín). They succeeded in fending off the entire Mescalero Apache force who escaped to the mountains (Gillett 1925).

Francisco Olguín was killed in a battle at Ojo Caliente in July 1880, while Bernardo Olguín and his son Domingo Olguín were both discharged in September 1880 at Fort Quitman. A total of 41 Tigua scouts from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo has been documented (**Table 1**) (Houser 2003:181-182). However, none received benefits from the U.S. military.

Tigua Indian scouts participated in the last Apache battle in Texas on January 29, 1881 with Captain George Baylor and Lieutenant Nevill of the Texas Rangers in the Sierra Diablo Mountains. After 1881, with the end of the Apache threat, Tigua scouts no longer served with the Texas Rangers.

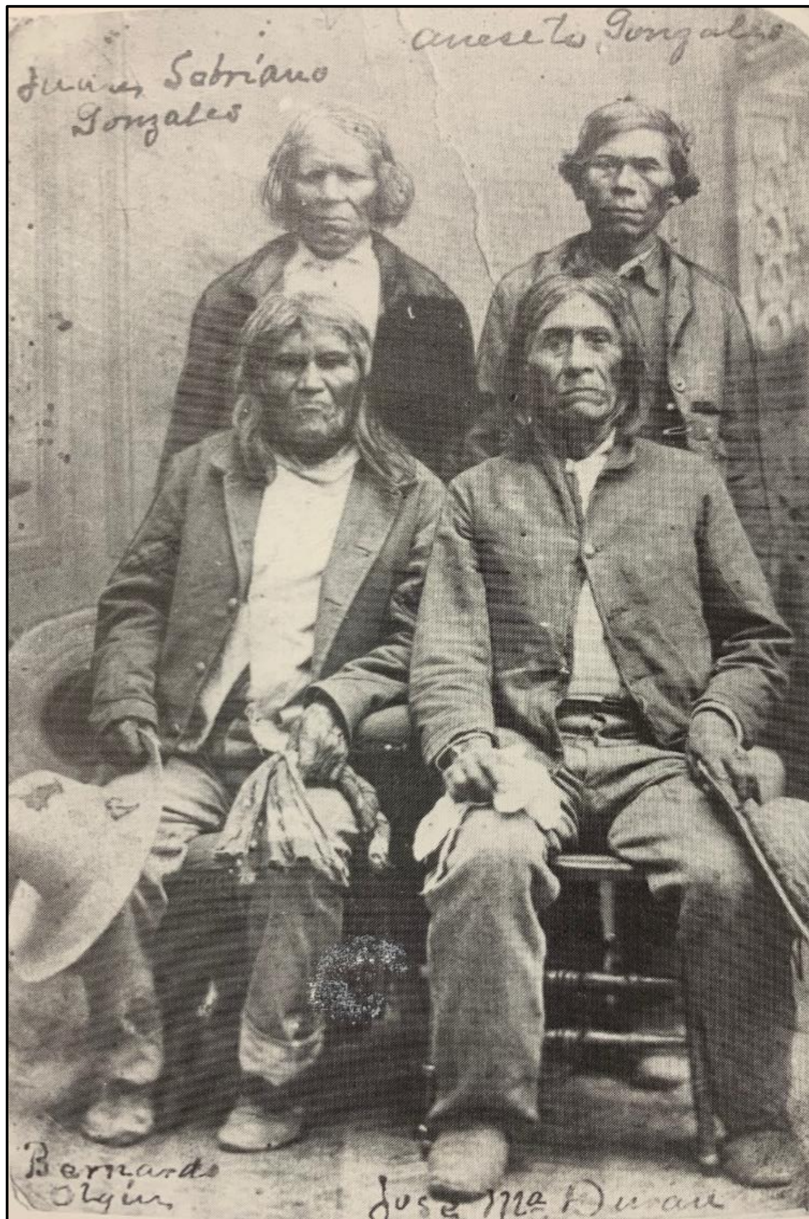

Figure 26. Tigua Scouts Bernardo Olguín (front row left), José María Durán (front row right), Juan Sabriano Gonzáles (back left), and Aneseto Gonzáles (back right) (photo courtesy of the Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Table 1. Pueblo Scouts from Ysleta del Sur Pueblo	
Cristobal Aguiar	Crecencio Marquez
Alvino Aquiar	Maleno Marquez
Cristobal Colmenero	José María Montoya
Damacio Colmenero	Bernardo Olguín
Mariano Colmenero	Domingo Olguín
Felipe Cruz	Francisco Olguín
Juan de la Cruz	José Olguín
Juan Domingo	Ponciano Olguín
Aniceto Durán	Simón Olguín
José María Durán	Tebucio Olguín
Santiago Durán	Manuel Ortega
Sabastiano Durán	Santiago Ortíz
Francisco Gonzáles	Toredio Predrasso Pedraza
Juan Severiano Gonzáles	Patricio Perea
Sostenso Gonzáles	George Piarote
Aniceto Granillo	José Tolino Piarote
Benislado Granillo	Pasqual Piarote
Encarnación Granillo	Simón Rodela
Juan Granillo	Reyes Trujillo
Tomas Granillo	Robel Trujillo
Albino Marquez	

Various military officials and ethnographers documented the Tigua in their nineteenth-century reports, although many reflected contemporary stereotypes and misunderstandings about the Tigua (Comar 2015:21). Ethnographers Herman Ten Kate (2004:69-72) and Adolph F. Bandelier (1975:159-165) each visited Ysleta in 1882 and 1883, respectively, and both noted how the Tigua community in Ysleta had maintained their traditions despite being immersed in Mexican society.

Jesse Walter Fewkes (1902) wrote that the Tigua had been "Mexicanized" and that "survivals of their New Mexican life which still remain, such as their dances at the church, have long lost their meaning." However, he also provided evidence that the Tigua had passed on their traditions and maintained a distinct group identity (Comar 2015:22). In contrast, Anne E. Hughes (1914) presented the Tigua as significant historical actors in the region's history. As a student of historian Herbert Eugene Bolton, Hughes recognized the importance of the Tigua and other tribes in the formation of New Spain's northern borderlands.

Other twentieth-century historians like Carlos E. Castañeda, Joseph I. Driscoll, and Cleofás Calleros brought the Ysleta mission and the Tigua from historical obscurity, and established them as prominent contributors in the region's history. Castañeda became librarian of the

Genaro García Collection in 1927 at the University of Texas, while earning his doctorate degree. His principal work was the seven-volume *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas, 1519–1936.* Castañeda crafted the history of the El Paso area by turning to the original Spanish documents (Castañeda 1937). Driscoll illuminated the Tigua community of Ysleta as an exciting tourist destination in a 1936 Texas Centennial booklet (**Figure 27**). Cleofás Calleros (1951, 1952a, 1952b, 1953) wrote about area missions and framed the Tigua people as the oldest permanent settlers in Texas. The Tigua Tribe published five volumes of *Ysleta del Sur Pueblo Archives* between 2000 and 2003, compiling an extensive collection of historic articles and journals, oral histories, bibliographies, and chain of title studies.

Figure 27. Tigua Indians at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo in 1936 (photo courtesy of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo).

Land Tenure

Following the end of the Mexican-American War in 1848, the United States Government was obligated to acknowledge the Tigua Indians as citizens and protect their property rights according to the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo. The United States never fulfilled these responsibilities. The State of Texas recognized the 1751 Spanish grant to the Tigua in 1854, but never issued a patent title for the land to the Tribe. In 1864 the United States Government reaffirmed the land grants of all Pueblo people—except Ysleta del Sur Pueblo—a consequence of Texas having seceded from the Union and joined the Confederate side of the Civil War.

Tigua Cacique Manuel Ortega told the *El Paso Herald* in 1935 that in addition to their Spanish land grant, the Spanish government gave the Tigua what he described as, "all these plains that lie north of the valley." Ortega said the paper copy of the title to the land had been lost

and stated, “Our neighbors soon learned of the loss, and, denying our ownership, gradually usurped our rights” (*El Paso Herald* 1935).

The boundary of Tigua land blocked any eastward expansion of El Paso or Ysleta. Their communal land could not be acquired for a prospective railroad route, either. Led by Texas Representative Albert J. Fountain, El Paso land speculators devised an illegal maneuver around these facts. The Texas Legislature enacted a law in 1871 that incorporated the Tigua land grant into the City of Ysleta. With that came the power for the city to dispose of the land by selling to speculators. This law was declared unconstitutional two years later, but by then the Tigua Indians had been robbed of their rightful land and left with about 26 acres (Eickhoff 1996:13-14). Politicians and railroad speculators cheated the Tigua and illegally stole control of their land grant.

The Tigua were involved in the salt trade and considered access to the salt basin (covering most of northeastern Hudspeth County) as a continuation of their traditional, communal rights to resources in the area landscape (Gelo and Pate 2003). The San Elizario Salt War began in the late 1860s as a struggle between Fountain and other Republican leaders to acquire title to the salt deposits at the foot of Guadalupe Peak, 100 miles east of El Paso (Sonnichsen 2020). Trouble continued in 1874 when Charles Howard became district judge and filed a claim on the salt lakes in the name of his father-in-law, Major George B. Zimpleman. This act outraged the Tigua and other citizens, who considered the lakes public property under terms of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo (Sonnichsen 2020), and for whom the end of the Salt War marked another step toward restricting their use of the land (Gelo and Pate 2003). By the end of 1877, the Salt War reached its climax when Howard tried to stop 16 wagons from San Elizario bound for the salt basin. A riot ensued that required U.S. troops to quell (Sonnichsen 2020).

Federal Recognition

The final attempt at usurping Tigua land occurred when the city of El Paso, Texas, annexed Ysleta in 1955. Tigua families, who had lived there for centuries, were now subject to annual property taxes of more than $100. With an average yearly income per family of $400, the Tigua living in the “Barrio de los Indios” (Indian neighborhood) were soon in debt to the city and in danger of losing the last of their Spanish-era land grant (Schultze 2001:17). Attorney Tom Diamond volunteered his services in the early 1960s after learning about the tribe’s tax problems. Diamond filed an injunction, halting action by the city until an investigation of the Tigua Tribe’s claims that they were exempt from taxation because the land grant gave them sovereign status (Schultze 2001:18).

Diamond began a long process to demonstrate that the Tigua still constituted a tribe, they never ceased being a tribe, and they were qualified for federal recognition and benefits (Eickhoff 1996:104). In October 1966, Diamond served notices to the City of El Paso and the El Paso County tax assessor-collector that the Tigua were exempted from paying taxes based on the Texas Legislature having recognized their title to the Ysleta Grant in 1854 (Schultze 2001:23).

On November 23, 1966, the Texas State Historical Survey Committee passed a resolution recognizing the historical accuracy of an anthropological study by Nicholas P. Houser of the University of Arizona that designated the Tigua as a tribe. Their resolution also stated that the Tigua were entitled to recognition, protection, and preservation by the State. Houser found it remarkable that the Tigua retained their cultural identity and tribal organization considering they lived in extreme poverty and had intermarried with not only with other Indian groups, but with Mexican Americans (Schultze 2001:25-26).

Houser described several traditions and customs that he believed contributed to keeping the tribe's culture intact, including the retention of their patron saint, Saint Anthony, and of the *tombe*, or tribal drum, both symbols of tribal unity; their Spanish-imposed system of government; original Tiwa rituals and dances; and kinship ties. Discrimination and prejudice from the outside had also kept the Tigua united, especially since so much (including land) had been taken away from them (Schultze 2001:25).

Diamond shepherded a bill through the Texas Legislature, recognizing the tribe and agreeing that the State would assume trust responsibility. This arrangement was subject to getting federal recognition for the tribe and transferring trust responsibility to the State of Texas. The Texas Legislature acknowledged the Tigua Tribe in 1967, setting aside $35,000 in emergency relief for them. State trusteeship was their only choice since federal Indian policy had been terminating tribal relationships (Schultze 2001:27). After the Texas Legislature agreed to assume the financial burden of a trust relationship with the Tigua Tribe, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) eventually supported the Tigua's claim to legitimacy, since the BIA would not be obligated to provide assistance.

On April 12, 1968, the federal government formally recognized the Tigua Indian Tribe of Texas when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed Public Law 90-287. This recognition was for the purpose of state trusteeship, and came nearly 300 years after the Tigua settled at Ysleta del Sur Pueblo. Having always been peaceful people, they had never found it necessary to make any treaties with the United States (Houser 1970). State funding allowed for modern housing with running water and electricity; however, trusteeship was not kind to the Tigua. In the early 1970s, half of the tribe was unemployed, most of the students dropped out before graduating high school, and alcoholism was on the rise (Schultze 2001:29). State programs targeting these problems were nonexistent or sporadically funded between 1968 and 1980. The Texas legislature also ignored repeated requests for economic development projects to attract tourism, purchase land, and build infrastructure (Schultze 2001:29).

Texas Attorney General Jim Mattox ruled in 1984 that under the Equal Rights Amendment of the Texas Constitution, Indian tribes are prohibited from receiving "special treatment." Mattox ignored arguments that Indian tribes were political, not racial, organizations. His ruling was aimed at the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas, but the implications for the Tigua Tribe were clear. They could lose all state funding and lose their land without protection from state taxation (Schultze 2001:30).

Diamond and the Tigua Tribe now faced a more complicated process for federal recognition, according to procedures established in 1978. These recognition criteria were burdensome,

time consuming, and required compiling substantial ethnohistorical and ethnographic data linking the Indian group's cultural origins and sociopolitical structure to that of a colonial Indian group (Schultze 2001:30). Instead, they petitioned for federal "restoration" alongside the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas. The BIA eventually conceded that the Tigua had been formally recognized in 1968, accepting their petition for restoration with unique conditions. The BIA imposed a fixed, one-eighth degree of descendancy to determine who was eligible for federal services and funding (Schultze 2001:31-32).

The Tigua and Alabama-Coushatta (Figure 28) federal recognition bill passed in 1987 and was signed by President Ronald Reagan. The federal trust relationship insures protection of the Tigua land indefinitely (Schultze 2001:34-35). During the 1990s, the Tribe purchased land in nearby Socorro and at Chilicote Ranch southwest of Valentine, Texas (Gelo and Pate 2003:26).

Figure 28. Detail of the Alabama-Coushatta Tribe and the Tigua Tribe playing a game of stickball at the 1974 Texas Folklife Festival (photo courtesy of The University of Texas Institute for Texan Cultures at San Antonio, UTSA Libraries Special Collections, University of North Texas Libraries, and The Portal to Texas History).

Resources Identified as Culturally Sensitive for Future Planning

The locations in Texas associated with the Tigua people of Ysleta del Sur Pueblo include agricultural fields, trails, campsites, lithic and mineral quarries, hunting grounds, nutritional and medicinal plant gathering areas, battle and skirmish sites, cemeteries, and religious sites such as Hueco Tanks that are considered culturally sensitive for future planning purposes.

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