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A STUDY OF SUPERSTITIONS AND CUSTOMS AFFECTING
HEALTH PRACTICES AMONG THE PEOPLE OF
STARR COUNTY, TEXAS

THESIS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Because superstitions and customs of the people of Starr County, Texas, have a bearing on health practices that affect their well-being, the purpose of this study is to explain the deep-rooted superstitions and customs adhered to by the settlers. In order to understand more fully the cultural factors which relate to health, it is necessary to study the lives and customs of the people of Starr County. An effort has been made to look at their problems, not from a critical standpoint, but from the standpoint of helping the people and of viewing them sympathetically. A keen interest in the health practices of the people of Starr County, Texas, originated in tracing superstitions and customs in relation to the backward condition of these people. This thesis is a report of the writer's findings of those superstitions and customs as viewed by one who has lived in the county for six years.

Scope of the Problem

The superstitions and customs considered in this thesis are limited to those found in Starr County, Texas, and to those that most deeply affect and shape the lives of

the people of the county. The reader must bear in mind that the discussions are limited to the poorer and more ignorant people of the county, who constitute the greater percentage of the population. It is necessary to probe into the background of their lives from many angles; namely, history, geography, economic conditions and health conditions.

Definition of Superstitions and Customs

The term superstition, like religion, is a word of uncertain origin. The process by which the Latin word, "superstito," literally "standing over," acquired the sense of "awe" or "excessive devotion" is a matter of conjecture. As contrasted with the development and application of scientific knowledge, superstition is a relic of the prescientific ages - - of the childhood thought and fancy of the race. The practices of primitive superstitions are usually directed to the propitiation or control of mysterious and lawless powers.

Indeed, most recent studies have shown that few even of the most highly educated men and women are free of traces of superstitions. Many of these appear, however, merely as survivals of childhood practices; others are retained as amusing, playful fancies.¹

Customs change more rapidly among certain peoples than among others. Ordinarily people of progressive localities are less prone to follow the customs of their forebears than are those of backward localities.

"Custom means the whole body of usages, practices, or conventions which regulate social life; the usual manner and method of living and doing; and social habit, whether

¹Lincoln Library of Essential Information, The Frontier Press Co., Buffalo, New York, 1940, p. 2077.

thought or actions."² Customs of one nationality and race often seem curious to members of other nationalities and races. According to Virgil N. Lott, Border Patrolman and long-time resident of Starr County, Texas, the population is seventy per cent Latin American and thirty per cent Anglo-American. Therefore, the superstitions and customs of the people of that county arouse interest and curiosity to the Anglo-Americans.

Sources of Data

Sources of data for this thesis are of two kinds:

(1) documentary and (2) human.

Documentary sources were used in connection with the geography, history and economic conditions of the county. Access to the court records and the bulletin made by the Starr County Land Use Committee was of great help.

Death and birth records of the county were used to establish the causes of diseases and deaths.

Ruby L. Goodman, a Red Cross nurse, furnished a wealth of information during the summer of 1942. She made surveys of the general health of the county and gave lectures to mothers on the proper care of children. These surveys also helped the Starr County Welfare Worker to locate the defectives of the county and to take steps to send them to state hospitals.

²Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition, unabridged, G & C Merriam Co., Springfield, Mass., U.S.A., 1946, p. 650.

T. L. Shaley's Health Survey of School Children gave information in regard to the health of Starr County children. She was also instrumental in sending some defectives to state supported hospitals for treatment and rehabilitation. Her survey helped immensely in making this thesis a complete unit.

The Chaser and A Report on the Health and Nutrition of Mexicans Living in Texas were used to a lesser extent, but they, too, furnished information used in this work. The information obtained was more general. It related to the entire people of this nationality, rather than specifically to Starr County residents.

Without access to the scrapbook belonging to Virgil L. Lott, this survey would have been incomplete. Lott is a writer of several articles on the customs and superstitions of the people of South Texas. His scrapbook furnished valuable information relative to the customs and traditions of the people. He is an authority on this section of the country and has spent the majority of his later years here. For many years he was the editor of the McAllen Monitor, and has since been in the Border Patrol. He has not only studied the characteristics of these peoples, but has also become the friend of all those he has contacted.

Human sources mainly include interviews. The following persons proved of much worth: the former county judge, Higinio Garza; Andres Longoria, a pioneer; David Longoria;

Consuelo de la Garza; and Minnie Jones, all of whom are interested in the history and the welfare of the people of Starr County, Texas. Florence J. Scott, former county superintendent of public schools was of great help in assisting the writer in that phase of the study dealing with the development of the schools and the many problems resident in the schools.

Information regarding diseases and their cures was received from the persons already mentioned and also from Eloisa Munoz Kelly, a former teacher and native of Starr County. Maria Gutierrez, an authority on the superstitions and customs of the people along the border, proved her familiarity with the Latin-Americans in connection with the uses of various herbs and with many superstitions relative to them.

In prescribing cures for different ailments there are persons proficient in administering remedies with herbs and spiritual healing. Such persons are called "curanderos." "Curandero (del Lat. Curandus; ger. de curare, cuidar, curar) El que hace de medico sin serlo."³ The translation of this definition is (of Latin Curandus; gerund of curare, cuidar, curar) one who makes others believe he is a doctor without being one. The origin of "curandero" in Starr County is unknown, but it is probably traceable to a com-

³Diccionario Enciclopedico Hispano-Americano de Literatura. Ciencias y Artes, Tomo Quinto, Montaner Y Simon Editores, Barcelona Espana, Calle de Aragon, Numeros 309 y 311, p. 1588.

bination of the Spanish "curandero" merged with the Indian custom of the medicine men and spiritual healers.

Since the few "curanderos" who are still practicing are so busy, it was impossible for the writer to contact them. "Curanderos" are very reluctant to give any information for fear the questioner wants to get that information in order to report them to the State Health Department or because the questioner wants to become a "curandero" himself and thus enter into competition with the already established practitioners. For these reasons, it was impossible to get any information from them. Most of the information collected in this survey was obtained through contact with those who resort to "curanderos" or from those who have heard so much about them that they had retained much of the information.

After the writer's intensive study of the background of the people of Starr County, Texas, it was easier to understand why the customs and traditions of their forefathers are still cherished and influence the health of most communities.

CHAPTER II

BACKGROUND IN RELATION TO SUPERSTITIONS AND CUSTOMS

Geographic

Starr County, located in the southern extremity of Texas, is bordered on the south by the Rio Grande River. It is within the Rio Grande Plain and lies just west of that section known as the Rio Grande Valley and Citrus belt of Texas. The county has an area of 862,720 acres with approximately 858,402 acres devoted to agricultural purposes.¹

The county is within the subtropical semi-arid region. Precipitation records of the United States Weather Bureau Station in Rio Grande City covering a period from 1871 to 1939, show the average annual rainfall to be 16.53 inches. The annual rainfall frequently falls below this average, resulting in complete or partial crop failures. Also, the annual rainfall during some years is poorly distributed, which fact adds further to the uncertainty of crop production. The highest rainfall months are December, January, and February.²

The climate of Starr County is characterized by long warm summers and short mild winters. The average annual temperature is seventy-four degrees. The lowest temperature which has been recorded is six degrees below zero. The average frost-free period is about ten months and extends from approximately February tenth to December seventh.³

¹"Report of Starr County Land Use Committee," 1943, Unpublished, p. 1.

²Ibid.

³Ibid., p. 2.

Today the county in its agricultural possibilities is admitted as a unit of the lower Valley group of four counties, but since it has a vast ranching territory within its boundaries it bears many of the topographical and economic characteristics of Zapata and Webb Counties.⁴

Soils of the northern half of the county are predominantly fine sandy loams. Surface soil absorbs water readily and the subsoil has a relatively high water-holding capacity. Most feed crops grown on this soil resist dry weather exceptionally well. This section is gently sloping to a plain. The south central third of the county is hilly and eroded gravelly clay soils, utilized principally for grazing. The soils of the entire county are high in lime content and especially is this true of the soils in this area. The soils of the narrow flat valley along the Rio Grande River are silty loams. Most of the farms of the county are located in this valley; however, more rainfall is required for crop production because the soils do not as readily absorb and retain moisture as do the sandy soils.⁵

As further stated in the bulletin of the Starr County Land Use Committee:

Major crops in their order are: cotton, corn sorghams and beans. These crops are produced on all the soil types; however, greater success is had with drought resistant varieties of sorghum in the valley. Due to the lack of sufficient moisture, vegetables and citrus fruits are not produced for commercial purposes.

The only irrigation carried on is in the valley where water is pumped from the river. The water sands are too deep for irrigation purposes and usually the water from wells contains so much sulphur that vegetation is killed by its use.

Native vegetation is plentiful and consists most of prickly pear, mesquite, huisache, guajillo, huayacau, white brush, graujeno, brazil and tazajillo. Coyotillo is common in the hilly portion of the county. The most prevalent grasses named in order of importance are buffalo, mesquite, reed and some grams.

The most important agricultural enterprise in Starr County is ranching which embraces both cattle and goat raising. Approximately 93% of the agriculture

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid., p. 3.

land of the county is devoted to grazing. Ranches as a whole are small, with approximately 47% less than one thousand acres in size. Most of the remainder range in size from one thousand to ten thousand, there being only twenty ranches containing more than ten thousand acres.

The farm problems are as follows:

1. Lack of water and water conservation
2. Inability to obtain sufficient farm credit
3. Lack of home food and feed supply
4. Control of predatory animals
5. Lack of proper workstock
6. Improper livestock breeding
7. Improper diversification of crops⁶

The history of Starr County is not unlike the history of the early colonies. It was settled by sturdy and brave people who came from Spain seeking adventure and a new place to make a living. The Viceroy of Spain created an Act by which Spain was to give land to former residents and ex-soldiers. The land fronted the Rio Grande. Jurisdictions were formed in 1765. They constituted counties and embraced both sides of the river.⁷

In 1766 the land was divided, and each former resident was granted a tract of land generally comprising 1300 varas on the front of the river. The grants were 25,000 varas deep. This land was granted on condition that the men had to settle their families and stock on this land and help the government in any uprising from Indians or others. These people settled on the banks of the river to have access to water and to be near the older settlement in Mexico where they had to seek refuge in case of Indian raids. The lands of Starr County are still legally divided in "porciones" which were the sections of land granted to individual settlers, each section comprising from five thousand to ten thousand acres of land and extending to both sides of the Rio Grande. The southernmost boundry of these provinces was the Nueces

⁶Ibid., p. 4.

⁷Deed Records Book No. 57, County Court House, p. 56. "Certified Copy of Records of the Findings of the Spanish Royal Council"

River, which enters the Gulf of Mexico at Corpus Christi.⁸

Racial

As suggested by the history of Starr County, the background of its settlers was Spanish. When the first settlers came here, they were in constant fear of Indian raids, since the Indians of this area were hostile. This was one section in the new world where the Indians and the whites did not intermarry as they did in other settlements in New Spain. As the Indians became civilized they migrated to this county and through later intermarriages, there still remains a certain percentage of the people with Indian characteristics. Those superstitions inherited by the settlers from their mother country were mingled with those of the Indians forming one pattern. Today there is the mixed blood of the Mestizo and Spanish people which is known as the Spanish-Mexican. Traits and customs of the old Aztec peoples survive in the present Mexican population.

The Spanish-Mexicans, from the Spanish heritage, have a natural desire to protect and preserve valuable documents. Family names illustrate the close association of the people of the ranches and blood ties which are never severed.⁹

⁸Ibid., p. 57.

⁹Virgil N. Lott, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas, Scrapbook, Unpublished, pages unnumbered.

As a result of their Indian heritage, the Mexicans love prancing horses, bright saddles, and jangling spurs. They also have a great love for dogs. Every rancher has a dog which he prizes highly. Practically all the citizens of Starr County are now American-born, and many are the fourth and fifth generation to live in the same communities. A small per cent of the population came to the United States between 1913 and 1917, during the turbulent revolutionary days in Mexico; but on the whole, the patrons in the county are land owners, who have inherited their property from their families.¹⁰

The present population in the county is seventy per cent Latin-American. The remaining thirty per cent of the population is composed of Anglo-Americans, very few of whom are property owners.¹¹ Practically all of the scholastic population comes from homes where the Spanish language is the mother tongue.

Description of Social Practices

Language.--During the days of colonization, this section of the country, under the Spanish rule, used nothing but the Spanish language. As the people, including the county officials, are still predominantly Spanish, the language spoken to this very day is Spanish. The early documents were all written in Spanish, and one finds warranty deeds in the records which were written

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Ibid.

in Spanish. This practice continued as late as 1900. Today, because the system of schools has improved, a great percentage of the people in the county speak the English language. All of the business and legal matters are conducted in the English, even though the Spanish language is heard in the streets. In practically every Latin-American home Spanish is used in conversation at all times.

Political.--The first form of government began after the allotting and distribution of these lands granted by the King to the founders of the county. The first form of government is described in Records of the Finding of the Spanish Lands Within the Jurisdictional Limits of Carmargo.

Let the inhabitants of this hamlet meet together, headed by their captain, and at which time two appraisers will be appointed who under oath shall designate the quality of the lands or classify them as laid out, and lying adjacent to this hamlet making a distinction between those most useful for cultivation purposes and those most useful for pasture lands, suburbs for this hamlet, stock range and other classification, with the end in view of allowing the inhabitants thereof to use it according to its respective classification with common advantages to all concerned for the benefit of the common weal.¹²

The inhabitants of the hamlet lived in their respective jurisdictions headed by their government officials. They underwent scarcity of food and clothing. Periodically,

¹²Deed Records Book No. 57, p. 58, County Court House, "Certified Copy of Records of the Findings of the Spanish Royal Council."

Indians arrived from the North, killing some of the men, who were caring for the stock, and taking off the women and children as prisoners.

Texas Independence was granted in 1836. Part of the country, now called Starr County, was not taken into the Republic of Texas, but remained almost without any government until 1846. In 1846, when Texas became a State in the Union, all lands north of the Rio Grande River were annexed to Texas. All of the country south of Corpus Christi remained under the Mexican Sovereignty until the American Invasion under General Zachery Taylor in 1846.

Although there have been changes in government, these changes have not altered the customs, traditions, and culture of the people of Spanish-Mexican descent. This was especially true of the peoples along the north bank of the Rio Grande River, who by the terms of the international treaty between the United States and Mexico, were left in this new country. They soon found themselves subordinated to the people of the larger nation.

The citizens of Mexican descent, many of whom were born in Texas, gradually gained control of most of the business interests of the county. During the period from 1880 to 1890, they began to assert themselves in the elections affecting the local government. A number of the county officials elected in 1890 and 1920 were Texas-Mexicans, and it is not surprising that they soon took

over the control of all county offices. Even the position of school teacher became a political plum. Certificates were awarded to the loyal and faithful members of the party in power.¹³

Starr County's first school superintendent was a man of Mexican extraction. He was elected in 1908, and was ejected from his office in 1926 due to political differences with other county officials, who controlled local politics.

These county officials were of Mexican descent, but were American citizens. There were less than one hundred persons of Anglo-American descent as residents in the whole county, and they had a very small part in the civic, educational, or political activities of the county. The population during 1926 was over ten thousand.¹⁴

According to Florence J. Scott's book on Starr County Education, one finds an account of political differences:

In April, 1934, a group of school patrons in one common school district began a small agitation which was designed to force an election of trustees; however, this group fumbled in the method of securing same and nothing was accomplished.

One year later, this same group met at a school house, at the largest settlement in the district, and proceeded to hold an election, which resulted in

¹³Florence J. Scott, Development of Education in Starr County. Unpublished manuscript, pages unnumbered.

¹⁴Ibid.

a great uproar, which brought on the question of validity, and in turn caused conflicting opinions from the State Department of Education and Attorney General's Department.¹⁵

Economic.--During the beginning of the colonization and distribution of the land of Starr County, surveyors, under general power of attorney, began their task of laying out and staking the lands. Due to the lack of water, this section was non-productive and offered little crop returns. The lands were permeated only by the Rio Grande and the San Juan rivers, of which waters were not suitable for irrigating. Pasturing stock consisted of cattle, goats and sheep. The population of the neighborhood comprised one hundred forty-six families of well-reputed settlers, and the inmate Indians of the religious missions. Each family was granted limited dimensions of five leagues on each side of the river. It was proposed that the lands be laid out so that each grantee would have access to water from one or the other of the two rivers.¹⁶

After being surveyed, all the land was without irrigation. The settlers tried to carry to a finish an irrigation project, but were unsuccessful. The hilly land of the county was chiefly used for cattle raising.

¹⁵Deed Records Book No. 57, County Court House, Certified Copy of Records of the Findings of the Spanish Royal Council, p. 58.

¹⁶The Texas Republic, A Social and Economic History, William Ransom Hogan, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Okla., p. 68.

The need for taking the products to market was evident, and since the caravan method used to go to Corpus Christi, Texas, to market was a long and tedious undertaking, promoters saw a way to start what seemed a lucrative business by introducing the steamboat.

The first steamboat to navigate the waters of Texas probably was the "Ariel," commanded and owned by Henry Austin, cousin of Stephen F. Austin. In the summer of 1829 Henry Austin began to run the vessel on the lower Rio Grande, but from the beginning the prospect was enough to discourage even such a persevering optimist as he. Sickness disabled his crew during the fall months, the season when the boat might have been most profitably employed; he himself was ill in the following spring, and he was further handicapped by "the crudeness of the people, who, taking his boat for a living thing, were afraid of it."¹⁷

Trade with the suspicious Mexican merchants on the sluggish, shallow Rio Grande soon disgusted this strenuous New Englander; and although conditions had sufficiently improved to enable him to make expenses for three months, he wrote that "nothing but my pride and the censure to which I should expose myself by abandoning a project of my own choosing has induced me to continue here so long."¹⁸

Henry Austin persisted in carrying on the business until July, 1830.¹⁹

There are no available data regarding those promoters who undertook steamboat transportation after it was abandoned as an unprofitable undertaking by Henry Austin. In what year the transportation was resumed is question-

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

able, but information furnished by old timers (Higinio Garza, former County Judge, Enrique Moreno, now deceased, and other county residents, all past seventy years of age) indicates that as late as the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the early twentieth century, steamboats were used on the Rio Grande. Until recent years, there still stood a loading and fueling station on the bank of the river, near where the old Davis home still stands in Rio Grande City.

Steamboats did not furnish an adequate outlet for the wool, meat and other products which needed to be marketed. People had to use land transportation to a great extent. Corpus Christi remained the best market for their products. Ranchers and farmers formed caravans to drive their sheep, goats and cattle to market.

Religion.--One of the traditions which the Spanish people brought to the new world was their pious, God-fearing attitude. One of the first things they thought about after making their settlement was to establish a place where they could go to worship God. It was this devoutness that promoted them to found churches as soon as possible after they made their settlements. Along with their devoutness, they often made offerings for certain blessings. As manifestations of this belief and custom, one finds monuments erected in thanksgiving. One of these monuments is found on a high hill on the highway

about two miles east of Rio Grande City. It consists of a tower with a high cross. It was built by the early settlers as a thanksgiving offering for the much-needed water, after digging a well which produced good drinking water.

Like their forebears, they are, almost without exception, Roman Catholic, firm adherents to the traditions of their ancient church and naturally deeply devoted to their dead. The relatives, true to the traditions of their religion, erected crosses where these fell, such spots becoming consecrated ground to them, on each November 1st, living relatives repair with flowers and wreaths with which they decorate the "recuerdos," or shrines in living memory of the dear departed, everyone, of whom, regardless of the manner of his death or the causes which led up to it is regarded as a saint.²⁰

The religious element enters very largely into the life of the women. They are very pious in their way and attend to their religious duties with the same interest with which they perform their toilet. The concrete symbols and observances of the church have a great influence over them. They are very particular in the training of their children in the principles of the church. During the early days great faith was placed in the healing power of certain shrines and relics. In many families this is still practiced, as tradition in these cases is more rigidly followed than the faith in modern physicians and their healing remedies. Signs, omens, and certain supernatural

²⁰Virgil N. Lott, Scrapbook, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas.

manifestations are also of great importance in certain families.

Marriage.--The Mexican believes that marriage is one of the most sacred of institutions, and he makes it such. Following the religious part of the ceremony which is, of course, solemn and sacred, he celebrates it with all the pomp and splendor his resources will allow.

During the very early days, approximately two generations back, a man had to be twenty-five years of age before he was allowed to select his bride, and the young lady had to be twenty years of age before she was allowed to marry. By then, she was expected to be able to cook, sew, and make quilts before she was eligible. If at the age of twenty-five, a man did not have a sweetheart, his parents would begin looking around for a bride for him. They would select a certain young woman and go to her parents and tell them they wanted their son to marry her. The girl's parents would agree and then they would tell their daughter. Procedure would be started for the wedding. However, there have been instances in which the marriage did not occur until a year or several years later. During that time when a young man selected the girl he wished to marry, he would tell his father, and his father would select two close men friends to go to the girl's parents, to tell them of the young man's desires. They would then return to their home and await the answer

from the girl's father and later notify the boy and his father. If the answer was to be "no," the answer would come in eight days. If the answer was to be "yes," the father of the daughter would answer in two weeks, a month, two months, or sometimes longer. When the answer was "yes," the daughter then became a dependent of the boy's father, and he would begin bringing food to her home for her to eat until the date of the marriage. Sometimes before the marriage, usually two weeks to one month, the young man would bring money to the girl for her trousseau and other expenses. This amount of money usually was from fifty to two hundred and fifty dollars, depending upon the financial circumstances of the families.

The wedding lasted three days. The first day was spent in making "tortillas" and preparing the meat. A large amount of food was necessary as not only the members of both families were to be present with their relatives, but all the community and any persons from neighboring communities if they desired to go. The younger persons spent the time dancing both day and night. Their place of dancing was on the ground to the music made by a violin, guitar and sometimes an accordion. The second day of the wedding was devoted to the last minute arrangements for the wedding proper. It took place around four or five o'clock in the morning. The rest of the day was spent in eating and dancing. Both

of the families involved financed the feast.

At that time the newly married couple did not go away on a honeymoon. The second day after their marriage, they began living together and building themselves a small house.

Recreation.--Recreation in Starr County has always been very limited. During the earlier days it consisted of baseball for the boys and dancing at "fiestas" for both the boys and the girls. Of course the dancing was strictly chaperoned by the mothers of the girls. The girls went only with their mother as a chaperone. All of the Latin-American peoples are rhythmic and love dancing. The majority of them are excellent dancers and begin dancing at a very early age.

Three days were highly celebrated. These were the days of the saints -- San Juan on June 24, San Pedro on June 30, and Santiago on July 24. On these days the younger persons spent the time riding horses or going around to visit their friends. No work was done during those days, and the nights were spent in dancing.

An occasion highly celebrated was one at which the young son got his first shave at about the age of fourteen. The boy must have "padrinos" or godparents for the event. When these were selected and the boy had been shaved the usual "fiestas" began, which of course is a large meal for the entire community, followed by dancing at night.

These Latin-American people have always included intoxicating liquors in their forms of recreation. Everything calls for "a drink." They do not believe it harmful to the body and very seldom do they consider it harmful to the morals. If friends refuse to drink with each other, more than likely there will be a fight, which has often ended in the knifing of several persons. One may rest assured as long as he will accept a drink from a Mexican, he will be accepted as a friend. This of course is done and in the past has been done mostly among the men. Today, many of the older women must have their daily liquor, and tradition readily accepts it.

The word "recreation" was unknown in the schools. The children knew very little about playing. At recess time, they would stand in a group or perhaps a few of the boys would organize a baseball game. It was not until recent years that games and instruction in how to play were included in the school curriculum.

CHAPTER III

SUPERSTITIONS, CUSTOMS, AND LEGENDS

WHICH CONCERN HEALTH PRACTICES

Birth Superstitions

In keeping with the traditionally superstitious nature of the people of Starr County, there exist many superstitions in regard to childbirth -- both before and after the event. During the mother's pregnancy the husband must be on the alert to give the expectant mother the foods that she might crave to eat. If the expectant mother fails to get the food she craves, she will either have an abortion or the child, when born, will have a marking on his body of the food she craved. This may be prevented provided she is given a tea made of either the skin from a hackberry tree or the hair-like strings on the outer rind of the coconut. It is considered a very serious matter if the expectant mother does not receive the food which she wants. If she lives on a distant ranch, the husband must hire a car to take him to town to buy this food. She is not to eat any seasoned foods, pork, or greasy food. She is to be on a strict diet, eating only "tortillas," beans, rice and such other light foods as

may be available. Vegetables are rarely heard of in the home of these people.

If the pregnant mother should see another person with a physical defect, the unborn child will take after that person by having the same defect. Also, if the expectant mother should look at an eclipse of the moon, her unborn child will be born with a physical defect. During an eclipse, she should stay in the house and hang several keys bunched together on her belt, This is to protect the baby from any defect. Others believe that instead of the child being handicapped physically, he will be instantly killed before birth, the instant the mother looks at the eclipse.

A pregnant woman cannot give any sick person medical treatment, massage, etc., for she has so much electricity in her body the sick person will become worse.

For some time before the child is to be born, the mother must refrain from bathing. If she bathes, she will have an abortion. If the mother should receive a shock before the child is born, the child will be born feeble-minded. The woman who is to have her first baby is given sugar to eat at the beginning of labor to enable her to have strength to give birth to the baby.

On the day of the great event, when the pregnant woman begins labor, the husband calls on a midwife. Midwives are plentiful. Some have had experience in deliver-

ing babies, but most of them are inexperienced elderly ladies who cling to the old traditions about childbirth. Sometimes the midwife has to stay with the expectant mother two or three days. She must be on hand when the child is to be born to give the necessary assistance. However, she knows nothing in case of emergency. For example, one midwife in Starr County bathed a woman's external organs with concentrated Lysol immediately after childbirth to prevent infection. The woman was heard screaming for blocks and was seriously burned. She then had to go to a doctor to be treated for something which could have been prevented had she had the doctor to deliver her child. This is only one example of how ignorant midwives are.

A child born during the full moon and before the end of that quarter will be a strong, healthy child, and the mother will have little trouble in giving birth. On the other hand, a child born during the first and second quarters of the moon will be weak and fragile, and the mother will have hard labor.

After childbirth, the placenta must be buried and covered with ashes to prevent "after pains." In case the mother does have after pains, she must put an axe under her bed to stop or "cut" these pains.

After childbirth, the mother must not sit up for two weeks. She must not bathe for forty days after the birth.

This length of time, together with the time before birth which she is not to bathe, makes a period of two or three months during which she cannot have a bath.

Since most of the mothers nurse their babies, they must adhere to a very strict diet. According to superstitions and customs of these people, she is not to drink any orange juice or raw or fresh milk. For the first week or two she has a diet of boiled milk, coffee, "atole blanco" (ground corn and sugar), and very thin toasted corn tortillas made with cinnamon and sugar. She can also eat mutton or chicken. This is more or less her complete diet for the first week or two after birth of her child.

If a baby is shaken or anything strikes the soft spot in the top of the cranium, the spot is said to fall. The test to learn if it has fallen is to put an egg under the baby's crib. If the egg turns black, then the soft spot did fall. It must be treated at a certain hour in the morning by using a soft wooden pad to lift the uvula in the upper palate. The child is then given a tea made of an herb for about a week. This treatment must take place only when the moon is in the quarter.

When the mother is to get out of bed for the first time after childbirth, she must put her right foot down on the floor first if the child is a boy and her left foot down first if it is a girl. This is necessary for her own health.

When a baby is teething, he is to wear either earrings or a necklace made out of coral beads to make the gums break. Rabbit brains are also sometimes rubbed on the baby's gums to prevent pain.

To help a child walk sooner, the white of an egg is beaten and rubbed under his knees very often. If a child is weak, it may be bathed in boiled water with "yerba de chivato" (billy-goat weed, it is commonly called in English), This solution strengthens the child and if these baths are continued, he will become strong and robust.

If the child's fingernails or hair are cut before he is one year old, the baby will either go blind or his eyes will be very weak when he is grown.

Death Superstitions

In keeping with their religious faith, the people of Starr County dread for anyone of their beloved ones to die without receiving Extreme Unction. In doing this, the afflicted one will confess to the priest and take Holy Communion. When a priest cannot come to the home, an elderly lady will come and help the afflicted one to die. This is done by praying for the soul of the agonizing patient.

If a deceased one owes a debt, the next of kin will have to pay it, for they believe that the soul of the deceased will ramble until the debt is paid. The spirit will appear in the house and will communicate with the

kin to pay the debt. If the debt is not paid the spirit will haunt the place indefinitely. The people say there are many haunted places in Starr County.

Some of the older people do not believe in putting money in the bank. If a well-to-do person dies, his money is buried underground. Many of these treasures are still believed to be left buried. Ignorant people believe that in that case the deceased will appear in person to ask for the money, or that he will go where it is, or that the place where the money is buried will make a flame at night. There are many tales of these treasures being unearthed.

Dreams of one who is dead means that he is in purgatory, and the dreamer should pray and make indulgences for him. Since the majority of the people of Starr County are of Catholic faith, they are great believers in purgatory, and they believe too, that souls being in purgatory will haunt in space. They are also great believers in spirits, or "spooks." The following is a story related by Mrs. Librada Flores Longoria, now deceased:

My "compadre" Victoriano Garza was a coward. He lived in the old brick house by the lake. He was always seeing ghosts. One night, as was the custom in the earlier days, my "compadre's" peon was left to attend the kiln. My "compadre" went to the kiln ever so often until ten o'clock to see that there was enough wood in it. After ten o'clock he went to bed after seeing that the peon was wide awake to keep the kiln going for the rest of the night. At midnight, my "compadre" awoke. He got up to see that everything was all right. The kiln was under the

old ebony tree that you see standing about one hundred steps from the old brick house. My "compadre" Victoriano, proceeded towards that place, but not before taking a look at the kitchen which was a few steps from the house. When he looked towards the kitchen, he saw standing in the door none other than a woman with long hair. This happened during a drought, and the people made a very poor crop of corn; therefore, having very little to make their tortillas. People had gotten very bold about stealing each other's corn. My "compadre" thought it was the neighbor who had come to steal their corn from the kitchen and he proceeded to catch up with her. When he started to go in the kitchen, the lady stepped out and started toward the lake to a great "Anaqua" tree. When she reached this tree, she turned to face him and her eyes were not the eyes of a human, but in their place were two glowing fires. My "compadre" fell to the ground and managed to crawl back to bed where he awoke my "comadre," Luisa, who was his wife. My "compadre" summoned me, and it was hours before we could get my "compadre" over his scare. We finally managed to open his mouth to put a few drops of liquor in his mouth. Then he told us the whole incident."¹

In case the original owner of a house or place was a social outcast or criminal, the place where he had lived would be haunted for the rest of the time after he died. A story illustrating this phenomenon concerns a man who took up residence in a house whose owner had recently died. This house, only a miserable hut, was located about ten miles north of Rio Grande City. Shortly after he moved there, he heard voices shouting for him to leave the place. At first he paid no heed, and rocks began

¹ Story related by Mrs. Librada Flores Longoria, now deceased, but former native of Starr County, Texas.

raining on his roof. He still did not heed. At night when he and his family would go to sleep, the dishes would fall from his cabinet, his hat would be cut into pieces, and even the sheets on his bed would be torn. One night, it is said, that he kept the old kerosene lamp lighted all night, but went to sleep sitting on a chair. It was at this time that his little daughter awoke screaming and he awoke immediately. The little girl said that someone had just clipped her hair. The man claimed that the girl's hair had been clipped. At the rumors of all this, the sheriff and other respectable citizens of Rio Grande City went to the scene to make game of the happenings. They found nothing that would justify any of the claims. The place was abandoned by the family.

A dog howling in the night is to announce death in the family. Many of the people claim that several deaths have been linked with this superstition. Therefore, they became alarmed upon hearing the dog howl.

Anyone who is bewitched is visited by night owls and witches who can take the form of any animal and sometimes bring back the dead to life or the sick to health.

These people are deeply devoted to their dead. The relatives, true to the traditions of their religion, erect crosses where their dead fall. Such spots become consecrated ground to them. On each November first, living relatives take flowers and wreaths with which they decorate

the "recuerdos," or shrines. This in loving memory of the dear departed, everyone of whom, regardless of the manner of his death or the causes which lead up to it, becomes a saint.

According to Virgil N. Lott, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas,

There is a patriarchal system in the survival of the sway of ancient chieftains. In the weird wailing of the daughter over the demise of relative, one sees a survival of old customs practiced by primitive peoples the world over when professional mourners are employed to do weeping. The women in the family where there has been a recent death mourn audibly every time a friend or relative calls to offer condolences over the loss of the dear one. This mourning is long, drawn-out shrieks that tear the nerves to bit.²

All the women in the family wear black when there is a death. In the case the father dies, the daughters wear black for one year. If the wife is devoted and remains true to her husband, she wears black for the remainder of her life. In case a brother has died, all the women wear black for one year. They very often express their desires to go to the movies or to go to a dance, but refrain from recreation to observe the mourning period. Neither can the family listen to music during this period of mourning. The men let their beard grow for two or three months and wear black bands around their hats.

²Virgil N. Lott, Scrapbook, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas.

Among the wealthier families, it is often customary to consecrate and devote the room where a member of the family died, generally the father or the mother, to the memory of the deceased. It is said that in one family in Starr County, there is a room in the home which has remained locked for fifteen years. The deceased in this case is the father, and his wife has not permitted the room to be opened a single time since his death.

Living Conditions

After making numerous visits in the homes of the rural peoples, which are mainly the lower income groups, of Starr County, Texas, writer found that a large percentage of the people of the county live in houses too small for the size of the family. They own a house of two or three rooms. Families average at least seven, not counting the mother and the father. There are very often relatives residing in the homes. The furniture is very scant, usually consisting of one bed, three or four quilts, a dresser, a stove in the kitchen, a few dishes, and several pictures of certain members of the family. The mother and father sleep on the bed, and the children and any others crowd on the floor.

The majority of the ranch people are poor and live from farming. For years and years they have been accustomed to this kind of life. Farming is the main occupation, although grazing is done extensively in the northern part

of the county. Farmers are dependent on the weather since very few of them own pumps to get water from the river for irrigation. As a result, when it does not rain enough, the poor farmers do not raise a crop. When they do not make a crop, they start north to pick cotton in July or August. Some of these people come back in September or October. The children attend school late in the season.

Very few chickens are raised, and consequently, they eat very few eggs. The eggs that are eaten are consumed by the head of the house, usually the father. The people often migrate to other parts of the State and country for seasonal work. They get their pots and pans ready for the venture, and are packed into the trucks with as many as fifty crowded into each vehicle. During their stay away from home, some of the parents clothe their children, and sometimes save enough money to last them for a few months after they return. Some of the fathers are very different. On payday, they collect the money from the earnings of the entire family and go to a "honky-tonk." They get drunk and spend their money dancing to their heart's content. These men's families live in the most pitiful of conditions. Their families are ill-nourished even poorer than the average. The children's clothing is ragged and they are not very bright in school.

Many of the little adobe cabins have only one room, perhaps without the luxury of a window. There is no seclusion in their lives and the real duties of life begin at a very early age. Their early experiences are with life's hard realities. The children can be seen on the streets and around their homes with baby brothers or sisters swung across their backs. Although some of these young maids are handsome, at twenty they have begun to fade and at thirty they retain scarcely a trace of their beauty. This is due to hard labor and deprivations.³

No people could be more poorly housed or poorly equipped for domestic duties than these women. None use the little they have to a good advantage. They frequently live and sleep on the bare ground and possess only the clothing they have on their bodies.

Nutrition

Nutrition is an outstanding problem in homes of the people of Starr County. In keeping with their meager income, their diet is simple and inadequate, especially for the babies and children. It is the custom among the people to serve the head of the family the best food and feed the babies and children the leftovers. Meals are seldom served at regular hours. Very often the family can afford only one or two meals daily.

Since the large percentage of the people of this county are farmers, they raise much of their foodstuffs.

³Ibid.

Corn "tortillas" is the principle food. These are made by boiling corn in lime water until the corn is soft and the hulls are removable. It is then ground on a "metate"* and made into dough. The woman pats it with the hands until it becomes a thick round shape. This round-shaped corn omelette is put on a hot griddle and turned on each side until it cooks.

It is a general custom of the people to prepare practically all their foods with small pieces of meat. Spices are used liberally. Rice is prepared by first roasting it in lard. Water and the small pieces of meat are added to it, and this mixture is then seasoned with black pepper, cominos, and sometimes garlic. When the rice is almost cooked, tomatoes and sometimes raisins are added. When this mixture is properly prepared, it is a very good dish. Chopped squash and spaghetti are prepared in the same manner.

Most of the foods are prepared in a great deal of fat. Beans, for example, are first boiled, mashed, and then fried in plenty of lard. Potatoes are also fried in a great deal of grease. Cabrito (kid goat) is considered one of their delicacies. It is served on very rare occasions; for example, a baptismal or wedding feast. Cabrito is prepared in two separate dishes. The meat is

* A flat, table-like stone utensil used to grind corn. A stone object similar to a rolling pin is used to press the corn on it.

fried and properly seasoned with pepper, cominos, garlic, and tomatoes. The liver, intestines, lungs, heart, and pancreas are made into another dish. Out of the blood they make a gravy.

Tacos, enchiladas, enbueitos, tamales, and tostados are under a different classification. All of these dishes are made with corn dough or corn "tortillas." Tacos are made of toasted "tortillas," fried ground meat, shredded lettuce and sliced tomatoes. The meat is seasoned as usual and put between the folded tortillas. Some of the cut lettuce and tomatoes are put in it. Enchiladas can be prepared with two different kinds of cheese -- American or cottage cheese. The tortilla is first soaked in boiling chili powder mixed with water and left in the mixture to cook until the chili powder has soaked into the tortilla. Scraped cheese with cut onions is then put in the tortilla, then the tortilla is rolled and put in the oven to warm. In the making of tamales, corn dough instead of the tortilla is used. The masa or corn dough is flavored with powdered red pepper enough to give it a rose tint. Corn shucks are moistened and lined with the dough. Then ground pork properly seasoned is put on it. Sometimes raisins are added to the pork. After the meat is put on the dough, the masa-lined shuck is rolled to enclose the meat. When the number of tamales desired is prepared, a few shucks are put on the bottom of a pot and the tamales are put

in it, with some more shucks on the top. The putting of shucks on the bottom and top of the pot is to prevent the contact of tamales with the container. A little water is put in the container and it is then covered. The tamales are cooked for about two hours. Envueltos are similar to the tacos. The tortilla is left soft in this case. Ground meat is put in the tortilla. The tortilla is rolled, and a gravy made of tomato is spread on the top of the rolled tortillas. Tostados means "toasted," and just as the name suggests, the tortillas are toasted and left flat. Fried beans are placed on top of the tortilla, making a tostado. Some people add lettuce and tomatoes to the beans.

During Lent Catholic beliefs are adhered to very closely. The head of the family goes fishing because the family cannot eat meat during the greater part of Lent. Another dish that is very common during this period is "nopalitos." "Nopalitos" are tender cactus leaves. During this time, people flock to the bushes to pick "nopalitos." The tender cactus leaves are cleaned of all thorns, cut into small pieces, and put to boil. When they have boiled for a certain time, they are taken out and fried with egg, making a very good dish.

Although the foregoing foods are used, the everyday diet of the people of this section consists of very simple foods. Inasmuch as the people are poor, they do not eat

these dishes often. Breakfast often consists only of coffee with a few flour tortillas. Coffee is served to everyone regardless of age. Even the baby drinks coffee. At noon they will have beans, corn tortillas, and probably another food consisting of rice, spaghetti or squash mixed in the customary way. For supper, the family ordinarily has coffee and tortillas.

The "Curandero"

A "curandero," who was pre-eminent among the rank and file of the people, was named Pedro Jaramillo. He lived on a ranch near the present site of Falfurrias. While everyone in Starr County who lived during the time of this great prophet and medicine man knows a great deal about him, nobody seems able to ascertain when he was born and when he died. But after conferring with a great number of elderly people of this county, the writer discovered that the consensus of opinion was that he was born around the middle of the nineteenth century and lived through 1915. They all claimed that he was quite old when he died and by looking at his pictures, which are held very dearly by a great many persons, one can judge that he was around 75 or 80 years old when he died. This man was considered a saint, and those people who were fortunate enough to have his picture pray to him when they are in trouble.

According to legend he was kicked on the nose by a horse when he was in his teens -- probably thirteen --

hence the use of odd numbers in his treatments. He did not regain consciousness until the end of the third day after being kicked. When he did regain consciousness, he claimed that he was inspired by God to cure people. This began his career. He acquired a fame which has not been paralleled by any other man in the history of "curanderismo." At the peak of his fame, it was said that no less than three hundred vehicles -- cars and wagons -- surrounded his home in search of relief for their maladies. Furthermore, he had a private post office where several pouches of mail were delivered to him daily. The same number went out with the treatment prescribed by him.

Although Pedro Jaramillo prescribed herbs, his treatments generally were simple. If he prescribed anything to be taken internally, he invariably extended his treatment to odds; for example, to drink a glass of water before breakfast for three consecutive days, or nine consecutive days.

He was a religious man and often prescribed praying in lieu of anything to be taken internally. According to legend, volumes could be written on achievements of this great "curandero."

According to statements of the people who knew him, he did not charge anything for his treatments, but the people in many cases made bountiful donations according to their means and according to the service he rendered.

Besides what he received in livestock and other commodities, it is claimed that his table was covered with money. When a poor man sought treatment from him, he would reach out to the table and pick a handful of bills, not bothering to count them and would give them to the afflicted one. In like manner, he distributed all the money that he received.

Stories have been told of some member of a family making a long journey on horseback to Jaramillo's home seeking treatment for another member in the family. When the person reached Jaramillo's home, he would be amazed to be told by a calm man that the ill person in his family was well and was now in the home doing chores or other work. Thereupon, Jaramillo would instruct him to leave, as there was no need for treatment or medical advice to be given to the afflicted person.

A story was related by Enrique Moreno of Grulla, Starr County, who is now deceased. Moreno always answered the letters for this great prophet. Once he went to Pedro Jaramillo from his neighboring ranch to procure treatment for someone who had had an attack of some sort. Upon reaching the medicine man's home, he was greeted by Jaramillo with, "You are going to stay here tonight and answer some letters for me." Moreno was in a great hurry and told him it would be impossible inasmuch as he had to get back to take treatment to Juan, his brother, who had had an

attack. Pedro Jaramillo still remained calm, and again insisted that Moreno was going to spend the night with him, and that Juan did not need any treatment, for he was well. Learning this, Moreno decided to stay over the night and answer a few letters. The following morning when he returned to the ranch, he found that Juan, as Jaramillo had said, was in perfect health.

In many other cases when someone came to him seeking treatment for a dear one, the "curandero" would disappoint him by saying, "There is no treatment for that man, for he is already a corpse." This person would return home to find the ill person dead.

So far the discussion has dwelt with his supernatural accomplishments, but when he gave any other kind of treatment, it was as simple as the manifestations of supernaturalness. It is claimed that the following story was published in a San Antonio paper. The name of the paper or the exact date could not be ascertained.

Some time in the early part of the twentieth century, there came to San Antonio a very wealthy lady who had taken her young son to the most famous doctors in the country. They had pronounced the teen-age boy tubercular and had recommended that the family move to a warmer climate. Thereupon, the family, originally from New York, moved to San Antonio. The boy was under the care of three physicians at all times, but still he was gradually

wasting away. One day Pedro Jaramillo was going through San Antonio on one of his pilgrimages. It was his custom occasionally to reach those people who were less able to make the trip to him. Word of this "curandero" reached the mother and she saw no harm in consulting him about her son. Consequently, a messenger was sent to contact Jaramillo and to get him to come to the house. Pedro Jaramillo did go. The lady asked him to treat the boy, but at first he refused, claiming that her son was in the best care with the three famous physicians. Upon the insistence of the mother, he agreed. The doctors asked him what was wrong with the boy, and volunteered information to the effect that their opinion was that the boy had tuberculosis. He disagreed with them and told them that this youngster had a grass-burr in his throat and that as soon as he extracted it, the boy would get well. The doctors only laughed at him, but promised to co-operate. Jaramillo asked for some warm water, a tub or some other large container, and a knife. They brought all that he asked for. He made the boy swallow some of the warm water which caused him to vomit, throwing out a large ball of mucous. The "curandero" then asked for the knife to open the ball, and found in the middle of it a grass burr, as he had predicted. To the great astonishment of the doctors, it is claimed that the boy got well.

It is said that Jaramillo had a clever way of playing a joke with those who wanted to make fun of him because

of his features or his treatments. It is said that once a doctor was passing by his house and stopped to make fun of the old man. They entered into an argument. The argument got so heated that they challenged each other to match medical wits. Pedro Jaramillo asked the doctor to give him the most active poison he had with him and that he would take it and it would not affect him. Thereupon the doctor gave him the poison, and the "curandero" took it. The poison showed no effect on him. He then told the doctor to get into his carriage and proceed home, and while he was riding to start pulling his fingers, starting with the little one and on to the index finger, but not to pull the thumb. When he got home he was to pull the thumb and rush to the toilet. The doctor did as he was instructed save for the fact that he became curious and pulled the thumb before getting home. It is said that the doctor instantly suffered a case of diarrhea.

In many other cases, it is said that Jaramillo would simply prescribe a glass of water from the container used by everyone and that it would act as a most active laxative.

Jaramillo predicted his own death, and instructed people not to bury him until after the third day, because he would return, he said, if they did. It is claimed that he was buried before the end of the third day after his death, as the authorities demanded it. There have been some "curanderos" who claim that they are Pedro Jaramillo,

who has come to life to save the lives of people. These are instantly found to be imposters.

The things that this great benefactor presumably did will remain in the memory of those who knew him, and in the annals of the history of "curanderoism" for a great many years to come. It is from his prescriptions and treatments that many people of this section of the country began treatments in their homes. Since those days, scientific health education has progressed very slowly.*

Treatment of Diseases

From time immemorial the "curanderos" have been the main source of medical treatment in these backward communities. The Spaniards had elderly ladies who knew herbs to administer treatment to the members of the colony. The Indians had their medicine men. The origin of the "curandero" is not definitely established. He might have developed out of the old Spanish custom to administer home treatment or he might have sprung from the Indian medicine man. At any rate, "curanderos" are still practicing in this section of the county.

As a general rule one finds that "curanderos" give very simple treatments. They claim they are inspired by

* These stories concerning Jaramillo cannot be verified in any way. This writer was not able to find any information concerning him in print. However, there is no doubt as to his existence since the memory of his life is so rooted in the minds of the people. The facts he performed have now become almost a part of their legend and folklore.

God and they are given powers to cure the afflicted ones. The "curanderos" are usually elderly people. One of the most famous of "curanderos" was Pedro Jaramillo, who has been discussed at length. "Curanderos" do not charge for their treatments, but generally accept gifts which are offered them. The patient, being grateful for the free services rendered by the "curandero," gives him the thing that the benefactor admires and would like to have. It might be a beautiful horse or a cow.

The rank and file of the "curanderos" give their treatment in periods of one, three, five, seven, or nine days. Treatments are given in odd numbers. The patient may have to say the Lord's Prayer upon rising for three consecutive days or the treatment may be a glass of water before breakfast for nine consecutive days.

"Curanderos" also resort to herbs and other treatments for the cure of diseases. Following is a list of some diseases and ways the "curanderos" combat them:

1. When a baby is suffering from a slight colic, it can be combatted by giving the baby a tea made from the camomile herb. This herb grows wild or can be bought in the drug stores. If the colic is acute, then a tea prepared from camomile and peppermint is made. This tea is made by boiling them in a small amount of water. The camomile tea is used instead of water in the baby's diet if the colic is persistent. In adults, hot applications

of urine are made on their stomachs for colic. Sometimes the patient's own urine is taken internally for this malady.

2. Throat diseases are treated in many ways. Cough has a great many cures. Out of "mescal" (a cheap Mexican liquor), honey and marubio horehound, is made a compound that is good for coughs. Out of the anacahuita is made a tea mixed with dried roses and honey, which is thought to be very good for coughs.

3. Colds are cured by steam baths on the feet, and baths of warm ashes.

4. "Borraja" or borage plant is used to the best advantage as a diuretic. The leaves and the flowers are brought to a boil to obtain the medicinal elements.

5. "Curanderos" use five herbs in the treatment of dyspepsia:

a. "Estafiate," mug wort, or "altamisa," country altamisa herb (mug wort), is made into a tea by boiling one part of the herb to twenty-five of water, which is taken before breakfast. This tea can be taken for any length of time or until the patient is relieved.

b. "Higuera," or fig tree, is given to one who is suffering from dyspepsia. The leaves are mashed and squeezed through a thin cloth. The juice is mixed with an equal quantity of water, and taken in doses of three tablespoons a day, preferably after meals.

c. The camomile, as has already been mentioned, is prepared by boiling two or three parts of it in several

parts of water. This tea is given after meals.

d. "Marubio," horehound, is given in a tea prepared by boiling five parts of it to one hundred parts of water.

e. "Toronjib," balm-gentle herb, is prepared by boiling one part of the herb to one hundred parts of water.

6. "Amargozo," which has an exceedingly bitter taste, is used as an appetite stimulant.

7. "Aguacate," (avocado), is used to great success to eradicate parasites from the human body. The outer bark of the tree or the covering of the seed is taken in doses which cause the parasites to become dislodged.

8. "Granado" is also used in dislodging parasites from the body. This is called pomogranate in English and grows in Starr County in many of the gardens. The outer bark of the trunk as well as that of the root is boiled in a portion of water until it is about two-thirds of the original amount. This tea is divided in three equal parts and is taken one-half hour before breakfast.

9. "Alcachofa," artichokes, is administered or given to a bilious person. It is prepared for use by soaking a small amount of the herb in a large portion of water for twelve hours and later filtering through a thin cloth. This liquid is divided into three equal parts to be taken three times a day.

10. Corn silks are used for liver ailments. They are also believed to exercise a favorable action on the

secretion of urine, and in heart diseases. A very small portion of the corn silks is used in a large portion of water and brought to boil as in the preparation of other teas.

11. For vomiting a mint preparation is used. The mixture is prepared by boiling one or two parts of mint to one hundred parts of water. This is taken after meals by a person who is susceptible to vomiting.

12. Three or four parts of rose leaves to one hundred parts of boiled water, taken before breakfast, is used as a treatment to stop too frequent bowel movements. When the proportion of rose leaves is doubled one will get opposite results. This solution is used more for babies than for adults.

13. Herbs used in the treatment of dysentery are "aguacate" bark and "malva," melva. The leaves and roots of "malva" are used. They are prepared by boiling three or four parts of the herb in one hundred parts of water. Mesquite bark is also used for diminishing dysentery. A small amount of bark is boiled in a large amount (approximately 100 parts) of water and taken in the form of enemas.

14. "Amapola," is used in the treatment of coughs and fever. The flower part of this plant is used. The flowers are dried and mixed with a large portion of water and taken in a dosage of a tablespoonful every two hours. The same mixture is used in a gargle to make swelling of

the tonsils disappear.

Superstitions Akin to Witchcraft

"Ojo" has been misunderstood by a great many writers. There may be two reasons for this: either poor translators were used, or the writers were misled by the definition of "evil eye." The idea that evil eye and "ojo" are the same is erroneous. According to the information the writer has been able to obtain by contacting Latin-Americans, not only from Starr and Webb Counties, but also from the interior of Mexico, "ojo," or rather "hacer ojo," does not mean "evil eye." "Evil eye," according to the dictionary, means the faculty to inflict injury or hard luck by a look.⁴ This act is implied to be a voluntary act of the wrongdoer's harming the person or object of his admiration by a look. "Ojo" is not voluntary. The wrongdoer is unaware that he is inflicting harm by his not touching the object or the person of his admiration. It is safe to assume that "evil eye" belongs to witchcraft, and is not the same as "ojo."

"Ojo" may be cast on a person or on an object. "Ojo" is cast, unwittingly, by a person when he refrains from touching what he admires when he is seized with a great desire to do so. A person or object afflicted with "ojo" will almost immediately be struck with a great calamity.

⁴The New Century Dictionary of the English Language, Edited by H. G. Emery and K. G. Brewster, D. Appleton-Century Co., N. Y., p. 524.

It is claimed that the reason for this is that the wrongdoer has a great deal of electricity in his eyes. When the one who cast "ojo" on the victim will touch the afflicted one, the victim will at once regain his health. If the object of admiration is breakable it will break when inflicted with "ojo." It is believed that some people have a stronger evil eye or "ojo" than others. This is a story related by an old lady:

One late afternoon a man was passing by my ranch astride a beautiful horse. The horse was so beautiful and fat that I instantly had a temptation to touch it. The man had not gone one-fourth of a mile when he came to our ranch to tell us that his horse was very sick and could not get up. He asked us if we could give him lodging for the night. Just then I told the man that I thought I had cast "ojo" on the horse and that I would be very glad to go and touch him. We went to the place and the horse looked very sick. I touched and rubbed him, and within a half an hour, he was up as if nothing had happened to him.*

The symptoms of "ojo" are fever and lack of appetite. If the person upon whom the evil eye has been cast is a baby, the baby will have no appetite. If the victim is an adult, he will feel his eye-lids grow heavy and intense pain over his body. To find if a person is a victim of this disease, the sign of the cross is made with an egg over the afflicted one's body and three creeds repeated. After this treatment is administered, the egg is broken and it, together with the shells, is placed in a cup filled

* Story related by Mrs. Wenseslada Longoria, Edinburg, Texas.

with water and containing crosses made of sacred palms. After this has been done, the cup is covered with any kind of lid, and placed at the head of the patient's bed. After about eight hours the egg is taken out of the cup. If the egg is partly cooked, or rather if the albumen has turned white, the patient is afflicted with the malady. If the egg is shaped oblong after the eight hours, a male cast the evil eye on the patient. If the shape of the egg is round, a woman cast the spell. The egg is then buried. This will serve also as a treatment in case the person who cast the evil eye is not found. If the person who cast the evil eye is found, he need only touch the patient to effect a quick recovery.

Another story related to the writer shows how much the people dread evil eye:

One time Geronimo took his wife to a dance. His wife, Maria, was a beautiful lady and she was expecting a baby. My cousin, Lionel, had a temptation to dance with the pregnant woman, but being a very shy person and being afraid to offend her husband, he did not ask Maria to dance with him. This happened just when Maria and her husband were going home from the dance hall. Before they reached home, Maria felt great pains and started vomiting persistently. Shortly after that she died as she had vomited her gall.*

There are some precautionary measures to take to prevent evil eye from taking effect. It is said that if the person wears a seed called "ojo de Venado," asabache, or red coral around his neck, evil eye will not affect him.

* Related by Mrs. Wenseslada Longoria, Edinburg, Texas.

To "curanderos," there is no such thing as appendicitis. To them it is the adhering of some foods, especially starches, to the wall of the stomach or the intestines. This malady affects the patient by his feeling slight spasmodic pains on either side of the stomach. If the malady is not combatted immediately, it will result in the patient's death. The patient loses his appetite, and begins to look anemic after prolonged affliction with this ailment.

The treatment for this is very simple. Roast and reduce to powder, then mix the following herbs: cactus roots, costomate, la punta de pila, la golondrina, swallow herb, el estafiate, and el ojase. The mixture is then added to milk in the amount of one teaspoonful to the glass. This treatment is followed by massaging the stomach, and then placing the patient's face down on a bed and stretching the spine to the tip. The spine cracks. After this treatment the patient is made to rest. Two hours after the treatment the patient is given castor oil. This treatment is continued for three days if necessary.

"Susto" is sickness resulting from sudden surprise, or caused by narrow escape. Many people are "asustadas," that is, they suffer a nervous disorder due to shock. The most common "sustos" are due to narrow escapes in drowning. Others, especially women, get "asustados" by witnessing a fight. Others become this way due to sudden news of a tragic event as the death of one of their dear

ones. Regardless of the cause of the shock, the symptoms are the same. Inasmuch as they are very similar to those of evil eye, it is hard to distinguish between the two. Many times the patient has no fever, but loses his appetite. He gradually wastes away, looking anemic and more like a corpse than a living creature. At the signs of fever, the patient is treated with "peyote" (a certain kind of cactus), peeled and sliced. This is spread over the head of the patient, who is then given a tea made of "orejas de raton" (an herb called "mouse ears").

In the treatment of tuberculosis, layers of maguay are barbecued, peeled and sliced. The patient eats it and drinks "agua miel" early every morning. This treatment is given to the patient regularly for nine months.

In treating nervousness, one must gather all papers from the four corners of the room and build a fire, make the patient jump it three times and then sweep him with a broom. He is given a tea made from "yerba aniz," or anise seed. Add sand dug from a cross road and a piece of scarlet material and rings. After that give him a hot bath. Make him sweat and allow no draft.

One "curandero" told a woman who went to him for nervousness that there was nothing wrong except that she had a dead mouse in her kidney. How it got there, he did not tell her.

Also another "curandero" told an old man who was dying of tuberculosis to walk straight north until he came to a

goat corral. He was not to go through the gate, but to go over the fence, stay there and let his family bring his food. He was not to leave there until he was cured. As a result, he died in three days.

An advocated treatment for boils and other skin diseases is to apply either cattle waste or human waste directly upon the boil. It will cause a boil to rise to a head in only a few hours, it is said.

Social Attitudes

As could be expected in a backward community, social attitudes are in keeping with the traditional customs of the people. Close association between the opposite sexes is looked upon as something unholy. One does not find the men and women of the communities of Starr County associating except at dances and through correspondence. When they marry, their social lives are completely shut away from the remainder of the community. The woman does not go to any social activities except with her husband. The husband most of the time associates with members of his own sex on drinking parties. One finds that many of the married couples have not had the chance to associate with their future mates and have had no opportunity for acquaintance except through correspondence. Divorce is practically unheard of.

The young girls are as a rule chaperoned to dances and to other social affairs by their mothers or aunts.

Dancing is their only contact with members of the opposite sex. A girl will be called "no-good" if she should go riding with a man. Even the simple pleasures of a motion picture are not permitted. Many a girl meets her boy friend at the show without her parents knowledge. There are times also when the girl leaves home ostensibly to go to the show, but meets her boy friend elsewhere.

The home life and social restrictions toward women are inherited from the Spanish ancestors, who were at one time the aristocracy and ruling class of Mexico. Nowhere is the love of home stronger than among these peoples. There may be no such word as home in his vocabulary, but the "casa," or house, of the Mexican is his castle and he protects it in every way from prying eyes.⁵

The Mexican men are passionate admirers of the fair sex. Domestic freedom in the sense understood by the Americans is absent. The daughters are closely watched by their mothers. In their estimation, the men do not deserve any confidence until they are married.

In the home, the father is absolute lord and master, and all bow to him. There never comes a time when the children are not subject more or less to parental authority. Harmony does not always exist. Where quarrels and family

⁵Virgil N. Lott, Scrapbook, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas, pages unnumbered.

dissensions do occur, the pride and jealousy of the race render them the bitterest and fiercest in the world. Sometimes a man and his wife will live together beneath the same roof without speaking.⁶

It is the custom of the people to celebrate Christmas and New Year's Eve. Most of them look forward to these two great days with great enthusiasm. Some of the people in the community, the most sociable, fatten pigs and kill them Christmas Day and New Year's Day. They serve tamales after midnight mass to their friends. They all enjoy a few drinks together until twelve, go to mass, and return to eat the tamales. As a general rule, in the younger set of these groups of friends, one finds an equal number of boys and girls invited. Each boy is permitted to pick at random the name of a girl. The boy calls the girl his "comadre" and the girl calls the boy her "compadre." They are supposed to send each other gifts shortly after New Year.

The foregoing wholesome social activities are the custom among the more intelligent class. There is, however, a great number of people who, due to ignorance, occupy a very low level in social behavior. The peace officers in the county are very few. In one community of about three thousand, there is only a Justice of the Peace and one constable. It is hard for these two to keep order. The

⁶Ibid.

constable has to furnish his own car and pay expenses to go from place to place. The peace officer often finds himself opposed by those in power so that convictions do not often follow arrests. In many cases where a wrongdoer is taken to court, some high official who happens to be a friend of the accused is instrumental in having the court grant leniency.

Juvenile delinquency also exists. The boys pride themselves in being seen with a bottle in their hands, going to the other fellow's yard and stealing chickens to cook and eat after they have drunk all they want. Many times the parents encourage the children to do these things. In so doing, they will be "hombres" (meaning "brave men"). Many times the officer drinks with these young boys in order to obtain a free drink.

CHAPTER IV

HEALTH STATUS OF STARR COUNTY

The nation's health is measured primarily by mortality statistics. The United States has little in the way of accurate morbidity statistics. On the basis of official figures published by the United States Bureau of Census, there can be no doubt that the nation's health has been steadily improving, but on the basis of these same rates it is equally certain that there is room for more improvement.¹

One hundred cases were chosen at random from the deaths of Starr County for each of three decades: 1910 to 1920; 1920 to 1930; and 1930 to 1940. The samples were chosen in order to get a general view of the causes of deaths in Starr County.²

The samples chosen were from accumulated death records, and no particular age groups were involved.

The following tables give these death causes from the 100 deaths selected at random for each given decade.

¹American Association of School Administrators, Health in Schools, Washington, D. C., National Education Association, 1942, p. 9.

²Death Records, County Courthouse, 1910 through 1940. Picked at random.

TABLE 1

DEATH CAUSES AS FOUND FROM 100 DEATHS SELECTED
AT RANDOM FROM THE TOTAL DEATHS REPORTED IN
STARR COUNTY BETWEEN 1910-1920

Cause	Number
Typhoid	2
Tetanus	7
Tuberculosis	7
Old Age	6
Heart Trouble	14
Suicide	1
Cancer	2
Fever	18
Accidents	8
Childbirth	3
Meningitis	1
Blood Poisoning	1
Appendicitis	6
Apoplexy	2
Hepatitis	1
Bronchitis	1
Hemorrhage	1
All Others	19

In Table 1, the causes of deaths in the decade 1910-1920 show two were from typhoid, seven from tetanus, seven from tuberculosis, six from old age, fourteen from heart trouble, one from suicide, two from cancer, eighteen from fever, eight from accidents, three from childbirth, one from meningitis, one from blood poisoning, six from appendicitis, two from apoplexy, one from hepatitis, one from bronchitis, one from hemorrhage, and nineteen from various other diseases. The type of fever in a majority of cases was not specified, but the writer learned through inquiries of the local doctors, the public welfare worker and old timers, that the fever was most likely typhoid or undulant,

caused from impure water and milk.

TABLE 2

DEATH CAUSES AS FOUND FROM 100 DEATHS SELECTED
AT RANDOM FROM THE TOTAL DEATHS REPORTED IN
STARR COUNTY BETWEEN 1920-1930

Cause	Number
Malaria	7
Myocarditis	2
Rabid Fever	17
Pneumonia	9
Throat Disease	1
Arterial Sclerosis	1
Old Age	6
Cerebral Hemorrhage	2
Poison	2
Influenza	9
Tuberculosis	6
Indocarditis	2
Nephritis	2
Stillborn	3
Hernia.	1
Diarrhea	2
Heart Trouble	6
Bright's Disease	1
All Others.	21

In the decade from 1920 to 1930, the one hundred cases picked at random showed seven deaths from malaria, two from myocarditis, seventeen from rabid fever, none from pneumonia, one from throat disease, one from arterial sclerosis, six from old age, two from cerebral hemorrhage, two from poison, nine from influenza, six from tuberculosis, two from indocarditis, two from nephritis, three stillborn, one hernia, two from diarrhea, six from heart trouble, one from Bright's disease, and twenty-one from all other causes. There was a high percentage of accidental deaths due to the numerous

family and political feuds. Stabbings under such conditions were usually listed as accidental deaths.

TABLE 3

DEATH CAUSES AS FOUND FROM 100 DEATHS SELECTED
AT RANDOM FROM THE TOTAL DEATHS REPORTED IN
STARR COUNTY BETWEEN 1930-1940

Cause	Number
Gastro-intestinal	4
intoxication	
Interior Colitis	2
Pneumonia	10
Influenza	6
Gangrene	1
Tuberculosis	11
Accidental Death	6
Fever	10
Heart Trouble	7
Stillborn	2
Old Age	5
Myocarditis	5
Dysentery	2
Anemia	3
Cerebral Hemorrhage	4
Syphilis	2
Diphtheria	1
Apoplexy.	1
Diarrhea	1
All Others	17

In the decade from 1930 to 1940, the one hundred cases picked at random showed four deaths due to gastro-intestinal intoxication, two from interior colitis, ten from pneumonia, six from influenza, one from gangrene, eleven from tuberculosis, six from accidental death, ten from fever, seven from heart trouble, two were stillborn, five from old age, five from myocarditis, two from dysentery, three from

anemia, four from cerebral hemorrhage, two from syphilis, one from diphtheria, one from apoplexy, one from diarrhea, and seventeen from all others. This increase in the tuberculosis rate might possibly be due to the fact that the years 1932 and 1933 correspond to the period of the greatest economic depression in Texas. According to the Texas Tuberculosis Morbidity and Mortality, 1938, published by the Texas State Department of Health in 1940;

The most satisfactory explanation of the increased number of cases of tuberculosis reported occurred as a result of organization of the Health Department, in which an Epidemiologist was used and greater emphasis was placed upon the reporting of diseases.³

The high percentage in the pneumonia death rate might possibly be due to the many houses poorly constructed against winter weather. A large percent of the country homes do not have any means of heat in them other than the chimney or campfire in which meals are cooked. When they get enough money from their labor, they do not try to improve their small homes for greater comfort.

Table 4 gives the causes for each decade in a form that may be more closely compared. The percentage of causes for the 100 deaths in each decade has been found to vary. No one disease was found to have been the cause of the same percentage of deaths in the three decades.

³Texas Tuberculosis Morbidity and Mortality, 1938, Texas State Department of Health, 1940.

TABLE 4

COMPARISON OF DEATH CAUSES AS FOUND THROUGH 100 CASES
CHOSEN AT RANDOM FOR EACH OF THREE TEN-YEAR PERIODS

Disease	1910-1920	1920-1930	1930-1940
Accidental & Suicide ..	9%	0%	6%
Anemia	0%	0%	3%
Apoplexy	2%	0%	0%
Appendicitis	6%	0%	1%
Arterial Sclerosis	0%	1%	0%
Blood Poisoning	1%	0%	0%
Bright's Disease	0%	1%	0%
Bronchitis	1%	0%	0%
Cancer	2%	0%	0%
Cerebral Hemorrhage ...	0%	2%	4%
Childbirth & Stillborn.	3%	3%	2%
Diarrhea	0%	2%	1%
Diphtheria	0%	0%	1%
Dysentery	0%	0%	2%
Fever	18%	0%	10%
Gangrene	0%	0%	1%
Gastro-Intestinal			
Intoxication	0%	0%	4%
Heart Trouble	14%	6%	7%
Hemorrhage	1%	0%	0%
Hepatitis	1%	0%	0%
Hernia	0%	1%	0%
Indocarditis	0%	2%	0%
Influenza	0%	9%	6%
Interior Colitis	0%	0%	2%
Malaria	0%	7%	0%
Meningitis	1%	0%	0%
Myocarditis	0%	2%	5%
Nephritis	0%	2%	0%
Old Age	6%	6%	5%
Pneumonia	0%	9%	10%
Poison	0%	2%	0%
Rabid Fever	0%	17%	0%
Syphilis	0%	0%	2%
Tetanus	7%	0%	0%
Throat Disease	0%	1%	0%
Tuberculosis	7%	6%	11%
Typhoid	2%	0%	0%
All Others	19%	21%	17%

Although there is a natural environment which induces good health, Starr County has always been retarded in its health development. During the early days when transportation was slow and the people lived a great distance from the largest town in the county, Rio Grande City, they had to depend on "curanderos." The latter knew the different uses of herbs and prescribed a few sensible but more non-sensible remedies to all the persons who went to them with different ailments.

Starr County, like most of the counties along the lower river, is hilly and well drained. Its climate is almost perfect and its health record as related to geographic and climatic conditions should compare with localities having similar natural resources. Pure air, good water, good drainage are imperative natural resources for healthful environment. The people of Starr County have lived simply and cleanly for two centuries in this naturally healthful environment.

The outstanding virtue of the valley is its health-inducing and disease-inhibiting properties found in its equable climate, sun-rayed citrus fruits, vegetables and dairy products.⁴

Solar rays available in an unlimited quantity are found in the valley and may be utilized almost every day

⁴Virgil N. Lott, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas, Scrapbook, Unpublished, pages unnumbered.

in the year. In infections, sunlight, if employed discriminately, is a curative measure. For many years the beneficial effects of the solar rays have been accepted by physicians and more especially are they being recognized in the treatment of tuberculosis of the joints, bone, lymphatic glands, and the skin.⁵

Many bacterial diseases have in the past been less severe due to abundant sunlight. Scarlet fever, which is almost always followed by dreaded complications, seldom occurs in Starr County. According to the deaths picked at random shown on the death charts, there was not a single death from scarlet fever.⁶ Mild diseases which have occurred only frequently are measles, whooping cough, smallpox, diphtheria, and lobar and bronchial pneumonia.⁷

Other diseases which have been believed to be favorably influenced with modified symptoms due to the climate are chronic heart conditions, high blood pressure, nephritis, rheumatism, asthma, bronchitis, sinus infection, and pleurisy. There are very few cases of goitre. Cancer is seldom seen, especially in the organs peculiar to women. Even though the weather provides so much sunshine, there has not been a single case of heat stroke recorded.⁸

⁵Ibid.

⁶See page 63 of this thesis.

⁷Virgil N. Lott, Border Patrolman, Roma, Texas, Scrapbook, Unpublished, pages unnumbered.

⁸Ibid.

Most of the older Starr County ranchers lived to a ripe old age. They succeeded in doing so simply because they were provided on the frontier with plenty of sunshine, pure air, and natural means of subsistence so essential to their well-being such as beans, mescal (cheap Mexican liquor), goat meat, and the tender leaves of the Mesquite tree. A handful of tortillas at each meal with black coffee to wash them down, and living in the out-of-doors the year round.⁹ This is believed to be the explanation of why many old people have always been seen along the river front.

Virgil N. Lott explains in his article on "What Explains Long Life Among the Mexican People,"

Don Albino, over ninety years of age, has his eyesight yet, and his teeth are today as sound as they were fifty years ago, and just as white and gleaming as polished marble, a polish applied by the constant application of "masa" (ground corn soaked in lime), which goes into the making of "tortillas."¹⁰

However, on the other hand, there are the same illnesses among the people of Starr County that exist elsewhere. There has always been a high percentage of tuberculosis among these people. Reasons for this are advanced in Volume XXII of The Chaser:

The great tuberculosis mortality among persons of Mexican extraction in the United States, which some authorities attribute to a racial predisposition,

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

is due to extreme poverty among immigrants, exceedingly bad housing, lack of health education, their position as foreigners and dangerous trades in which they work.¹¹

Stressing the need of a broader health education program among Mexican residents of the State of Texas, Dr. J. B. McKnight, superintendent and medical director of the State Tuberculosis among Latin-Americans, was twenty-five years behind the antituberculosis campaign for other citizens of the State.¹²

It has been estimated that there are approximately 12,000 cases of tuberculosis among the Mexicans in Texas.¹³ According to the death records of Starr County, there have been a number of deaths from the illness. These people are often unwilling to discuss their health with welfare workers or public nurses. They will go to a doctor only in the last stages of any sickness. For example, a certain welfare worker was making a routine home visit and found one of the members, the father, ill from tuberculosis. This welfare worker insisted that the man let him apply to the State Sanatorium for entrance. This man refused. A year later the welfare worker was called to his home and the father asked the worker to please make application at once for his admission to the Sanatorium. The worker could

¹¹The Chaser, Newspaper Published at State Sanatorium, Sanatorium, Texas, Vol. XXII.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Ibid.

see that the man was unable to make the trip, and too, it would take some time for his application to be accepted. The man died the next day. This is only one example of the Mexican not wanting to admit his health needs.

The mortality rate of Starr County has been compared to the mortality rate in the State of Texas as a whole. The mortality rate by selected causes was based upon an estimated population of 100,000. The last United States Census, taken in 1940, lists Starr County as having 13,312 population. For purposes of comparison, the number of deaths in Starr County from each selected cause was multiplied by 7.5 to place this rate on a basis of 100,000 -- 100,000 being 7.5 times as great as the total population of Starr County. The figures listed in Tables 5 through 11 will give the comparison of death causes in Starr County and in the entire State of Texas. It should be understood that the figures given for the death rates in Starr County are hypothetical in that they are a statistical extension of the actual death rate. This extension has been made so as to place the death causes of Starr County on a basis of 100,000 population.

A study of the tables will reveal that the death rate in Starr County of tuberculosis, influenza, pneumonia, and diarrhea greatly surpassed the death rate for 100,000 in the State of Texas. Death from these causes can usually be prevented with proper medical attention and healthful

living conditions. It is likely that the traditional distrust of medical service felt by the people of Starr County is directly related to these high death rates.

In general, there has been improvement in the death rates in the last five years. World War II, which occurred during this five-year period, probably influenced the people toward improved health knowledge and relations with medical service through the training received by young men in the armed forces.

TABLE 5

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES PER 100,000* FOR 1940

Estimated Population	<u>Texas</u>		<u>Starr County</u>	
	6,423,312		13,312	
Cause	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	62,503	973.1	141	1057.5
Typhoid fever	216	3.4	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	3,797	59.1	12	90.0
Dysentery	646	10.0	1	7.5
Diarrhea and enteritis - 2 years	1,954	30.4	12	90.0
Diarrhea and enteritis 2 years /	412	6.4	1	7.5
Malaria	175	2.7	1	7.5
Influenza	1,729	26.9	15	112.5
Cancer	5,052	78.7	2	15.0
Heart Disease	11,981	186.5	18	135.0
Pneumonia	3,611	56.2	9	67.5
All Accidents	4,624	72.0	4	30.0
All other Causes	15,140	235.7	65	487.5

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the 6,423,312 estimated population in the State of Texas, for 1940, there were 62,503 deaths, with the rate of 973.1. The following death causes selected with the rate of each are: typhoid fever 216, rate 3.4; tuberculosis 3,797, rate 59.1; dysentery 646, rate 10.0; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 1,954, rate 30.4; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 412, rate 6.4; malaria 175, rate 2.7; influenza 1,729, rate 26.9; cancer 5,052, rate 78.7; heart disease 11,981, rate 186.5; pneumonia 3,611, rate 56.2; all accidents 4,624, rate 72.0; all other causes 15,140, rate 235.7.

Of the foregoing 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1940, there were reported 141 deaths with a rate of 1057.5 when placed on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: typhoid fever 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 12, rate 90.0; dysentery 1, rate 7.5; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 12, rate 90.0; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 1, rate 7.5; malaria 1, rate 7.5; influenza 15, rate 112.5; cancer 2, rate 15; heart disease 18, rate 135; pneumonia 9, rate 67.5; all accidents 4, rate 30; all other causes 65, rate 487.5.

TABLE 6

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES
PER 100,000* FOR 1941

Estimated Population	Texas		Starr County	
	6,423,312		13,312	
Cause	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	60,474	917	112	830.0
Diphtheria	158	2.4	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	3,684	55.9	12	90.0
Dysentery	339	5.1	2	15.0
Diarrhea and enteritis -2 years .	1,062	16.1	9	67.5
Diarrhea and enteritis, 2 years/	246	3.7	2	15.0
Malaria	156	2.4	1	7.5
Influenza	1,930	29.3	11	82.5
Measles	79	1.2	1	7.5
Cancer	5,200	78.9	7	52.5
Heart Disease	12,420	188.5	10	75.0
Pneumonia	3,288	49.9	8	60.0
Suicide	645	9.8	1	7.5
All Accidents	4,885	74.1	8	60.0
All Other Causes	14,818	224.9	40	300.0

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the foregoing 6,423,312 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1941, there were 60,474 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 917. The following selected death causes with the rate of each cause are: diphtheria 158, rate 2.4; tuberculosis 3,684, rate 55.9; dysentery 339, rate 5.1; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 1,062, rate 16.1; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age, 246, rate 3.7; malaria 156, rate 2.4; influenza, 1,930, rate

29.3; measles 79, rate 1.2; cancer 5,200, rate 78.9; heart disease 12,420, rate 188.5; pneumonia 3,288, rate 49.9; suicide 645, rate 9.8; all accidents 4,885, rate 74.1; all other causes 14,818, rate 224.9.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1941, there were 112 deaths with the rate of 830.0 when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: diphtheria 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 12, rate 90.0; dysentery 2, rate 15.0; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 9, rate 67.5; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 2, rate 15.0; malaria 1, rate 7.5; influenza 11, rate 82.5; measles 1, rate 7.5; cancer 7, rate 52.5; heart disease 10, rate 75.0; pneumonia 8, rate 60.0; suicide 1, rate 7.5; all accidents 8, rate 60.0; all other causes 40, rate 300.0.

TABLE 7

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES
PER 100,000 FOR 1942*

Estimated Population	<u>Texas</u>		<u>Starr County</u>	
	6,689,396		13,312	
Cause	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	59,068	883.0	115	862.5
Typhoid Fever	91	1.4	1	7.5
Diphtheria	158	2.4	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	3,568	53.3	13	97.5
Dysentery	374	5.2	2	15.0
Diarrhea and enteritis -2 years .	1,194	17.8	5	37.5
Diarrhea and enteritis, 2 years/.	386	5.8	4	30.0
Influenza	885	13.2	3	22.5
Cancer	5,405	80.8	2	15.0
Heart Disease	12,647	189.1	9	67.5
Pneumonia	2,779	41.5	13	97.5
Nephritis	3,964	59.3	4	30.0
Suicide	640	9.6	2	15.0
All Accidents	4,722	70.6	8	60.0
All Other Causes	14,419	215.6	47	352.5

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the 6,689,396 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1942, there were 59,068 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 883.0. The following selected death causes with the rate of each cause are: typhoid fever 91, rate 1.4; diphtheria 158, rate 2.4; tuberculosis 3,568, rate 53.3; dysentery 374, rate 5.2; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 1,194, rate 17.8; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 386, rate 13.2; cancer 5,405, rate 80.8; heart disease 12,647, rate 189.1; pneumonia 2,779; rate 41.5; nephritis 3,964, rate 59.3; suicide 640, rate 9.6; all acci-

dents 4,722, rate 70.6; all other causes 14,419, rate 215.6.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1942, there were 115 deaths with the rate of 862.5, when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: typhoid fever 1, rate 7.5; diphtheria 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 13, rate 97.5; dysentery 2, rate 15.0; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 5, rate 37.5; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 4, rate 30.0; influenza 3, rate 22.5; cancer 2, rate 15.0; heart disease 9, rate 67.5; pneumonia 13, rate 97.5; nephritis 4, rate 30.0; suicide 2, rate 15.0; all accidents 8, rate 60; all other causes 47, rate 352.5.

TABLE 8

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES PER 100,000 FOR 1943*

Estimated Population	Texas		Starr County	
	6,942,770		13,312	
Cause	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	61,807	890.2	100	750.0
Whooping cough	268	3.9	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	3,287	47.3	10	75.0
Diarrhea and enteritis - 2 years.	1,394	20.1	6	45.0
Diarrhea and enteritis, 2 years/.	403	5.8	3	22.5
Malaria	55	0.8	1	7.5
Influenza	922	13.3	2	15.0
Cancer	5,557	80.0	5	37.5
Heart Disease	13,115	188.9	4	30.0
Pneumonia	2,840	40.9	6	45.0
All Accidents	5,555	80.0	5	37.5
All Other Causes	15,294	220.3	57	427.5

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the foregoing 6,942,770 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1943, there were 61,807 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 890.2. The following selected death causes with the rate of each cause are: whooping cough 268, rate 3.9; tuberculosis 3,287, rate 47.3; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 1,394, rate 20.1; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 403, rate 5.8; malaria 55, rate 0.8; influenza 922, rate 13.3; cancer 5,557, rate 80.0; heart disease 13,115, rate 188.9; pneumonia 2,840, rate 40.9; all accidents 5,555, rate 80; all other causes 15,294, rate 220.3.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1943, there were 100 deaths with the rate of 750.0, when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: whooping cough 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 10, rate 75.0; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 6, rate 45.0; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 3, rate 22.5; malaria 1, rate 7.5; influenza 2, rate 15.0; cancer 5, rate 37.5; heart disease 4, rate 30.0; pneumonia 6, rate 45.0; all accidents 5, rate 37.5; all other causes 57, rate 427.5.

TABLE 9

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES
PER 100,000 FOR 1944*

Estimated Population	<u>Texas</u>		<u>Starr County</u>	
	6,835,480		13,312	
Cause	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	61,239	895.5	101	757.0
Typhoid fever	75	1.1	2	15.0
Whooping cough	94	1.4	1	7.5
Diphtheria	132	1.9	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	3,065	44.8	8	60.0
Dysentery.....	441	6.4	1	7.5
Diarrhea and enteritis -2 years.	1,531	22.4	10	75.0
Diarrhea and enteritis, 2 years/	367	5.4	2	15.0
Influenza	1,217	17.8	3	22.5
Measles	181	2.6	2	15.0
Cancer	5,626	82.3	2	15.0
Diabetes Metities....	1,000	14.6	2	15.0
Heart Disease	13,328	194.9	4	30.0
Pneumonia.....	2,959	43.3	12	90.0
Nephritis	3,809	55.7	2	15.0
All accidents	5,304	77.6	5	37.5
All other causes	15,027	219.7	38	285.0

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained
from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the 6,835,480 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1944, there were 61,239 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 895.5. The following selected death causes with the rate of each cause are: typhoid fever, 75, rate 1.1; whooping cough 94, rate 1.4; diphtheria 132, rate 1.9; tuberculosis 3,065, rate 44.8; dysentery 441, rate 6.4; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age, 1,531, rate 22.4; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 367, rate 5.4; influenza 1,217, rate 17.8; measles 181, rate 2.6; cancer 5,626, rate 82.3; diabetes metities 1000, rate 14.6; heart disease 13,328, rate 194.9; pneumonia 2,959, rate 43.3; nephritis 3,809, rate 55.7; all accidents 5,304, rate 77.6; all other causes 15,027, rate 219.7.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1944, there were 101 deaths with the rate of 757.0 when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: typhoid fever 2, rate 15.0; whooping cough 1, rate 7.5; diphtheria 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 8, rate 60.0; dysentery 1, rate 7.5; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 10, rate 75.0; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 2, rate 15.0; influenza 3, rate 22.5; measles 2, rate 15.0; cancer 2, rate 15.0; diabetes metities 2, rate 15.0; heart disease 4, rate 30.0; pneumonia 12, rate 90.0; nephritis 2, rate 15.0; all accidents 5, rate 37.5; all other causes 38, rate 285.0.

TABLE 10

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES
PER 100,000 FOR 1945*

Estimated Population	<u>Texas</u> 6,835,480		<u>Starr County</u> 13,312	
	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	58,628	875.4	73	547.5
Tuberculosis	2,923	43.6	11	82.5
Diarrhea and enteritis -2 years.	1,192	17.8	7	52.5
Diarrhea and enteritis, 2 years/	249	3.7	2	15.0
Syphilis	693	10.3	3	22.5
Cancer.....	5,948	88.8	2	15.0
Heart Disease	13,060	195.0	5	37.5
Pneumonia	2,557	38.2	5	37.5
Nephritis	3,430	51.2	3	22.5
Motor Vehicle Accidents	1,517	22.7	4	28.0
Other Accidents	3,633	54.2	7	52.5
All Other Causes	14,441	215.6	24	180.0

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the 6,835,480 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1945, there were 58,628 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 875.4. The following selected death causes with the rate of each are: tuberculosis 2,923, rate 43.6; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 1,192, rate 17.8; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 249, rate 3.7; syphilis 693, rate 10.3; cancer 5,948, rate 88.8; heart disease 13,060, rate 195.0; pneumonia 2,557, rate 38.2; nephritis 3,430, rate 51.2; motor vehicle accidents 1,517, rate 22.7; other accidents 3,633, rate 54.2; all other causes 14,441, rate 215.6.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County of 1945, there were 73 deaths with the rate of 547.5 when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: tuberculosis 11, rate 82.5; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 7, rate 52.5; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 2, rate 15.0; syphilis 3, rate 22.5; cancer 2, rate 15.0; heart disease 5, rate 37.5; pneumonia 5, rate 37.5; nephritis 3, rate 22.5; motor vehicle accidents 4, rate 28.0; other accidents 7, rate 52.5; all other causes 24, rate 180.0.

TABLE 11

THE MORTALITY OF STARR COUNTY COMPARED TO THE MORTALITY
OF THE STATE OF TEXAS, FROM SELECTED CAUSES, RATES
PER 100,000 FOR 1946*

Estimated Population	<u>Texas</u> 6,835,480		<u>Starr County</u> 13,312	
	Deaths	Rates	Deaths	Rates
All Causes	59,533	855.4	98	73.5
Typhoid Fever	48	0.7	1	7.5
Whooping Cough	89	1.3	1	7.5
Tuberculosis	2,842	40.8	7	4.9
Dysentery	254	3.6	1	7.5
Diarrhea and Enteritis -2 years.	844	12.1	4	30.0
Diarrhea and Enteritis, 2 years/	209	3.0	1	7.5
Syphilis	638	9.2	5	37.5
Influenza	631	9.1	1	7.5
Cancer	6,343	91.1	3	22.5
Diabetes Mellitis	909	13.1	1	7.5
Heart Disease	14,076	202.3	8	60.0
Pneumonia	2,499	35.9	8	60.0
Nephritis	3,236	46.5	1	7.5
All Accidents	5,135	73.8	11	82.5
All Other Causes	14,662	210.7	45	337.5

*These figures were taken from mortality records obtained
from the Texas State Department of Health.

Of the 6,835,480 estimated population in the State of Texas in 1946, there were 59,533 deaths per 100,000 with the rate of 855.4. The following selected death causes with the rate of each are: typhoid fever 48, rate 0.7; whooping cough 89, rate 1.3; tuberculosis 2,842, rate 40.8; dysentery 254, rate 3.6; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 844, rate 12.1; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 209, rate 3.0; syphilis 638, rate 9.2; influenza 631, rate 9.1; cancer 6,343, rate 91.1; diabetes mellitis 909, rate 13.1; heart disease 14,076, rate 202.3; pneumonia 2,499, rate 35.9; nephritis 3,236, rate 46.5; all accidents 5,135; rate 73.8; all other causes 14,662, rate 210.7.

Of the 13,312 estimated population of Starr County for 1946, there were 98 deaths with the rate of 73.5 when estimated on the basis of the rate of 100,000 for the State of Texas. The death causes and rates are as follows: typhoid fever 1, rate 7.5; whooping cough 1, rate 7.5; tuberculosis 7, rate 4.9; dysentery 1, rate 7.5; diarrhea and enteritis under two years of age 4, rate 30.0; diarrhea and enteritis over two years of age 1, rate 7.5; syphilis 5, rate 37.5; influenza 1, rate 7.5; cancer 3, rate 22.5; diabetes mellitis 1, rate 7.5; heart disease 8, rate 60.0; pneumonia 8, rate 60.0; nephritis 1, rate 7.5; all accidents 11, rate 82.5; all other causes 45, rate 337.5.

Health Education

According to Florence J. Scott, former county school superintendent, health education in the schools was almost completely neglected at the time she became county superintendent in 1926. The children received no health instruction in the classes and the health conditions in the schools were very poor. The children knew nothing about health rules which are now taught in the schools. Even their physical education on the school ground was neglected. The children did not know how to play. Most of them would sit around alone or in groups while a few would attempt a game of baseball.

Florence J. Scott did much in the county schools toward including health as a subject in the curriculum. She did much toward developing the art of play on the playground, which was perhaps more important. Only within recent years have scheduled health and physical education classes been arranged. These classes now include baseball, volleyball, basketball, games and dancing. Previously, baseball was about all that the children knew existed, and they did not have the proper equipment with which to play even that one sport.

The health education of the parents was very limited. They had not taken any health instruction through the Red Cross or through county health nurses. Since there were so few doctors and practically no means of transportation,

aside from horses and wagons, their health knowledge was obtained almost entirely from "curanderos" and their knowledge of the use of herbs. There was one "curandero," Pedro Jaramillo, which the present older generation will long remember since he achieved more fame in this section of the country than did any other. The people are still following some of his practices because it was through him the older generation acquired the majority of its health teachings and practices.

According to information obtained from the State Health Department, there was a county health officer from about 1920 until September, 1936. From this date until November, 1947, there was no county health officer. The reporting of morbidity causes were practically none. One would believe that the lack of a county doctor during this eleven-year period is a good example of how insignificant even the county officials considered health and the prevention of diseases. There has not been at any time a county health nurse or any visiting nurses in the schools. Therefore, if the political leaders and leading citizens of the county do not consider county health officials of any importance, what chance would an educator or even a group of imported educators have in teaching authentic and scientific health practices?

There is one hospital for all of Starr County. This hospital can provide for approximately twenty patients.

It is privately owned. There is no free health clinic and certainly no county or city hospitals. What chance would the citizens of Starr County, Texas, have in combatting any epidemic?

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of this thesis has been to study the superstitions and customs of the people of Starr County, Texas, and to determine their effect on health practices. The writer has made a study of the geographic factors and social practices and has found they have a bearing on the lives of the people.

1. Geographically, Starr County, Texas, is located in the southern extremity of Texas and is bordered on the south by the Rio Grande River. The annual rainfall often falls below average, thus bringing complete crop failures. There are long warm summers and short, mild winters.

2. The first settlers of Starr County, Texas, were of Spanish origin. They later intermarried with the Indians, thus mingling the superstitions and customs of Spain with those of the Indian. Even though about seventy percent of the present population is termed Latin-American, they are American born, and the majority of them are now land owners.

3. Numerous social practices have been found to have important bearing on the health practices of the people of

Starr County.

a. The Spanish language is predominantly used. Even though official documents are now written in English a great percentage of the people carry on their business and personal conversations in Spanish. The parents are unaware of the handicaps to the health practices of their children that are due to language differences.

b. Although there have been political changes and upheavals, these have not altered the customs and traditions of the people. Because of a minority of Anglo-Americans in Starr County, political officials are of Latin-American extraction.

c. Numerous farmers whose properties are near the banks of the Rio Grande River have tried irrigation projects for their farms. Few have been successful. Ranching and farming have been the principle means of subsistence since the time of the early settlers of the county. A large per cent of the population consists of migratory workers. Entire families follow seasonal labor throughout the United States.

d. The early settlers of Starr County were pious, God-fearing people. They established places of worship and offered thanksgiving for their blessings. They are predominantly Roman Catholic. The women of the county today attend their religious duties with conscientious attitudes. Their children are well-trained in the principles of the

church. Many of the families even in the younger generation still place great faith in the healing power of certain shrines and relics.

e. Since early colonization, marriage has been held a most sacred institution. Following the solemn ceremony, marriage is celebrated with great zest and splendor. Numerous customs are respected and adhered to by the families of both the bride and the groom. After marriage the bride follows in the footsteps of her female ancestors -- she remains close to home and her only interests are her home and children.

f. Dancing has always been the dominant form of recreation. Public dances are held frequently and the girls are strictly chaperoned by their mothers. The male population celebrates any event or happening with intoxicating beverages. It is not considered harmful to their morals or to their health.

There are innumerable superstitions, customs and legends which concern health practices of the people of Starr County.

1. Birth superstitions cover the types of food eaten by the pregnant woman, moon phases, eclipses, medical treatments, her body cleanliness, shock and massage. There are also post-partum superstitions that have a bearing on the health of both the mother and the child. A large percent of babies are delivered by inexperienced midwives who cling to old traditions of childbirth. Illnesses of the newly-

born baby are often treated by administering teas made from certain herbs.

2. Death superstitions and customs affect all social and economic classes of people in Starr County. There is great faith in and devotion to the dead which often continue throughout the lives of those surviving. Recreation is not permitted until the end of a long mourning period, as it would be disrespectful to the deceased.

3. The majority of the population of Starr County have low incomes. Therefore, they live in cramped living quarters, and do not have sufficient facilities for proper eating, cleanliness and child care.

4. The father is head of the home and in many instances, his own pleasures are of greater importance than his family's comforts.

5. In a large per cent of instances, meals are served irregularly. There is not a great deal of deviation from the regular "Mexican foods" of corn "tortillas," rice, tomatoes, hot peppers, onions, garlic, meat, cheese, and an excessive amount of fat. During Lent fish, eggs and tender cactus leaves are important dishes.

6. Due to lack of transportation, the limited number of doctors in Starr County, and long distances to be travelled, the people resort to visiting "curanderos" for treatment of illnesses. These people have great faith in "curanderos," and are often willing to give their treasures for their advice and treatment.

7. Innumerable herbs are used in home remedies for treatment of the majority of common illnesses.

8. "Ojo," often misunderstood as "evil eye," is of great interest and is often feared by the people. They believe a person afflicted with "ojo" will be struck by great calamity almost immediately.

9. The social attitudes of the people are in keeping with the traditional customs. There are no close associations between members of the opposite sexes until after marriage. The fairer sex is then seldom permitted social activities because few are held in the homes. The daughters are closely guarded, but the sons are often permitted to go without guard, and are sometimes encouraged to participate in bold wrong-doings, thus causing juvenile delinquency.

Recommendations

As a result of the conclusions drawn from this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. A greater emphasis on public school instruction in authentic health practices.

2. Regular scheduled health classes in schools beginning in the first grade and continuing through high school should emphasize the importance of health in the training of the children.

3. Health education classes conducted in both English and Spanish for all adults throughout the county would give opportunity for the parents to become familiar with proper

health practices.

4. City and county health officers with sufficient medical facilities and assistants should provide the people with contacts and advice regarding the health problems.

5. Visiting nurses should give the expectant mothers the right sort of information regarding pre-natal care.

6. Follow-up visits after the births would provide the correct instruction until the child enters school.

7. Because dancing comprises the major part of the recreation of these people, an activity program of wide variety should be offered to meet the needs of both children and adults who now have limited social advantages. The results of such a program would in time be reflected in the improved health in each community.

APPENDIX

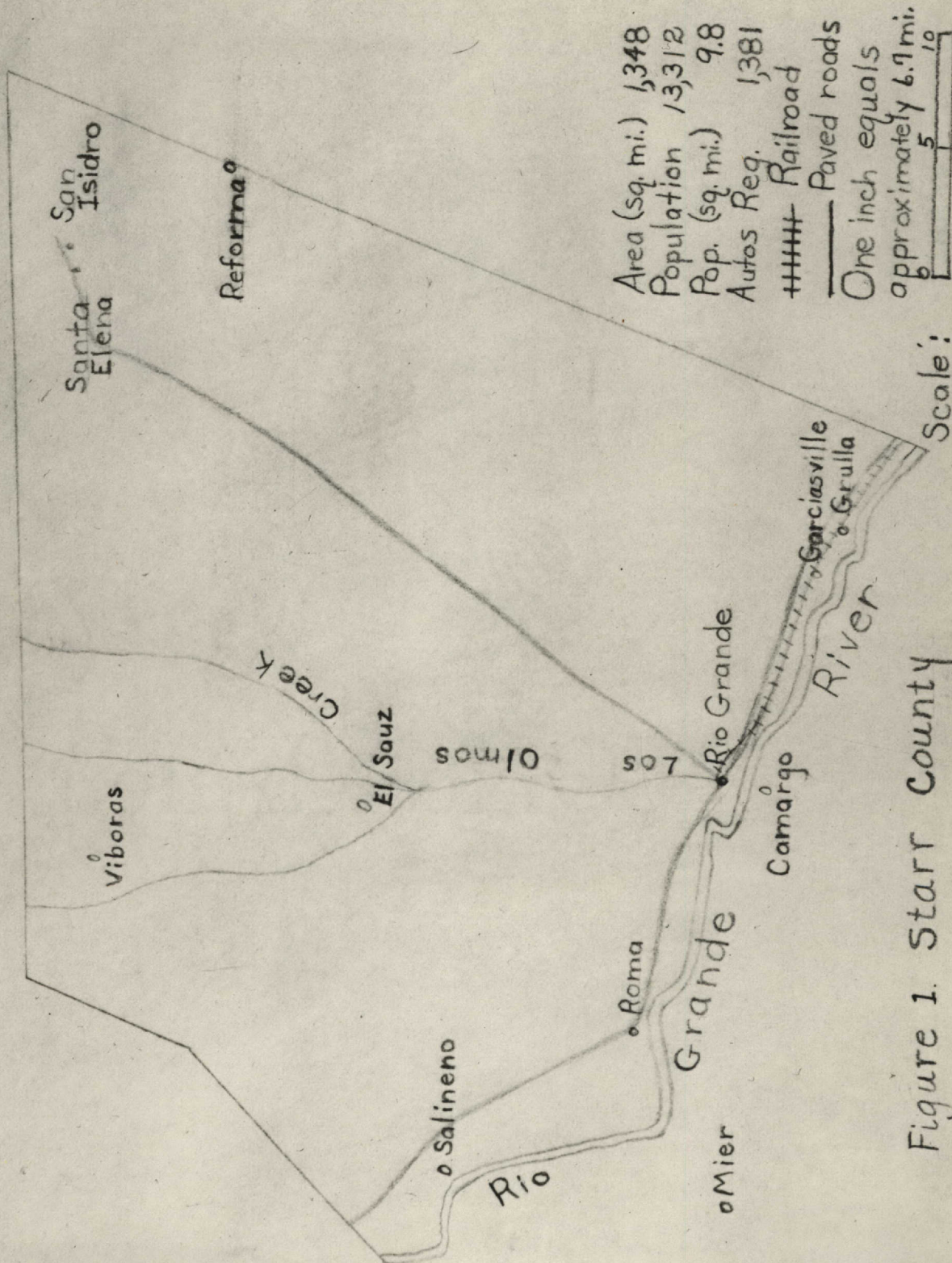


Figure 1. Starr County

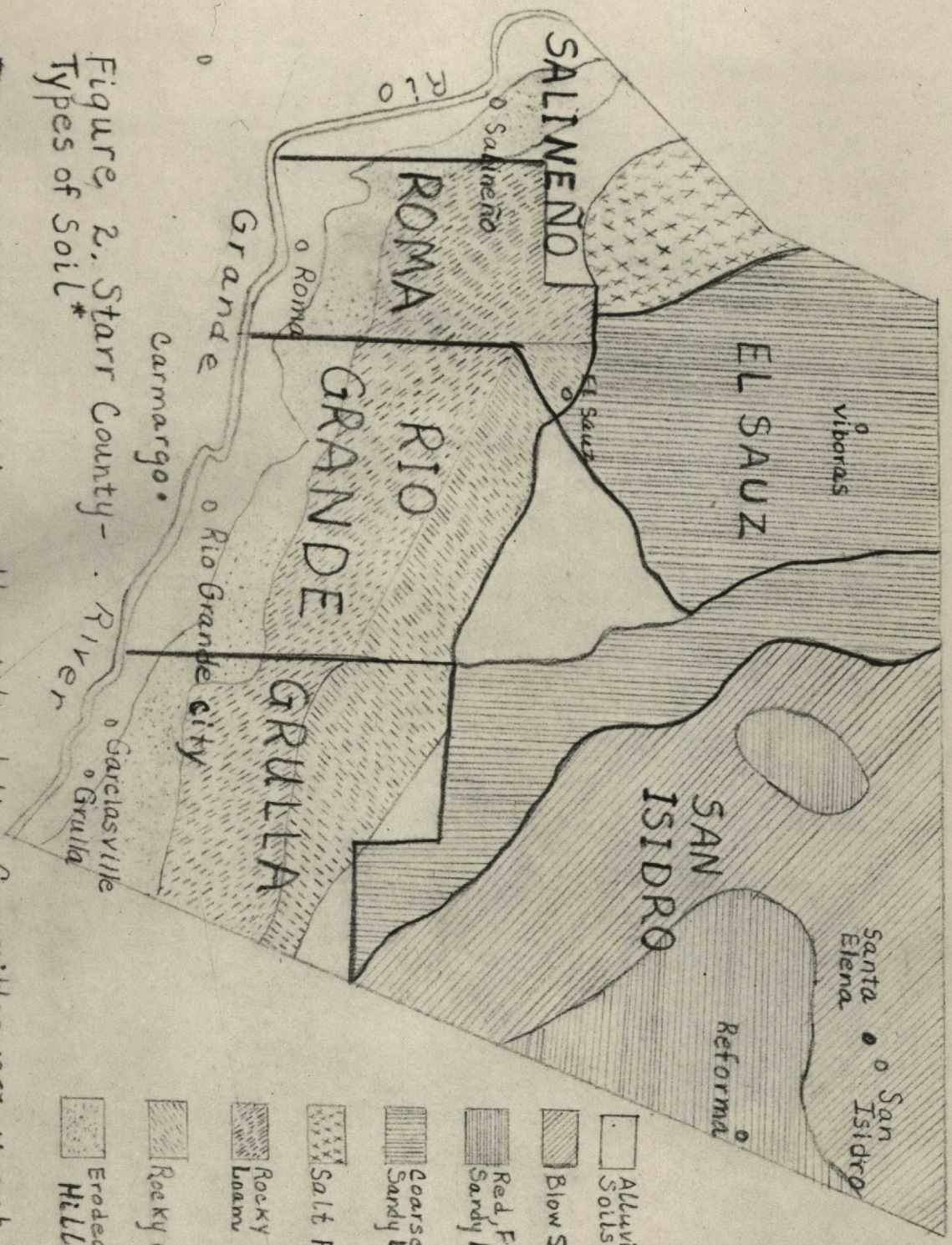










Figure 2. Starr County -
Types of Soil*

*Report of Starr County Agricultural Land Use Committee, 1943, Unpub.

-  Alluvial Soils
-  Blow Sand
-  Red, Fine Sandy Loam
-  Coarse, Sandy Loam
-  Salt Flat
-  Rocky Clay Loam
-  Rocky clay
-  Eroded Hills

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