

ANTONIO LÓPEZ FAMILY CEMETERY: APPLICATION NARRATIVE

I. CONTEXT

The Antonio López Family Cemetery (also known as San José Cemetery) is located in the rural community of San José, in South Texas' Duval County.^{1, 2} This sprawling enclave of Mexican-American ranching families sits roughly 15 miles southwest of the county seat of San Diego, infamous for the failed revolutionary plot known as the "Plan de San Diego" and the notorious corruption of George "Duke of Duval" Parr, whose political machine thrived on the favor curried (or coerced) from ranching families like those who are laid to rest in the cemetery.³ About 27 miles east of San José is a much more widely known Texas tract: the world-renowned King Ranch. San José also lies about seven miles due east of Benavides, a once-bustling hub now in decline that grew up around a Texas Mexican Railway station.

In continuous use for over a century, the Antonio López Family Cemetery is the final resting place of José Antonio López (known as Antonio), founder of San José, and his descendants. The cemetery is a rustic, lovingly curated family burial ground hewn out of the caliche rock and dense scrub brush and *nopal* (prickly pear cactus) that blankets Duval County. A well-preserved example of the *Tejano* (Mexican-American) experience in rural South Texas, the cemetery is adorned with statues of the *Virgen de Guadalupe* and other Catholic iconography, and dotted with grave markers and bilingual engravings that trace one family's lineage, economic ups and downs, military service, and transition from Spanish- to Spanglish- to dominant-English-speaking generations.

¹ "San Jose Cemetery," Google Maps, accessed 11/2/18, <https://goo.gl/maps/s6YFWBpeQwM2>.

² The cemetery is well within Duval County lines, despite Google Maps and the US Postal Service listing the area as Alice, Texas—a city about 30 miles northwest and in a different county (Jim Wells). To further complicate matters, San José residents attend school in and vote in San Diego elections—about 15 miles north—while their phone numbers are local to Benavides.

³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Don M. Coerver, "Plan Of San Diego," accessed 11/4/18, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/ngp04. Uploaded 6/15/10; modified 10/5/15. Texas State Historical Association.

Handbook of Texas Online, Evan Anders, "Parr, George Berham [1901-1975]," accessed 11/4/18, www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fpa36. Uploaded 6/15/10. Texas State Historical Association.

II. OVERVIEW

Antonio López (baptized June 14, 1830) and María de los Santos Gonzalez (known as Santos; baptized June 17, 1832) were married on August 17, 1853, in Miér, Tamaulipas, Mexico.^{4, 5} Antonio and Santos started their family in San Pedro, now known as Ciudad Miguél Alemán, Tamaulipas, Mexico. Then in 1866, with six children and dreams of establishing a homestead and ranch, they packed up and emigrated northeast roughly 130 miles to the sparsely settled Texas frontierland near present-day Alice in Jim Wells County.^{6, 7}

Antonio and Santos were enticed by stories of open pastureland and wild horses, free for the taking for anyone cunning enough to trap and tame them, and thriving *Tejano*-run ranches with large herds of sheep, goats, cattle, and horses.⁸ The area was near a region referred to as *los Llanos Mesteños* (the Wild Horse Plains, also called the Wild Horse Desert).⁹ By 1880, Duval County and neighboring Nueces County were home to over one million sheep—a count that the López contributed to—and nearby Corpus Christi was the nation's leading wool port.¹⁰ There would

⁴ Andrés López Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching in Duval County: The Family History of Ranchos San José and El Fresnillo*, (San Antonio: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1999), pp. xxi, 3.

⁵ The authors owe a great debt of gratitude to López descendant Andrés Sáenz, now deceased, and the exhaustive research reflected in his book, *Early Tejano Ranching*.

⁶ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 3.

⁷ Directions from Ciudad Miguél Alemán to Alice, Texas. Google Maps, <https://goo.gl/maps/DbyKcYnKG6C2>.

⁸ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 6.

⁹ “Kingsville to Raymondville: A Wild Horse Desert Turned Ranching Empire,” Texas Historical Commission, 2018, accessed 10/27/18, <http://texastropicaltrail.com/our-stories/kingsville-raymondville-wild-horse-desert-turned-ranching-empire>.

“Texas, Our Texas: Ecoregions of Texas,” Texas Education Agency, 2010, accessed 10/27/18, <https://2.files.edl.io/drsokhn5oQSjURuQtZZRvbxpUXv3Q5Z6APZgVPWxNTGhsgfS.pdf>, pp. 1, 8.

¹⁰ Alfredo Cardenas, “History of Duval County,” TxGenWebProject, circa 2012, accessed 11/4/18, http://sites.rootsweb.com/~txduval/duvalhist_cardenas.html.

Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. xiv.

David Moore, Martha Freeman, and Margarita Wuellner, “South Texas Ranching” Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT) Historical Studies Report No 2007-01, p. 17.

Murphy Givens, “The rise and fall of the sheep era in South Texas,” *Corpus Christi Caller-Times*, Sept. 2, 2009, <https://www.caller.com/story/news/2018/10/15/rise-and-fall-sheep-era-south-texas/1617990002/>.

also be familiar faces. Less than 20 years before, the area had still been considered part of Mexico (at least by Mexicans), until the Treaty of Guadalupe-Hidalgo officially relocated the border in 1848; plus, some of the ranching families had ties to the López' home state of Tamaulipas.¹¹

After a multi-day trek by horse and wagon (less than a three-hour drive today), the López family arrived at the busy Rancho Las Latas owned by the Vela brothers, whose father had been a neighbor to Antonio in Mexico.¹² Rancho Las Latas, just south of the present-day airport in Alice, Texas, would be the López family's base for roughly the next decade, as they amassed livestock and planned for a permanent settlement.¹³ Antonio first appears on Nueces County tax assessment rolls in 1869 as owning sheep, no land; by 1872, he is recorded as owning 35 horses, and by 1873, 65 horses and four cows.¹⁴

In 1875, Antonio finally acquired two tracts, nearly 1,300 acres, roughly 20 miles southwest of Rancho Las Latas and on the northern border of a large land grant known as Las Anacuas.¹⁵ It was there that Antonio would establish his homestead, Rancho San José, which would evolve into the present-day San José

Handbook of Texas Online, Martin Donell Kohout, "Duval County," accessed November 04, 2018, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hcd11>. Uploaded June 12, 2010; modified February 1, 2016. Texas State Historical Association.

¹¹ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 6.

¹² Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, pp. 4–6, 12.

¹³ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 6.

Texas General Land Office. Grants to Crisanto Vela in Jim Wells County: Abstract 486, File No. 279, Patent No. 474, Patent Vol. 7, August 9, 1876 (<http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/land-grants/landgrants.cfm?intID=162174>) and Abstract 63, File No. 307, Patent No. 288, Patent Vol. 15, Aug. 21, 1876 (<http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/land-grants/landgrants.cfm?intID=161749>).

"Latas Cemetery," Find A Grave, January, 2, 2000, accessed 11/2/18, <https://www.findagrave.com/cemetery/4763/latas-cemetery>.

¹⁴ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 7.

¹⁵ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 9.

Duval County Abstracts 586, 587; Duval County Clerk; Gen Index A; Vol B; pp. 520–521. Tracts transferred to Antonio López on January 28, 1875. Available via Texas General Land Office at http://www.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCS/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/8/8/6/886345.pdf and http://www.glo.texas.gov/ncu/SCANDOCS/archives_webfiles/arcmaps/webfiles/landgrants/PDFs/8/8/6/886346.pdf, respectively.

community.¹⁶ That same year, Antonio's listings on tax rolls included 500 sheep and 100 goats, along with 50 horses, and 15 cows.¹⁷

The López family's victory in finally securing their small piece of Texas was tragically marred by the matriarch's death, however. Santos was felled by a tumor sometime between 1878 and 1884 and is believed to have been buried at Rancho Las Latas.¹⁸ It is unclear how much time, if any, she spent on Rancho San José. Now well into his fifties, Antonio began a new chapter, developing Rancho San José with the help of some of his adult children who settled there with him, and remarrying in 1886 to Dominga Peña.¹⁹

On Christmas Eve of 1903, at age 72 or 73 after a long life of hard labor in Texas' wild lands, Antonio's heart finally gave out.^{20, 21} Having already passed on most of his land, Antonio's will divided his remaining 230 acres between his adult children and wife Dominga.²² Per family lore, each contributed a small portion of their inherited acreage to fulfill Antonio's wish of creating a family cemetery, and thus began the Antonio López Family Cemetery, with Antonio laid to rest at the southwest corner of Rancho San José.²³

Antonio López was a beloved patriarch with a penchant for reciting poetry. After his passing, one of his handwritten poems was found and mounted in a wooden case by his gravesite. Antonio's children lovingly rewrote the poem every

¹⁶ Why the name San José (Saint Joseph) was chosen for the ranch may be lost to history. Some research suggests that when the abutting tract Las Anacuas was granted to Vicente Ynojosa of Miér in 1836 by the Mexican government, it was referred to as Agostadero San José de las Anacuas. (See Homero Vera, "Agostadero San José De Las Anacuas," *El Mesteno*, March 2001: Vol. 4, Issue 42, pp. 8–9.) Whether this is a clue or just a coincidence is currently unknown.

¹⁷ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 9.

¹⁸ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 16–17.

¹⁹ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 15–16.

²⁰ Antonio's death certificate (see appendix) lists his age as 72 years, 2 months. However, the date of birth on his headstone is June 14, 1830, which would make him 73. The same date, June 14, 1830, is also cited as the date of baptism in Saenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. xxi.

²¹ Andres Sáenz, *Rancho de San Jose*, self-published precursor to book *Early Tejano Ranching*, circa 1987, p. 62.

²² These included six children plus an adopted child from his first marriage, and an adopted child from his second marriage.

²³ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 18–19.

time the paper faded—a tradition carried on through his great-grandchildren.²⁴ The case finally succumbed to the harsh South Texas elements about 10 years ago. The poem reads as a farewell:

<i>Aquí yace una existencia,</i>	Here lies an existence
<i>El que siete décadas tuvo</i>	That lasted seven decades
<i>Que la que a su lado estuvo,</i>	May the one who he had by his side,
<i>Adolorida por su ausencia,</i>	Grieved by his absence,
<i>Recoja el polvo y la esencia,</i>	Pick up the dust and the essence,
<i>Que su espíritu contuvo.</i>	That his spirit contained.

Antonio was soon followed in death in 1905 by a granddaughter, Teresita López, at age 14.²⁵ In 1917, another granddaughter followed, Juana López, along with her husband, Carlos Benavides.²⁶ In 1922, Antonio's second wife Dominga passed away and was also laid to rest in the cemetery.²⁷ Little by little, San José's other original settlers joined them.

The cemetery has had continuous care and enhancement since it began. After acquiring the entire homestead from his siblings in 1924, son Margarito López formally designated the acre surrounding Antonio's gravesite for cemetery use.²⁸ Sometime thereafter, the López family added hurricane fencing around this original one-acre burial ground. In 1964, Rosendo López, grandson of Antonio, purchased and donated an adjacent 1.75 acres, increasing the cemetery to its current size of 2.75 acres.²⁹ Then Rosendo, his sons, and cousins enclosed the entire area in barbed-wire fencing to demarcate and protect the cemetery. In late 2016, over 80

²⁴ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 18–19.

²⁵ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 24–25.

²⁶ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 24–25.

²⁷ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 18–19.

²⁸ Deed Record of Margarito López' Reconsolidation of Antonio López Homestead and Designation of One Acre as Cemetery on December 24, 1924, *Deed Records of Duval County, Texas*, Vol. 25, p. 212–215, Office of the Duval County Clerk, Duval County Courthouse, San Diego, Texas.

²⁹ Deed Record of Rosendo López' Addition of 1.75 Acres to San José Cemetery on June 2, 1964, *Deed Records of Duval County, Texas*, Book 129, p. 76–77, Office of the Duval County Clerk, Duval County Courthouse, San Diego, Texas.

descendants and their families launched a collaborative preservation project, which included adding a decorative entryway and sign; upgrading to woven-wire fencing to keep out livestock and wild animals; and seeking historical designation.³⁰

Today, the Antonio López Family Cemetery stands at 430' x 292' (2.75 acres), which are fully encircled by woven-wire fencing, within which a smaller hurricane-fenced area demarcates the original one-acre burial ground.³¹ Surrounding the cemetery are large tracts of rural ranching and agricultural land, dotted with homes—mainly López descendants. The public has direct access to the cemetery via a drivable caliche road off of County Road 211; a permanent and irrevocable easement was recorded for this road in January 2018.³²

The López family's Mexican, Catholic, and ranching heritage is readily visible to anyone who walks the caliche-covered pathways and dirt trails of the cemetery. Grave markers are studded with statues and images of the *Virgen the Guadalupe* and other Mexican-Catholic saints. Headstones are engraved with ranching scenes and epitaphs in both Spanish and English. Landscaping includes both cultured plants (e.g., cypress trees, cedar shrubs, and crinum lilies), as well as natural plants (e.g., hackberry and mesquite trees, native grasses, wildflowers). A backdrop of dense scrub brush encircles the cemetery.

The date of the oldest burial is 12-24-1903 (Antonio López), and the most recent is 1-31-2018 (Soila Peña López). There are approximately 203 graves, both marked and unmarked, which have been inventoried by López descendant and San José resident Eladio Barrera and wife, Juanita Barrera.³³ There are no segregated graves. The gravestones are predominantly granite, marble, and concrete, with a few modest unmarked PVC crosses. Ceramic photos of López ancestors grace some

³⁰ “2017 Beautification Project,” *Antonio López Family Cemetery Website*, <https://antoniolopezfamilycemetery.com/about/2017-beautification-project/>. Accessed April 15, 2018.

³¹ Deed Record of Margarito López, December 24, 1924.

Deed Record of Rosendo López, 1964.

³² Deed Record of Easement from County Road 211 East Granted by Ariana Elise Munoz to San José Cemetery on January 4, 2018, *Deed Records of Duval County, Texas*, Book OR, Vol. 658, p.597–599, Office of the Duval County Clerk, Duval County Courthouse, San Diego, Texas.

³³ Inventory available upon request. A partial inventory can also be found on Find a Grave at www.findagrave.com/cemetery/6701/san-jose-cemetery.

markers. Most gravesites are regularly adorned with colorful artificial floral arrangements, and some are covered in decorative stone pebbles. One grave is enclosed within cast iron fencing, and several are demarcated with granite curbing. All graves face the rising sun in the east.

In lieu of a formal cemetery association, a long-established family custom holds that the eldest local living descendants of Antonio López' first-born natural son, Francisco, serve as principal caretakers and decision makers. Today, this duty is borne by cousins and neighbors Armando López and Eladio Barrera, both great-grandsons of Francisco, who reside in San José within close proximity to the cemetery and across the road from the San José Catholic Mission, built on land donated by their ancestors.

III. HISTORICAL/CULTURAL SIGNIFICANCE

As the final resting place of San José's founder, as well as at least six generations and counting of his descendants, the Antonio López Family Cemetery is of deep historical and cultural importance locally. Encapsulated within this rustic burial ground is one family's story of hope, toil, service, tragedy, success, and ultimately, endurance. It is also an active cemetery, making it a central part of the fabric of life for San José residents today.

Viewed with a wider lens, the Antonio López Family Cemetery also preserves an important part of early Texas history and is representative of Texas today—not only from an ethnic and cultural perspective, but also by highlighting the rural ranching life that is still such an important part of the Texan ethos. This cemetery holds the remains of enterprising, hardworking men and women who, through sweat and toil, cleared dense, unforgiving scrub brush under the harsh South Texas sun to build homesteads, schools, churches, and businesses—a community.³⁴ Over a century and a half, Rancho San José would expand into a sprawling community, as Antonio's land was partitioned and his descendants built their own homes and ranches around the original homestead. Most of the roughly 20 families who live in

³⁴ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 7.

San José today are López descendants, and several still raise cattle.³⁵

Life on early Rancho San José, as on other frontier settlements, was busy and hard. The López *vaqueros* (cowboys) cleared land; built homes and corrals; tended the livestock (sheep, goats, and cattle); trapped and tamed horses to sell; dug water wells through the sun-baked dirt and caliche rock; sheared sheep; butchered animals for food; cured cowhides to make harnesses and other leather goods; and grew, picked, and hauled cotton.³⁶

Generations of tough López women worked at their side. They helped in the fields; tended chickens; hand-carded shorn wool for quilts; made mattresses from cornhusks and dried grass; sewed the family's clothes; made soap; hauled clothes to a nearby pond for arduous laundering; harvested cactus pears and pads; ground and boiled corn in lime for corn tortillas; salted and dried meat; made tamales, *chicharrones* (cracklings), and other traditional foods; hauled water; and delivered babies.³⁷ As late as 1944, the youngest child of Belia López Barrera (great-granddaughter of Antonio) was delivered at home on San José with the help of mother-in-law Josefa Barrera.³⁸

The traditional rustic *jacales* (shacks) that Antonio lived in and even his grandkids remembered inspired a model in the Institute of Texas Cultures (ITC) Tejano Exhibit Area.³⁹ López descendant Andres Sáenz's careful documentation was used to replicate the construction, which typically included mesquite-branch walls with mortar made of lime mud and cornhusk fiber, and thatched roofs made of yucca plant leaves.⁴⁰

The Catholic customs on display in the cemetery are also evidenced in San José's religious history and tradition. When Antonio established Rancho San José,

³⁵ St. Rosa de Lima Parish records as of 9/12/18, Benavides, Texas.

³⁶ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, pp. 8–14, 22, 25, 45, 52, 55.

³⁷ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, pp. 45, 49, 51–58, 90, 95–96, 120.

³⁸ Interview with Eladio López Barrera, 10/5/18, who was the child delivered.

³⁹ Institute of Texas Cultures; Inauguration of "Jacal Exhibit," Family Section of the Tejano Exhibit Area, Invitation to reception (June 10, 1998) and Program (July 9, 1998).

Clipping from *Falfurrias Facts*, July 16, 1998, from Andres Saenz' personal papers.

⁴⁰ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, pp. 28–29.

the closest church was 15 miles north in San Diego—too far to attend regularly. To fill the void, San José matriarchs conducted daily devotions before an *altarcito* (little altar) created in a corner of the home. The *altarcito* displayed the essentials, such as a rosary, crucifix, candle, and a favorite icon, and often evolved into unique, lovingly adorned works of art—a long female tradition that continues to this day.⁴¹

As the López clan prospered and grew, the matriarchs spurred the building of a one-room schoolhouse in 1890 designed to double as a church.⁴² Initially, Father Claudio Jaillet, the “Saddlebag Priest of the Nueces,” along with the beloved Father Peter “Pedro” Bard, serviced the ranch, riding out from San Diego.⁴³ Students’ desks would be pushed against the wall, benches pulled out, and a simple altar set up. In 1957, the community purchased an old wood-frame church and moved it to its current site on land donated by Victoria López Valadéz, a granddaughter of Antonio.⁴⁴

At the turn of the century, the sheep industry collapsed in Duval County, forcing the López to turn to growing cotton and cattle-ranching.⁴⁵ The central role that ranching continues to play for the López is preserved on more recent cemetery headstones, which are engraved with images of windmills, horses, cattle, and brush

⁴¹ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 115–116.

Handbook of Texas Online, Teresa Palomo Acosta, “Home Altars,” accessed 11/5/18, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/izh01>, uploaded 6/15/10. Texas State Historical Association.

⁴² Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 39.

⁴³ *Handbook of Texas Online*, Sister Lou Ella Hickman, I.W.B.S., “Jaillet, Claude,” <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fja14>; uploaded 6/15/10 (accessed 11/3/18), Texas State Historical Association.

Mary Xavier, Sister, I.W.B.S., *Father Jaillet : Saddlebag Priest of the Nueces*, Corpus Christi, 1948, available at <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/005946140> (accessed 11/3/18), pp. Author’s Note, 29–30.

⁴⁴ San José Altar Rosary Society meeting minutes re: 20th anniversary of purchase, Nov. 6, 1977. San José Altar Rosary Society records re: mission renovation plans and original purchase amount, Oct. 21, 1979.

Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 81.

⁴⁵ Moore, et al, “South Texas Ranching,” p. 17.

Givens, “The rise and fall of the sheep era in South Texas.”

Kohout, “Duval County.”

Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. xv.

country landscape. By the 1930s, Antonio's ranch had evolved into a community that supported a large grocery store (owned by a descendant) serving the rural area.⁴⁶ In the late 1950s, the López' church was formally designated a mission of Benavides' Santa Rosa de Lima Parish.

As the US entered military conflicts, the López answered the call, and several veterans rest in the cemetery. From WWII, Humberto and Mateo López, Israel López (Iwo Jima hero), Salome Sáenz, Alubo and Ernesto Valadéz, Fructuoso Vela, and Lazaro Vela, Jr.; from the Korean War, Manuel Peña; and from the Vietnam War, Romeo Peña.

Today, the community sprung from Antonio's homestead is in a waning period. The youth venture to nearby cities and beyond in search of employment outside of the small-family-ranching tradition. Some eventually bring families back to be surrounded by relatives and the brushy landscape; for others, the cemetery marks their final homecoming. Still, San José endures in its remaining families, its active Mission, its community center where people gather after funerals, and in Gonzalitoz Grocery (run by a López descendant)—the bustling local feed store/gasoline station/barbeque joint. The ebb and flow of San José is reflective of similar stories playing out across rural Texas, though it retains a special flavor in its faces, its Spanglish, its spice. The project to seek historical designation for the Antonio López Family Cemetery is an effort to preserve the history of one family in one small corner of the state, and thereby to help illustrate the multiplicity of peoples and culture that together are Texas.

⁴⁶ Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 71–72.

APPENDIX TO NARRATIVE FOR ANTONIO LÓPEZ FAMILY CEMETERY HISTORICAL MARKET APPLICATION



Antonio López Family Cemetery (2017)



*Cemetery namesake and San José founder Antonio López
with his second wife, Dominga Peña, circa 1890¹*

¹ Reprinted from Andrés López Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching in Duval County: The Family History of Ranchos San José and El Fresnillo*, (San Antonio: The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio, 1999), p. 2.

Marriage and death certificates of Antonio López²

CERTIFICADO MATRIMONIAL

El Señor JOSE ANTONIO LOPEZ
 hijo de JOSE MIGUEL LOPEZ
 y de MA. MARINA SANCHEZ
 Contrajo Matrimonio Eclesiástico con la Srita. MA. DE LOS SANTOS GONZA
 hija de JUAN JOSE GONZALEZ
 y de MA. ROSALIA HINOJOSA
 El 17 de AGOSTO de 1853
 en los Santos _____

El Párroco
PBRO. JESUS RODRIGUEZ ROJAS. M.N.M.

14 JUN. 1995

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CERTIFICATE OF DEATH

Clerk's No. (Consecutive)	Date of Record & Date of Report:			Name: Race, and Sex and Age	Nativity Where Born	Residence Alien Or Citizen	Date of Death		
	Month	Day	Year				Month	Day	Year A.M. or P.M.
69	January	18,	1904	Antonio Lopez	Mexico	San Andres	December	24,	1903 A.M.
	January	13,	1904	Mex, Male, 72yrs, 2 Mo.		Citizen			
Place of Death		Cause of Death		Name and Residence of Physician or Coroner Reporting					
San Andres		Heart Trouble		Ferman Lopez San Andres					

2

THE STATE OF TEXAS
 COUNTY OF DUVAL

I, OSCAR GARCIA, JR., County Clerk in and for the aforesaid County
 and State, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of _____
Death Certificate of Antonio Lopez

as the same appears of record in my office in Volume "1" Pages 76—Death Records.
 GIVEN UNDER MY HAND and seal of said Court, at office in San Diego,
 Texas, this 5th day of July, 1988

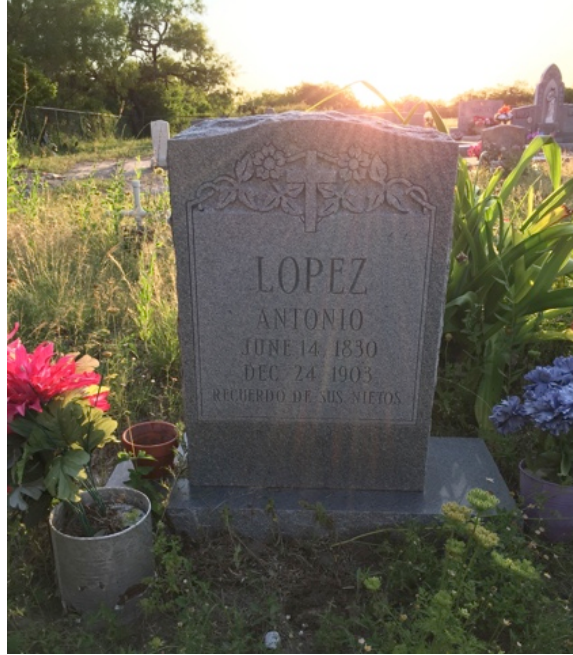
(L. S.)

Oscar Garcia, Jr.,
 County Clerk, Duval County, Texas
 By Rebecca F. Pena, Deputy.

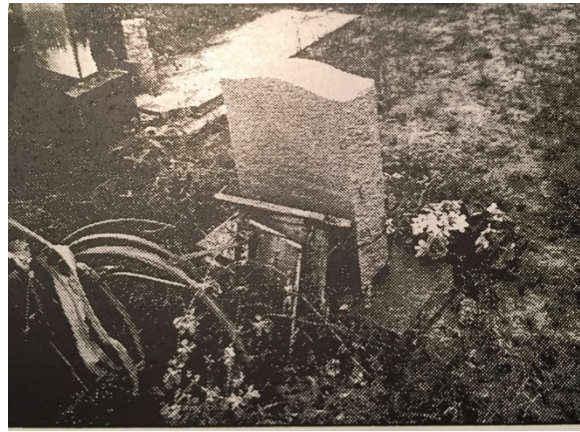
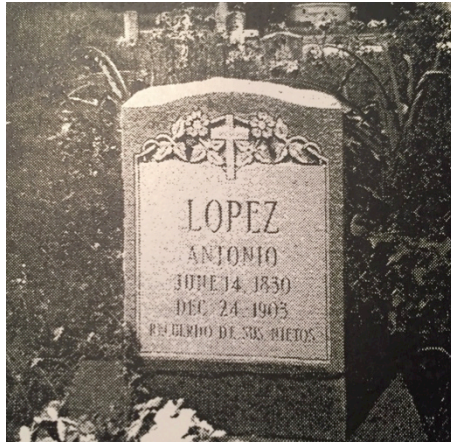
BOHNER'S A221264

² Reproduced from Andrés Sáenz, *Rancho de San Jose*, self-published precursor to his book *Early Tejano Ranching*, circa 1987, pp. 59, 62.

Antonio's residence is cited as San Andres at time of death, which was the name of a specific small cluster of López family homes in San José.



Final resting place of José Antonio López and earliest cemetery gravesite; the headstone was installed later by his grandchildren (2017 photo)



1995 photos of remnants of poem casing attached to back of Antonio López' headstone³

³ Reproduced from Sáenz, *Rancho San Jose*, p. 29.



*Headstones of other early burials in the cemetery:
Antonio's granddaughters Teresita (1905) and Juana (1917)⁴*



Headstone of Antonio's second wife, Dominga (1922); photo taken 2013⁵

⁴ Reproduced from “Teresita López,” and “Juana López Benavides,” photos by Eligio Peña, May 2013, *Find a Grave*, accessed 11/4/18, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110269971/teresita-lopez> and <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110269868/juana-benavides>.

⁵ Photo reproduced from “Dominga Peña López,” photo by Eligio Peña, May 2013, *Find a Grave*, accessed 11/4/18, <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/110269920/dominga-lopez>.



Catholic iconography, engravings and adornments of ranching scenes, Spanish surnames and epitaphs, and a dense, brushy backdrop illustrate the López family heritage (2007, 2018)



López descendant and author Andrés Sáenz (on right) poses by the Institute of Texan Cultures replica based on the San José jacales documented in Sáenz' book (1998)⁶

⁶ Reproduced from Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 134.



More recent photo of ITC replica based on San José jacal (2012)⁷



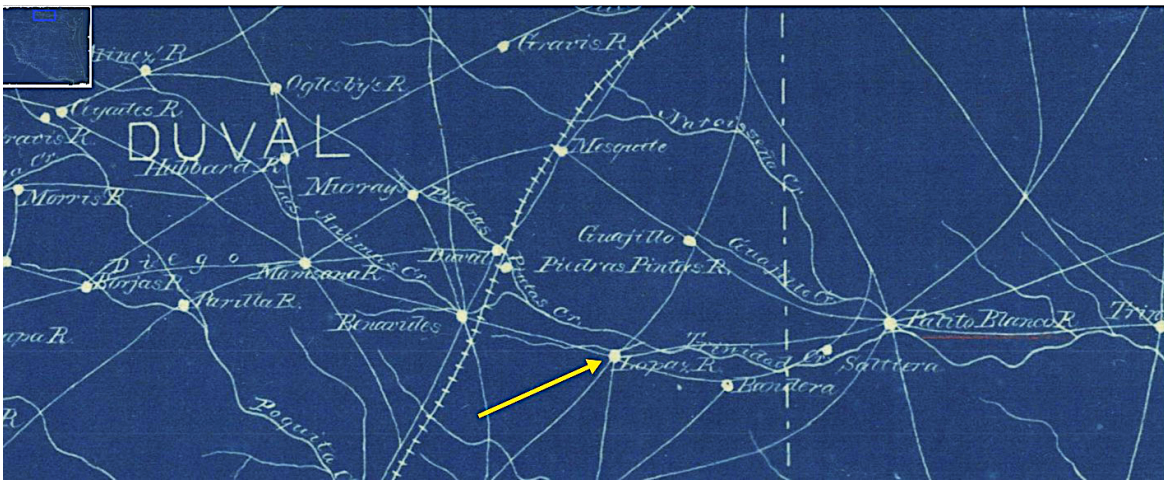
First San José schoolhouse/church, built by López family, circa 1890⁸

⁷ Reproduced from Clay Coppedge, “Our Family Tree: Institute of Texan Cultures documents the many peoples who put down roots across the state,” *Texas Co-Op Power*, Sept. 2012, accessed 11/4/18, https://www.texascooppower.com/texas_stories/history/our-family-tree.

⁸ Reproduced from Sáenz, *Early Tejano Ranching*, p. 39.



San José Civic Center and Catholic Mission⁹



"López R." marks the site of Antonio's ranch in this 1892 map¹⁰

⁹ Photos reproduced from Duval County Commissioners website (www.co.duval.tx.us/default.aspx?name=CountyOffices.CommCourt) and Gerald Massey Catholic Church Photos (<https://geraldmassey.smugmug.com/Churches/Gallery-of-Catholic-Churches/i-d5Vqv2s>).

¹⁰ "Map of the Rio Grande Frontier, Texas, East of Fort McIntosh and South of the Mex. National RR.," 1892, available from the Texas General Land Office, accessed 11/4/18, <http://www.glo.texas.gov/history/archives/map-store/index.cfm#item/4660>.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS: 2019 Official Texas Historical Marker COVERSHEET

Complete the form and send to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov
Valid September 1, 2018 to November 15, 2018 only

APPROVAL BY COUNTY HISTORICAL COMMISSION (required)

As chair or duly appointed marker chair, I certify the following:

☒ The topic qualifies for an Official Texas Historical Marker according to marker policies on the THC website. Representatives of the CHC have met or talked with the potential marker sponsor and discussed the marker program policies as outlined on the THC website. The application has been filled out correctly. The narrative history and documentation have been reviewed for accuracy.

CHC comments or concerns about this application (required): Approved without comment.

Name of CHC contact (chair or marker chair): Lydia O. Canales, Marker Chair

Mailing address: P.O. Box 340 **City, Zip:** Benavides, TX 78341

Daytime phone: 361-389-8397 **Email address:** lydiaEOC@hotmail.com

CHECKLIST APPROVAL (required)

☒ The cemetery has been designated as a Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC)

- Year designation filed in county records: 2018
- Historic Texas Cemetery designation number: DV-C003
(Ex. AT-C023; Number may be found on Exhibit A of the HTC designation)

☒ A narrative history is included

☒ Permission of cemetery administrator or landowner granting permission for marker placement has been obtained (page 6)

☒ Invoice for application fee is complete, printed and ready to be mailed to THC along with \$100 check (page 7)

OR

☐ The application fee has been previously paid. This topic is a resubmission from previous years. Previous Marker Job # (ex: 18PO01):

Sponsor Name: Eladio Barrera/Armando López

Date: Nov. 10, 2018

NOTICE: Incomplete applications will be returned to the CHC Chair or Marker Chair.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS: 2019 Official Texas Historical Marker SPONSORSHIP APPLICATION

This form constitutes a request for the Texas Historical Commission (THC) to consider approval of an Official Texas Historical Marker for a cemetery noted in this application. The THC will review the request and make its determination based on rules and procedures of the program. Filing of the application for sponsorship is for the purpose of providing basic information to be used in the evaluation process. The final determination of eligibility and approval for a state marker will be made by the THC. This form is to be used for Historic Texas Cemetery marker requests only. Use this form if (1) you already completed the HTC designation and (2) you want to apply for an interpretive historical marker for the cemetery. Please see separate forms for either HTC Medallion only and/or Name & Date Plaques, Recorded Texas Historic Landmarks (buildings and structures) or subject markers.

NOTE: A final Historic Texas Cemetery (HTC) designation is a prerequisite for HTC markers. Information regarding the HTC designation can be found on the THC website: (<http://www.thc.texas.gov/preserve/projects-and-programs/cemetery-preservation/historic-texas-cemetery-designation>).

Marker title (must be exactly as listed in the HTC designation): Antonio López Family Cemetery

County: Duval County

Town (nearest town in same county on state highway map): San José (immediate community), Benavides (nearest town)

Street address of marker site or directions from town noted above: Latitude: 27.5753 Longitude: -98.3122. From San José community on FM 2295 (approximately 7 miles east of Benavides), turn south on CR 211 (caliche road), proceed for 0.9 mi., and turn left on cemetery easement road.

NOTE: Historic Texas Cemetery markers must be placed at the cemetery being marked. They cannot be placed on right-of-way maintained by the Texas Department of Transportation (TxDOT).

HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS

Purpose

Historic Texas Cemetery markers are only for use in burial grounds previously designated as an HTC. These markers recognize the historical significance of a cemetery and, with the use of interpretive plaques, provide background on associated communities, families, events and customs. HTC markers must be placed at the cemetery, but since cemeteries are protected under other existing laws, placement of a marker establishes no restrictions on the property.

Criteria

1. **HTC designation:** All steps of the HTC designation process must be completed by the time of application for the HTC marker.
2. **Historical/cultural significance:** Completion of the HTC designation does not ensure approval for an HTC marker; it is only a prerequisite. The application for an HTC marker with an interpretive plaque must include the same type of detailed history required for other markers. In addition to Context, Overview and Significance sections, it must also include a description of the physical site, cemetery setting, and significant landscape features or noteworthy burial markers and funereal practices.

APPLICATION PROCEDURES

Any individual, group or county historical commission (CHC) may apply to the THC to request an Official Texas Historical Marker for what it deems a worthy topic. Only complete marker applications that contain all the required elements can be accepted or processed by the THC. For HTC markers with interpretive plaques, the required elements are sponsorship application, narrative history and documentation.

- Completed applications must be duly reviewed, verified and approved by the CHC in the county in which the marker will be placed.
- The sponsorship application, narrative history and documentation must be in the form of Microsoft Word or Word-compatible documents and submitted by email attachments to the THC from the CHC no later than November 15, 2018. Paper copies of applications, whether mailed or delivered in person, cannot be accepted in lieu of the electronic version. THC email accepts mail no larger than 10 MB so the application and supplemental materials may need to be sent in multiple emails. Please note this in the subject line of the email. (Ex. Post Oak Co., Smith House, Email 1 of 3, etc.)
- Required font style and type size are a Times variant and 12-point.
- Narrative histories must be typed in a double-spaced (or 1.5-spaced) format and include separate sections on context, overview and significance.
- The narrative history must include documentation in the form of reference notes, which can be either footnotes, endnotes, or parenthetical citations. Documentation associated with applications should be broad-based and demonstrate a survey of available resources, both primary and secondary.
- **The CHC or Marker Chair will forward the application and narrative history to markerapplication@thc.texas.gov.** You will receive confirmation of your application being received. If you do not receive confirmation from the THC Marker Team within one week of sending your application, please contact our office.
- Once the CHC sends in the application, the sponsor mails the Marker Application Fee Invoice (page 7) and a \$100 check to the THC mailing address noted on the invoice by November 30, 2018, 5 p.m., CST. Payment of the application fee does not guarantee approval of the historical marker and this fee is non-refundable. However, if not accepted, the application fee will carry over to a new submission.
- A signed form is required to show approval of marker placement by the cemetery administrator or landowner. This is due via email, fax or mail by November 30, 2018, 5 p.m., CST.

Once marker applications have passed preliminary review and the application fee and signed proof of cemetery administrator approval have been received by THC, the application will be scored to determine whether the marker will be submitted to the Commissioners of the THC for final approval.

SCORING CRITERIA

- (1) 5 pts. max. Age;
- (2) 10 pts. max. Historical Significance/Architectural Significance;
- (3) 10 pts. max. State of Repair/Integrity;
- (4) 10 pts. max. Diversity of topic for addressing gaps in historical marker program;
- (5) 15 pts. max. Value of topic as an untold or untold aspect of Texas history;
- (6) 10 pts. max. Endangerment level of property, site or topic;
- (7) 10 pts. max. Available documentation and resources;
- (8) 10 pts. max. Diversity among this group of candidates;
- (9) 5 pts. max. Relevance to other commission programs; and
- (10) 15 pts. max. Relevance to the commission's current thematic priorities.

SPONSORSHIP PAYMENT INFORMATION

Prospective sponsors please note the following:

- Topics approved as Official Texas Historical Markers will require payment of the full marker amount within 45 of the official approval notice. Payment must be received in full, accompanied by the THC payment form, by March 15, 2019, 5 p.m., CST.
- The THC is unable to process partial payments or to delay payment due to processing procedures of the sponsor. Applications not paid in the time frame required may, at the sole discretion of the THC, be cancelled or postponed.
- Payment does not constitute ownership of a marker; Historic Texas Cemetery markers and other Official Texas Historical Markers are the property of the State of Texas.
- If at any time during the marker process sponsorship is withdrawn, a refund can be processed, but the THC will retain the application fee of \$100.
- The Official Texas Historical Marker Program provides no means of recognizing sponsors through marker texts, incising or supplemental plaques.

Marker sponsor (may be individual or organization): **Eladio Barrera and Armando López (informal cemetery administrators -- see narrative for details)**

Contact person (if applicable): **Juanita Barrera**

Mailing address: 1035 East FM 2295 City, Zip: Alice, TX 78332

Email address (required): **ejbarrera1964@yahoo.com** **Phone:** 361-256-4187

SHIPPING INSTRUCTIONS

In order to facilitate marker delivery, residence addresses, post office box numbers and rural route numbers are not permitted. To avoid additional shipping charges or delays, use a business street address (open 8 a.m.—5 p.m., Monday through Friday). **THC is not responsible for additional shipping charges if multiple delivery attempts are made.**

Name: Eladio Barrera c/o Gonzalitoz Grocery

Street address: 570 FM 2295 **City, Zip:** Alice, TX 78332

Daytime phone (required): 361-256-4187 **Email** (required): ejbarrera1964@yahoo.com

TYPE AND SIZE OF HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS

The sponsor/CHC prefers the following size marker:

- ☒ 27" x 42" HTC marker with post (\$1875)
- ☐ 27" x 42" HTC marker without post* (\$1675)
- ☐ 18" x 28" HTC marker with post (\$1175)
- ☐ 18" x 28" HTC marker without post* (\$1175)

*For HTC medallion only and/or with Name & Date Plaques, please fill out an HTC Name & Date Plaque application.

**For an HTC marker without post, indicate to what surface material it will be mounted:

- ☐ wood ☐ masonry ☐ metal ☐ other (specify)

RECORDS RETENTION BY CHC: The CHC must retain hard copies of the application as well as an electronic version, at least for the duration of the marker process. The THC is not responsible for lost applications, for incomplete applications or for applications not properly filed according to the program requirements. For additional information about any aspect of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program, visit the Markers page on the THC website (<http://www.thc.texas.gov/markers>).

**HISTORIC TEXAS CEMETERY MARKERS:
PERMISSION OF ADMINISTRATOR/LANDOWNER FOR
MARKER PLACEMENT**

Please fill out this attachment, print, and sign. Return to our offices via email, fax, or mail by **November 30, 2018, 5 p.m., CST**. If overnighting mail, please send by UPS or FedEx to: 105 W. 16th St. Austin, TX 78701.

Name of cemetery: Antonio López Family Cemetery

County: Duval County

Cemetery representative, property manager or landowner: Eladio Barrera and Armando López (informal cemetery representatives -- see narrative for explanation)

Address: 1035 East FM 2295 City, State, Zip: Alice, Texas 78332

Phone: 361-256-4187 Email address: ejbarrera1964@yahoo.com

I, Eladio Barrera and Armando López, certify that I am the cemetery administrator or landowner of the property noted herein, and further certify that I have read the information regarding Official Texas Historical Markers and that I voluntarily seek the marker for the property. I further certify that I will comply with the policies and procedures of the Official Texas Historical Marker Program.

Signature: Eladio Barrera / Armando Lopez

NOTE: The cemetery association or surrounding property owners will not receive copies of general correspondence from the THC. All procedural correspondence (notice of receipt, requests for additional information, inscription, shipping notices, etc.) will be sent by email to the CHC representative, who is encouraged to share the information with all interested parties as necessary.



OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER**Sponsorship Fee Invoice**

Please fill out this attachment, print, and sign. Return to our offices via mail by November 30, 2018, 5 p.m., CST, along with a \$100 check or payment information noted below. Do not send this form via email.

Name of Cemetery: Antonio López Family Cemetery

County: Duval County

Note:

- We will not accept multiple payments for one marker, only one form of payment please.
- If overnighting mail, please send by UPS or FedEx to: 105 W. 16th St. Austin, TX 78701.
- If the application fee has been previously paid and this topic is a resubmission from previous years, the \$100 application fee will be waived.

Please fill out the information below for billing purposes, even if paying by check:

Name of sponsor(s): Eladio Barrera/Armando López (administrators of Antonio López Family Cemetery Fund)

Address: 1035 East FM 2295

City, State, Zip: **Alice, TX 78332**

Phone: **361-256-4187**

Email address: ejbarrera1964@yahoo.com

Payment enclosed (make check payable to Texas Historical Commission)

OR

Bill to credit card (only VISA or MC accepted): ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard

Card number _____

Exp. Date _____ Security Code _____

Name (as it appears on card) _____

***THC Staff Services will run credit card payments in batches using a state approved payment processing program. "THC Virtual Austin" will show as the Merchant Name on your credit card statement once the payment has been processed.

Signature: _____

