

The Zavaleta Family: A Legacy of Public Service

by

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<i>Gernikako arbola</i>	The Tree of Guernica
<i>da bedeinkatua</i>	Is a blessed symbol
<i>euskaldunen artean</i>	Loved by all the Basque people
<i>gutziz maitatua</i>	With deep love
<i>Eman da zabal zazu</i>	Give to all the world
<i>munduan frutua</i>	Your fruit
<i>adoratzen zaitugu</i>	We adore you
<i>arbola santua.</i>	Sacred tree. ²

Basque Origins

Zabaleta is a Basque surname of considerable antiquity.³ Students of Hispanic heraldry indicate that, though the antiquity of the name makes it impossible to document an exact temporal origin, the name has appeared prominently in Iberian history for at least the last twelve hundred years. Basque surnames “are quite distinctive and most are derived from the ancestral country home’s name or other prominent geographic feature.”⁴ The Basque surname is a word by which an extended family is described and located, and is determined by a technique typical of tribal peoples. A Basque surname, for example, may describe a people “*who live at the top of the hill*” or “*the people who live by the river*”⁵

In his work on Basque surnames, Fernando González-Doria described the name’s meaning: “Zabaleta has its origin in the Basque country and while we do not know in which century it appeared, we do know that it is an ancient Basque surname.” In the Basque language, the surname Zabaleta refer to a wide flat area.⁶ Thus, Zabaleta describes the people who live by a flat place in the mountainous Pyrenees. Another version translates Zabaleta as “*the people who live by the mountain pass.*” When the surname-root, “*Zabal,*” meaning a wide place, is combined with the maximizing ending “*eta,*” it becomes “a very-wide place.” Hence Zabal-eta is, “*un lugar muy ancho.*”⁷

The Basque practice of associating place designators with extended families also allows us to know the exact location of the Zabaleta family in the Basque countryside, through an oral tradition which pre-dates written records, or at least to the eighth century CE (Contemporary Era). It stands to reason that, since the Basque language describes a people’s location, there could be

more than one founding family called *Zabaleta*. In fact, this research has located two families, one in the Basque Province of Navarre (*Navarra*) and the other in neighboring Guipúzcoa. The two families are related, and together they form the progenitor base for the extended Zabaleta family both in Spain and in the Americas.

It should be noted here that the Zabaleta surname spelled with a “b” and Zavaleta spelled with a “v” have the same origin. With the sixteenth century emigration of Zabaleta’s to the New World, this Basque surname, along with many others, was changed from the Basque spelling using “b” to the Castilian spelling using “v.” Etymologically there is no difference between Zabaleta and Zavaleta. In fact, this change allows us to easily differentiate between Zabaletas born in Spain and Zavaletas born in the Americas (beginning around 1500). Simply stated, all Zabaletas/Zavaletas are members of the same family, separated by generations and oceans.⁸ For the purpose of this article, when Zabaleta is spelled with a “b” it refers to a Spanish origin, and when spelled with a “v” it refer to an American origin.

The Basques speak an ancient tongue, *Euskara*, which, means, “way of speaking.” *Euskara* is not one of the Indo-European families of languages. Though theories of Basque origin abound, their precise beginning as a genetically and culturally homogeneous people is lost in time.⁹ It is known, however, that the Basques have occupied a single geographic region of the Iberian Peninsula for longer than any other identifiable European ethnic group. The Basques are most probably one of the only surviving Neolithic peoples of Europe.

It is believed that the Basques have lived in or near their present location, on the border between Spain and France for thousands of years, a relatively small tribe surviving when many others were overwhelmed by invaders, losing their ethnic identity.¹⁰

Over the last two thousand years, the Basques, who inhabit the Pyrenees mountain range, where it meets the Cantabrian Sea along the modern day Spanish-French border, have struggled to maintain their cultural and linguistic identity. Today, four contiguous Spanish Provinces make up the Basque region: Viscaya, Álava, Guipúzcoa, and Navarre. Collectively this region is known as the Basque Country. Over time, national borders have been created where only ethnic ones once existed. There are also three Basque Provinces in France: Labourd, Basse Navarre, and Soule. Together the seven Provinces form what is known as *Euskal Herria*.¹¹

The Iberian Peninsula has an ancient history, and in the early historic period, consisted of disassociated groups of long established peoples surrounded by more recently invading tribes. In his book, *History of Spain and Portugal*,¹² Payne points out that the origin of the Basque people is shrouded in mystery,

but one thing is certain: this tribal people, organized by kinship, were among the first inhabitants of Europe. Benefiting from the rugged terrain of the Pyrenees, they remained relatively secluded until the Romans invaded the Iberian Peninsula around 75 BCE (Before Contemporary Era).¹³

Through successive invasions over approximately one thousand years, from the time of Christ to 1,000 CE., the Basques never succumbed to foreign domination. Payne explained that “*to this day the Basques are considered to be xenophobic, very difficult to get to know, and always wary of strangers.*”¹⁴ Tony recalls, in the 1970s, our cousin Bruno Zavaleta recounting a story of his first trip to the Basque country. Bruno, who is always given to wearing a Stetson®, even in Spain, remarked that the combination of a Tejano Zavaleta wearing a Stetson® was such a shock that people were “afraid” of him.¹⁵ They were amused to discover that he was their “cousin” from Texas. This isolationist stereotype is, of course, thought to be one of the Basque’s most successful strategies for ethnic survival. “*The truth is that the Basque distrusts a stranger much too much to invite someone into his home who doesn’t speak his language.*”¹⁶ It was this inherent Basque distrust of strangers that drove the Basque Diaspora to the farthest reaches of the Americas, and, eventually, to the northern frontier of Mexico along the *Rio Bravo del Norte*.¹⁷

Basque history and culture have been described continuously since the time of the Roman Empire, with Roman historians and geographers providing references to the Basques two thousand years ago. From their well-protected vantage points in the Pyrenees, the Basques watched successive waves of invaders come through their land. In his classic publication, *A Book of the Basques*,¹⁸ Rodney Gallop eloquently describes the Basque country, telling how the Basque were witnesses to the arrival of the Aryans, the ancestors of most native Europeans.¹⁹ The Romans, Visigoths, Franks, Normans, Moors, and, finally, Castilians subsequently all crossed through *Euskal Herria*. As Christianity slowly began to take hold, the Basques’ tribal identity survived in the secluded and easily defensible internal valleys of the Pyrenees, untouched through the eighth century, CE.

The Basque region lies at the crossroads of sub-continent and empires. Through the passage of time, and the movement of armies, Christianity was the only external force that was able to eventually permeate Basque tribal armor and philosophically “conquer” them. This was only possible because the primary road to the second holiest pilgrimage site in Europe, *Santiago de Compostela*, the burial site of St. James the Apostle, passed directly through the Basque countryside. Over the course of a thousand years, pilgrims from the farthest reaches of Europe and the Middle East traversed the road from the Holy Land to Rome (Europe’s primary pilgrimage site) and then on to Santiago.

Slowly but surely, the emergence of Europe from the Dark Ages required the Basques to convert their verbal tribal codes to written records, guaranteeing thousands of years of inheritance and land ownership. Rights, which in the pre-literate world had been passed on by word of mouth and ratified by tribal councils, had to be converted to a written format known as the *fueros*.²⁰ It was the power of ancestral rights that allowed the Basques to form allegiances with the earliest Christian monarchs of Castile and Aragon. In the early centuries, the *fueros* empowered the tribal structure and its leaders. Later, *fueros* formed the basis for the formation of Basque regions, provinces, and communities, as well as the authority from which the first generation of European style Basque lords emerged and governed.²¹

Finally, the history of the Iberian Peninsula informs us that the Basques have always enjoyed full autonomy, resisting local warlords and answering only to their own lords. Through the formation of alliances with the Kings of Castile and Aragon, the Basques were afforded honors and the rights to trade as if forming a separate country. For example, since the Basque province of Guipúzcoa was never conquered by the Moors, the Kings of Castile and Aragon bestowed the status of “nobility” upon all of its inhabitants, and while this honor was mostly honorary and never utilized by the majority of the population of Guipúzcoa, the leading Basque families²² eventually came to be recognized as *Hidalgos* or Basque “nobility.”

Zabaleta Family Origins

Tracing family history through time, over generations, and across oceans is both time-consuming and expensive. It was not until the advent of the Internet that more than fifty years of study of Zavaleta family history and genealogy could be more fully facilitated by a few simple keystrokes, but travel to historic family locations and national archives is still essential.²³ Old World family records are often sketchy and, in antiquity, mostly non-existent. However, the nature of the Basque population, their geographic area of origin, and the uniqueness of their surnames make the records and references available beyond the ordinary. It is when families have had illustrious histories, or have played important historical roles, that familial reconstruction is easiest. For the sake of this article, only family history with the surname Zabaleta/Zavaleta is considered. Documented family history now approximates two thousand years of direct descent. Special thanks to doctoral student and friend Michael Scott Van Wagenen, who has, in the interest of my work on family history and the origin of families in Northeastern Mexico, spent more than 100 hours in the, Family History Library of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Salt Lake City, Utah. It is important to note that in the Mormon archives, Michael found numerous Zavaleta ancestors in Northern Mexico whose surname was recorded with an “S.” Therefore, the search for Savaleta and

Sabaleta revealed many heretofore unknown family links and answered many questions that the family had held for many years. As a result of his work and that of Tony Zavaleta, Jr., the Zavaleta family genealogy has a documented direct line of descent that now exceeds 60 generations and is placed in time at the year zero CE. Two thousand years of direct family descent.

The earliest reference we have to the Basque family known as Zabaleta comes from the ancient accounts of the military campaigns of Charlemagne and of his defeat at the hands of the Basques at the Battle of Roncevaux Pass (French spelling) or Roncesvalles (Spanish spelling) in 778 CE.²⁴ The ancient account of Charlemagne's only defeat provides us with a twelve-hundred-year-old description of the Zabaleta family home and of *El Camino de Zabaleta* (the Zabaleta road running through the forest and the Roncesvalles Pass), near the modern border between Spain and France.²⁵

*Los cronistas carolingios universalizaron Valcarlos englobandolo en un pedazo del "Pirineo de los Vascones," que no conocian por si mismos, sino por relatos de supervivientes y, en mayor medida, de gentes que oyeron contar las historias de primera mano. Pero, como dudarlos, fueron enormemente precisos en las referencias topográficas... la hondonada subyacente por la que corre un rumoroso arroyo que no se deja ver hasta **la borda Zabaleta**" (in this case the word "borda" translates as a small country cottage).²⁶*

Approximate translation: *The Carolingian chroniclers spread the word of Valcarlos, locating it in a part of the "Pyrenees of the Basques," which they did not know personally, but had heard of in the stories of survivors and mainly from people that had heard the stories told first hand. However, how can one doubt it, as they were extremely precise in the topographic references...the underlying hollow in which runs a roaring stream that is not seen until reaching the Zabaleta's cottage.*

The ancient account describes the battle in which Roland the nephew of Charlemagne was killed and provides a lyrical, even poetic, description of the home's country setting:

*Con trazas de volver a pisar el trazado genuino, la senda gana la luz en otro claro del bosque, el a que forma un recoleto parado enmarcado entre gruesos castaños y dos caudalosos arroyos, **conocido por Zabaleta (lugar ancho)**, un rincón cautivador por su sabor pastoral que preside una recia casona de piedra, hoy convertida en borda."²⁷*

Approximate translation: *With plans to return to walk along the actual layout, the footpath opens into the light in another clearing of the forest, one that forms a secluded stopping point, framed between thick chestnut trees and two mighty streams, known as Zabaleta (a wide space), a corner of the woods, captivating with its pastoral flavor that presides over a sturdy stone house, today converted into a cottage.*

The Kingdom of Navarre and the Province of Guipúzcoa

It was not until the year 905 that Sancho Garcés I (a direct ancestor), organized the Basque region around a European-style regional dynasty. It became known as the Kingdom of Navarre. McAlister states that, “*The Kingdom of Navarre was created in the tenth century by Romanized Basques in the western Pyrenees; and the kingdoms of Castile and Aragon were both formed in the first half of the eleventh century, Castile from the east of León, and Aragon from a county of Navarre in the central Pyrenees.*”²⁸

The principality of Navarre enjoyed independence for several hundred years, largely due to the fact that it had no threatening neighbors. While the eastern half of the Basque country was drawn more and more into the French realm, the western half, today located in Spain, included the regions of Navarre and Guipúzcoa, home of the Zabaleta family.

Payne suggests that by the twelfth century this region had been mostly Christianized and was comprised of farms with strong extended families.²⁹ Slowly, Guipúzcoa and the entire Spanish Basque region became part of the Castilian world, and the Basques were poised to play a major role in the expansion of Castile in its colonization of the New World after 1492.

The Zabaleta family has its origin in Guipúzcoa and Navarre, and, as such, all Zabaletas in the Old World and Zavaletas in the New World herald from the same general location. Map searches indicate that the distance from the Zabaletas of Lesaca, Navarre, to those in Urretxu, Guipúzcoa, to be no more than 50km or 30 miles.

The Basque regions of Guipúzcoa and Navarre have had a homogenous cultural and socio-economic identity for at least the last one thousand years. Melded around families, Guipúzcoans and Navarrans are a people who have developed a culture based both in their experiences in the mountains and on the sea. The mountains and the sea coexist with equal importance in Basque history and identity.

Mark Kurlansky's, *The Basque History of the World*, is particularly illustrative of this fact.

*“For hundreds, if not thousands of years, the Guipúzcoans have stood on their rocky coastline and watched the great whale migrations cross the Bay of Biscay. Basque fishermen followed the great beasts to Newfoundland. Famed as boat-makers, mariners, and as navigators, Basque settlements have been found in Newfoundland that pre-dates the Norsemen, and certainly the voyages of Columbus.”*³⁰

Basque shipbuilders from San Sebastián and other Guipúzcoan ports are known to have built the legendary Santa María, and it is also known that Columbus heavily recruited Basque mariners for his historic voyages.³¹

Urretxu Villa Real, Guipúzcoa

The Royal Village of Urretxu is located in inner Guipúzcoa, equidistant from the four Basque capitals.³² Urretxu is part of the region of the Upper Urola River Valley, and was built along the Urola River located at the base of the steep faced Mount Irimo. Urretxu lies along a narrow and elongated valley with an undulating topography.³³ One of the earliest known references to the Zabaleta family is associated with the establishment of the Basque village of Urretxu and its designation as a Royal town. Urretxu was designated a “Royal Village” (*Villa Real*) in 1383, and was designed in a manner typical of the Middle Ages. The first known historical document from the region is its City Charter, signed by King Juan I of Castile (1358-1390) on October 3, 1383. In the early centuries after its formation, Urretxu was a stopping point for kings and armies along a main east-west route from the capitals of Europe connecting the Iberian Peninsula.³⁴ Today, the medieval antecedents of Urretxu “*conserve the magnificence of the ancestral Basque gothic houses and palaces found there.*”³⁵ One of the most distinctive Basque family country homes, or *caseríos*, in the Urretxu region is the *Caserío de Zabaleta*, located on the approach to Mount Irimo, above the Hermitage of Santa Barbara.

Many references to the origin of the Zabaleta family point to this very precise and easily locatable area in Guipúzcoa. “Zabaleta” is a geographic place name easily locatable on Spanish geodesic maps.³⁶ The Zabaleta family of Urretxu, who we know sent members to México around 1500, is directly related to the Zabaleta family of South Texas, and has its origin in the large *caserío* in Urretxu, Guipúzcoa. This Basque country *casona* maintains its coat of arms (*escudo*) on its façade to this day. *En campo de sinople, una torre de argent*; translated: a silver castle-tower on a green background (the tower is a clear allusion to the relationship with the Torre de Zabaleta in Lesaca). This house was the birthplace of many very illustrious family ancestors who were powerful regional lords and land owners.

It is because of the historical importance of this family site that we know that the Zabaleta family is one of the earliest of the region. We are indeed fortunate to have available to us, Lope de Isasti’s 1625 description of the house. The house is described as “truly monumental,” having been constructed by only the most “accomplished stone masons”:

*La casa Zabaleta se nos presenta ya próxima, mostrando su fachada de ladrillo rojo sostenida por recios muros de mampostería y dos bellos arcos de sillares. Zabaleta sorprende por las medidas de su zaguán y sus establos, y la amplitud de las estancias en toda su primera planta. Pero es en la parte alta, en la gabaría, donde la casona deja ver su verdadera dimensión y la importancia que tuvo antaño, pues sus vigas y entramado, la estructura toda del tejado, en verdad monumental, no pudo ser obra mas que de consumados maestros.*³⁷

Approximate translation: *The Zavaleta house appears to us (walking along the road and toward the house)...showing its red brick façade maintained by strong walls of stone and two beautiful arcs of cast stones. The Zavaleta house surprises one with the size of its vestibule and its stables, and the amplitude of the rooms in the entire first story. But it is in the second story and above that the large house lets us see its true dimension and the importance that it had long ago, since its beams and framework, and the entire structure of the tile roof, which is truly monumental, could not have been built by anyone other than by consummate master builders.*

Equally significant is the fact that the work of Jaca on the history of Urretxu documents the Zabaleta family descent line, beginning with the first “Señor” of the *Caserio de Zabaleta*, Joan de Zabaleta y Aguinaga, who fought in the war against France in 1524. He married María de Iturbe Irigoyenin in Zumárraga in 1526. The couple was given the country home as a wedding gift by Joan’s father Pedro. Pedro and his wife Domenja had another son, Martín, who moved to nearby Legazpia, and married María de Aizaga y Lakidiola. The descendants of Martín and María began another branch of the family whose members still live in Legazpi. The gift of the house included “all the land, water rights, *castaños, robledales, cubas, arcas, ajuar y bastago.*”³⁸ Translation: orchards and house furnishings.

María Irigoyenin died in childbirth, and Señor Joan de Zabaleta y Aguinaga then married María Joaniz de Zabalo y Legazpi, the daughter of General Legazpi the commander of the Royal troops in the Philippine Islands. This marriage created an even stronger Zabaleta connection to Legazpi. Joan and María Legazpi’s firstborn son, Santuru, fought in the War of the Pyrenees in 1558, and he was designated by King Felipe II to escort the French princess, Isabel de Valois, from the border of France into Spain, via the *camino real*, which passed directly in front of his Zabaleta house. Santuru’s son, Santos Zabaleta married Cathalina de Beydacar and became Capitán and payroll officer for the Royal Navy of Galleons. In 1613, he became *Alcalde* of Urretxu and then *Alcalde* of Bergara in 1615-1626. In 1615 he served as part of the official escort of King Felipe III through Guipúzcoa from the French border to Oñati.

The fourth Señor of Zabaleta was Joan de Zabaleta who married María de Galdos who also served as *Alcalde*. Joan de Zabaleta and María de Galdos had a son named Domingo. There exist two unsubstantiated versions of the descent line of Domingo de Zabaleta. The first, indicates that Domingo served as Capitán in the army of *Flandes* (Holland) and was killed at the battle of *los Paises Bajos*. In the second version he returns from war and produces an heir. The examination of both records suggests that the first is the most plausible, because there is no record of a male heir.

Assuming he had no male heir, the ownership of the *Caserío de Zabaleta* passed to his sister, María de Zabaleta y Galdos who married Miguel de Nocolalde y Barrenechea. Their daughter María Joséfa de Zabaleta married Cristóbal de Gaviria y Gárate, a member of the Order of Santiago, who was governor of the Spanish Guard and ambassador of the Court to France. His son, Juan Santos de Zabaleta y Gárate became the Royal court historian and author of numerous scholarly books on history, politics, and philosophy.³⁹

Juan de Zabaleta y Gárate married Antonia de Espinoza, and their son Antonio de Zabaleta y Espinoza married Juana Lafuente, who was born in San Sebastian in 1705. Their daughter Doña María de Zabaleta y Lafuente moved to México, most probably to meet her brother Antonio, who had established residence there. In Mexico, she married Antonio de Llobregat. One of their sons, Mariano, became *Capitán de Dragones* in Buenos Aires, while their other son, José de Zabaleta, married Francisca Sancho.

In the records of sixteenth century México, Pedro, Antonio, Juan, José, Santos, and other common Zabaleta "Christian" given names continue to reappear generation after generation, and well into the twentieth century. Second and third born sons also gave their children common family names, so it is quite easy to follow the family line through time to Mexico. For example, Juan de Zabaleta y Mondragón, a second son, married María de Salinas in 1595, and named his son Pedro de Zabaleta y Salinas. Pedro served in the *Indias* for many years as *Capitán* in the Royal Spanish navy. Manuel de Zabaleta served in Cuba as *Coronel* in the army. He died there in 1836, leaving a fortune to his native city of San Sebastian for the construction of hospitals. A street in San Sebastián (Donostia) was named in his honor in 1895.

Casa Torre de Zabaleta, Lesaca (Lesaka), Navarre

The *Casa-Torre de Zabaleta*, located in Lesaca, Navarre, was constructed in the thirteenth century or earlier. In 1364, Lesaca town records note that the tower was being reconstructed: "*A Tomas de Gárriz, maestro balador, 100 carlines prietos por restaurar las almenas del Palacio de Zabaleta.*"⁴⁰ Translation: Pay to master estimator, Tomas de Garriz 100 coins for the restoration of the Zabaleta Palace.

In 1444, Señor Ochoa López de Zabaleta defended the region of Navarre against the Guipúzcoans, who sacked and plundered his home.⁴¹ For his service to the Crown, the Zabaleta family was recognized by the monarchs of Aragon, and the funds to "restore" the *casa-torre*, damaged during the siege, were provided by King Juan II, in gratitude for Zabaleta loyalty and support.⁴² Around 1450, López de Zabaleta was granted a Captaincy, becoming the regional military commander, and was made responsible for the safety of Goizueta and "*el Gobierno de las Cinco Villas,*" the Government of the Five Villas.⁴³

Mosén Felipe Zabaleta the son of Ochoa López de Zabaleta became “El Señor del Mayorazgo de Zabaleta” and also the “owner” of the *Palacio de Cabo de Armeria de la villa*. Later he would receive the title of “*Salvador de Lesaca y Capitán General de Filipinas*”.⁴⁴ Felipe Zabaleta, who was also Señor de la *casa-torre de Zabaleta*, is recorded in Lesaca history through extant letters as having been the “*Magnifico y Nuestro Especial Amigo*,” of *Cardenal de Fox, Infant de Navarre*, Bishop of Bayona and uncle to Queen Catalina.⁴⁵

The historical documentation of the Zabaleta family in Lesaca, Navarre, briefly predates the family in Urretxu, Guipúzcoa, but is generally contemporary to the family just a few kilometers away. It is probable that the *Caserio de Zabaleta* in Urretxu was the Lesaca family’s country estate. Lesaca, located in the Basque province of Navarre, lists the *Torre de Zabaleta* as one of the two most important historical monument buildings in the town.⁴⁶ The Torre, also known as “*la Caxerna and as Labrija*” was known to have housed the troops of The Duke of Wellington during the Peninsular War or the *Guerra de Independencia* (1808-1814).⁴⁷ The troops were likely housed in the *casa-torre* during Wellington’s campaign to dislodge the French from San Sebastián (Donostia) in 1813, until the sacking and burning of San Sebastián at the hands of the Anglo-Portuguese Army, also in 1813.⁴⁸ Bishop Zarándia, the owner of the *casa-torre* during the French occupation of Spain, was held prisoner by the French until he was freed by Lord Wellington’s forces. An antique photograph of the *Torre de Zabaleta*, taken in 1916, shows a woman washing clothes in the Oñin River which runs along the side of the tower.⁴⁹

The "primary" Zabaleta family coat of arms is shared by both the family in Lesaca and Urretxu, and is characterized by a silver castle-tower on a green background. There is no doubt that the two family locations in the neighboring Basque provinces of Guipúzcoa and Navarre are directly related.

Zabaletas in Public Service to the Crown

With the establishment of the primary locations of Urretxu and Lesaca and their strategic importance to the Spanish Realm, the Zabaleta family began centuries of royal service, and established their social-economic and political dominance in the region. The Zabaleta family was established in this mountainous area by 800 CE., and played a major role in the formation of both Basque and Castilian history. One historian put it this way:

The Zabaleta family is both ancient and noble.⁵⁰ “*En el caso del apellido Zabaleta, todo y su antigüedad y desarrollo, posee títulos nobiliarios, según las fuentes bibliográficas.*”

Translated: *The surname Zabaleta, both in antiquity and through the years, possesses titles of nobility, according to the bibliographic sources.*⁵¹

There is ample evidence in the historical record of the importance the Zabaleta family played. While the term Guipúzcoan “nobility” is merely an historical footnote, in reality the title opened the door for the Zabaleta family to develop social, economic and political status, and it facilitated family movement to the Indies in the sixteenth century. In 1499, a royal document authored by Queen Blanca and King Juan de Labrit confirmed and increased all the social, political, and economic privileges granted to the Zabaleta family by King Carlos, on October 1, 1202. Lesaca history notes that the town continued to thrive through the centuries because of these benefits to the Zabaleta family: “*por los muchos servicios prestados por los vecinos de Lesaca a la Corona.*”⁵²

From the family’s earliest references, the Zabaletas are described as having been formally educated. They attended preparatory schools and universities run by religious orders, studied Roman Catholic doctrine and the law, read the classic literature, and were among the first to write the history of their people and their region. It was this education that led to successive generations of public office.

Numerous sources suggest that many Zabaleta ancestors served as magistrates, “*testigos,*” and “*escribanos,*” and were witnesses and scribes for legal documents. In one recorded case, it is said that:

“Beltran de Larrain y Galarza testo en Aranaz ante Matias de Zabaleta el 27 de diciembre de 1682, declarando que es Señor de la Casa de Larrain y que esta en su sano juicio. Pero enfermo del cuerpo.”

*Translated: Beltran de Larrain y Galarza testified in Aranaz before Matias de Zabaleta on December 27, 1682, declaring that the Señor of the Casa de Larrain was in good health and mentally able to handle his affairs although he was physically ill.*⁵³

From the history of the Basque town of Aranaz, another example describes three Zabaletas involved in a legal document, in which the parish priest, Don Pedro Luys de Zabaleta, is named as the executor of the estate of his nephew Lino de Larrain. The document was witnessed by Juan Fermín de Zabaleta and was notarized by Matías de Zabaleta. The author says that it was notable that all of the notaries (attorneys) in Aranaz were Zabaletas, and that the position was past on from father to son.⁵⁴

It is obvious from the records that the status of “nobility” or *hidalguía* provided great influence with the Crown and that the feudal lords maintained their status over land and people through the centuries. Beginning in the sixteenth century, families began to receive funds sent to them from the Americas. This newfound source of wealth further served to solidify family status at home in Spain with family in the colonies. As the years passed, it was important to maintain contact between Spain and the colonies for the purpose of arranging proper marriages. Marriages between Spanish families

remained a popular and important business proposition at least until the end of the colonial era in 1820 and in many cases well into the nineteenth century.

Family records indicate that arranged Basque marriages were common through the middle of the nineteenth century. Basque families in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, México and on the north side of the river, sought Basque men and women to marry from established Basque colonies up river at Camargo, Ciudad Mier, Revilla (now in Tamaulipas) as well as in Nuevo Leon, and throughout the Basque communities of México. In the eighteenth century, Matías Zabaleta made reference in his writing to the importance of “properly” educating the family members who leave Spain for the Americas so that they may have “proper marriages” with Spanish-born men and women when they came of age.⁵⁵

Records dating from the fourteenth century for the royal town of Urretxu through the present day indicate that the Zabaleta family played a substantial social, political, and economic role in the region and in the Americas. Basque and Spanish records list some of the positions and honors held by family members: Hidalgo, Military and Naval officer, Bishop, Monsignor, Priest, *Familiar de la Inquisition*, Royal Historian, *Pagador de la Real Armada*, *Alcalde*, Governor, Ambassador to the Court; Royal envoy; Professor, Author, Historian; Magistrate, *Caballero de la Orden de Santiago*, and Superintendent of Royal mints. Historical Basque notables born at the Zabaleta family home in Urretxu include General Gaspar de Jauregui, “*el Pastor*,” Francisco Domingo de Zabaleta, professor of the University of Alcalá in the seventeenth century; and Santuru de Zabaleta y Zabalo, special envoy of King Felipe II in 1565. As noted, the coat of arms from the house of Zabaleta de Urretxu is shared by Zabaleta families in Lesaka, Navarre, as well as with families in Durango, Bizkaia, Elduain, and Tolosa, further indicating that all of these branches of the family are related.⁵⁶

Other branches of the family display coats of arms which signify their individual accomplishment and membership in military orders. For example, in the Zabaleta houses in Irun and Mondragón, family members are known by the following coat of arms:

*En campo de oro, un árbol de sinople con un jabalí de sable empinado a su tronco; also, En campo de oro, cuatro escudetes de gules cargados de una cruz a todo trance de argent y colocados en dos palos. Entre ellos tres panelas de sinople colocadas dos en los flancos y una en punta; tambien, En campo de argent, un águila de sable. En campo de gules, cinco veneras de oro colocadas en sotuer.*⁵⁷

Approximate translation: *On a field of gold, a green tree with a black boar with raised tusk. Also: On field of gold, four small red shields with silver crosses with two wooden clubs. Among them three green trees two placed at the sides and one at the top; Also: On a field of*

silver, a black eagle, on a red background, with five gold scallop shells arranged in a bent cross.

Over at least the last 1,228 years of recorded history, Zabaletas are documented to have served the Realm as nobles, adventurers, religious, military, politicians, and intellectuals. They were called to serve the Kings of the house of Aragon, and to escort Queen Isabel through Guipúzcoa. When it was time to adventure out to the New World, Zabaletas are known to have been among the first to dare.

Ermita de San Juan and La Virgen de Zabaleta

The *Caserío de Zabaleta* was located on one of the principal pilgrimage routes to *Santiago de Compostela*. From the twelfth century to the present day, the family has maintained the hermitage of San Juan, located on family property and along the road that the pilgrims walk. At some point in the distant past, the hermitage acquired the sacred object of a “*Black Virgin*,” known also as the *Virgen de Zabaleta*. Beginning in medieval times, the Zabaleta country house complex included a sanctuary for weary travelers, as well as a hospital for pilgrims.⁵⁸ The *Diccionario Histórico Geográfico*, dating from 1802, lists a pilgrim's hospital located at *Caserío de Zabaleta*.⁵⁹

The family home was positioned along one of the most heavily traveled routes of the medieval world. Travelers of all social classes, including royalty, passed along this route and, visited the *Virgen Negra de Zabaleta*.

Since the time of their conversion, more than a thousand years ago, the Basques have been fervent Catholics. Today, the Basque Country is characterized by the duality of sophisticated large cities, with first class universities, modern industry and wealth, along with the pastoral countryside where little has changed in a thousand years. In the rural areas, life continues to be based on the changing of the seasons, and Catholicism has been frozen in time very much as it has in rural México. In 1610, Fray Felipe de Zabaleta, the priest at Zugarramurdi and the Monastery of Urdax played a major role as inquisitor in the famous Witchcraft trials of Logroño.⁶⁰

Three hundred years later, in the 1930s, an anti-clerical fervor swept over Spain, very much as it had in México. In 1930, the dictatorship of Primo de Rivera ended, followed in 1931 by the abdication of King Alfonso XIII and the declaration of the Second Republic. By May of 1931, Basque Bishop Mateo Mugica of Vitoria had been expelled, and, in June of 1931, the Primate of Spain, Cardinal Pedro Segura, was expelled as well. The rural religious backlash began when, in late June of 1931, a little-known but important hysterical craze befell the inner mountain communities of Guipúzcoa.

Described in William Christian's book *Visionaries: The Spanish Republic and the Reign of Christ*, by July 1931, crowds of more than 50,000 persons gathered in remote and rural Guipúzcoa to see visions and miracles. As in

Fátima and Lourdes, first children and soon adults began to have visions of the Virgin Mary, to fall into trances, to communicate heavenly messages. This hysteria brought international attention to this remote corner of the earth and was roundly condemned by the Church, but, curiously, it was seen as useful by the government. In México, less than a decade earlier, President Plutarco Elias Calles made his famous visit to El Niño Fidencio at Espinazo in the desert of northern México. In November of 1931, the Basque seer José Garmendia was similarly requested to visit Spanish President Macía in Barcelona.

The center of the “seer” phenomena was Ezkioga, a village very near to Urretxu and Zumárraga, and one of the “permanent seers” was León Zabaleta, a humble farmer from Oñati, located only a few miles from Ezkioga.⁶¹ As in México, eventually the government joined the Church in condemnation, fearing the emergence of a new socio-political-religious movement that they could not control. In early 1932, the Spanish government, in an attempt to separate government from religion, demanded the removal of all religious images from government offices in Guipúzcoa. This is most likely when the icon of the Virgen of Zabaleta was removed from its permanent shrine at the *Caserio de Zabaleta* in an effort to protect it from destruction by the anti-clerical secular movement. In 1933, the Vatican denounced the agglomerations of religious fanatics in Guipúzcoa, and the cult was forced underground. In 1936, three years of turmoil across Spain led to the overthrow of the Second Republic, to the Spanish Civil War, and to continued reprisals against Basques by General Franco, including, in 1937, the Nazi bombing of the Basque national symbol, the Tree of Guernica.⁶²

Neither dictators nor World War have been able to dampen Basque religious and political fervor, and now in the 21st century, Basque fringe separatist groups continue to operate in the mountains and conduct terroristic plots against the Spanish government and people. The dark side of family history includes at least one Zabaleta family member who is a convicted “ETA” (Basque Fatherland and Unity) terrorist. In December 2001, José Javier Zabaleta received 200 years imprisonment for an attack in 1980 that killed five persons.⁶³ In a recent article, Inaki Zabaleta, “found that 85 percent of all articles on Basques in the U.S. Press made reference to terrorism and that of the approximately 2.4 million Basques only about 70 are terrorists. In contrast, Patxi Zabaleta, a representative in the Navarre legislature and the leader of “ARALAR,” a Basque nationalist party, openly opposes violence and supports the arrest of “ETA” members, including at least one of her kinsmen.⁶⁴ Patxi Zabaleta has said, “Once people start settling down, politics is far from the problems of daily life. Self-determination is not the bread and butter of daily life.”⁶⁴ On March 24, 2006, ETA declared an end to terrorism and announced a “permanent” cease-fire in order to seek political solutions to issues of nationalism in the Basque Country.

Zabaletas in the New World

The movement of Zabaletas from their homes in Guipúzcoa and Navarre to the New World began at least five hundred years ago. Historical documents indicate that Zabaletas were among the first to arrive in the New World, arriving by the year 1500.⁶⁵ We know, however, that they were not included among the first 506 founding *encomenderos* of New Spain 1521-1555.⁶⁶ Only a handful of the original *encomenderos* was Basque. Almost certainly the first Zabaletas in the Americas were military and naval officers and *hacendados*.

It is widely known that the majority of the seamen recruited by Cristóbal Colón (Christopher Columbus) were Basque sailors, and at least one Spanish publication includes a Zabaleta on the crew list.⁶⁷ It is well documented that Columbus had strong Basque connections, that his ship the Santa María was owned by the Basque merchant, Juan de la Cosa, and the Pinzón brothers, and that Columbus sailed with a Basque crew. Additionally, the crew of the ship La Niña was primarily Basque. The Mariners' Museum of Newport reports that, on his second voyage, Columbus sailed "with 17 ships, 1,200 men and boys, including sailors, soldiers, colonists, priests, officials," many of whom we know were Basque.⁶⁸

Some of the earliest documented members of the Zabaleta family were seafarers and fishermen. In his book, *The Basque History of the World*, Kurlansky suggests that Basques are believed to have discovered the route to North America by following the great whale migration in the North Atlantic. Basque fishermen preceded Norsemen in North America and were there centuries before Columbus.⁶⁹ It is safe to establish a historical baseline for the Zabaleta family's arrival in the New World between 1492 and 1520, a supposition that has considerable support, but still requires definitive documentation.

The Spanish utilized their earliest Caribbean outposts as jumping-off points to México and the rest of Latin America. The records of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), LDS database, "Familysearch.org," documents Zabaletas in Cuba and Puerto Rico from the early 1500's and in México, Central America and South America from shortly after the *Conquista* and certainly by 1530.⁷⁰ Evidence from these important databases, along with other historical records, indicate that from approximately 1500 forward, and with each wave of Spanish exploration and colonization of New Spain, Zabaletas were present, many playing significant and historic roles. Zabaleta men made their way from the Basque homeland to the New World, first as naval and military officers and as members of religious orders. Zabaleta colonists quickly followed.

By the end of the fifteenth century, all of the factors critical for the Basque Diaspora to the New World were in place. Major Basque families recognized by the Crown sat at Court and were considered to be noble and

loyal. Additionally, as “good” Catholics they were positioned for favor by the Catholic Monarchs. Major Basque families had established dominance over land and sea, and, by 1500, the principal families were sent to the New World, serving as landlords, government officials, priests, officers, and professional soldiers. All Spanish families had members who were in need of land, and it was known that in the New World one could easily establish rank and status not held or possible in Spain.

It is important to note that tracing family genealogy across five centuries and two continents is no simple matter. One major genealogical research technique that has served this study is the tracing of “Christian-Baptismal” or given names, passed down over generations from father to son and daughter. Tracing Zabaleta family history is informed by both the uniqueness of the surname, as well as the consistency and faithfulness of their given names. Therefore, given names like Pedro, Juan, José, Antonio, Francisco, Santos, Bartolo, and Abraham are bestowed upon the male children in the family generation after generation and century after century across continents. For example, the landlord of *Caserío Zabaleta* in the late fifteenth century was Pedro de Zabaleta. The initial patriarchs of the Zabaletas in México were located in the states of Veracruz, México and Puebla in 1550, in Hidalgo in 1600, in Nuevo León, Coahuila, Durango and Zacatecas in 1650, and in Brownsville, Texas, in 1890. All were named Pedro and all are descendants from the original Pedro in Spain.

Zavaletas Arrive in México 1530

The first Zabaletas to arrive in México were sailors and soldiers, followed by priests and then colonists. Service to the Realm was followed by attention to family interests. Records document the arrival of Zavaletas in Veracruz shortly after the *Conquista*. Immediately following the fall of Tenochitlán in 1521, Hernán Cortez and his troops had to be supported by supply lines from Spain through Cuba to Veracruz. One of the first *Conquistadores*, Juan Navarro a Basque from Navarre, is a documented family ancestor whose descendants were among the founders of Saltillo. The areas along this sixteenth-century supply route comprise the current day Mexican States of Veracruz, México and Puebla, with the State of Hidalgo a little to the north of the Valley of México and Oaxaca to the south.

Zavaleta family oral history places family members in the Mexican states of Veracruz in the 1520s as naval and military officers and in the Valley of México and Puebla by 1540 as colonists. Zavaleta family members were also established in Hidalgo between 1540 and 1580, where they launched ranching interests in the area of *Huichapan, Provincia de Jilotepec*. By the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Zavaleta surname frequently appears in the historical record in México.⁷¹ The Zabaletas of Urretxu are known to have established residence in México in the middle of the sixteenth century, and are

believed to have been established in Puebla on the east side of the volcano and in the Valley of Chalco where they founded the *Hacienda de Zavaleta*. It is at the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* that the given names Pedro and Antonio first appear in México and then follow through the generations with both the southern branch and the northern branch of the family.

Hacienda de Zavaleta

Tlalmanalco, in the Mexican State of México, is a picturesque drive on a modern highway not more than thirty miles from México City. However, in 1519, at the time of the *Conquista*, it was a regional capitol of the Aztec empire. It is an interesting note that the Nahuatl word “Tlalmanalco” translates to “lugar de tierra plana,” or the place of flat earth, thus bearing an uncanny resemblance to the meaning of Zavaleta in the Basque language.⁷² Positioned along the route from coastal Veracruz to México City, this central place was one of the earliest Basque settlements. The *Hacienda de Zavaleta* is today located in the village of San Rafael in the ancient municipio of Tlalmanalco which sits at the foot of the beautiful snowcapped volcano *Iztaccíhuatl*. The *Río de la Compañía* runs down from the snows of the volcano and through the lands of the hacienda. A group of twelve Franciscan missionaries built one of the earliest Catholic churches in México on this spot in the 1530s. The Church of San Luis Obispo de Tolosa (Tolosa is a Basque town in Guipúzcoa) is the burial place of the messianic Franciscan leader Fray Martín de Valencia, leader of the Christianization of the region.⁷³ In 1564, only forty years after the *Conquista*, José de Castañeda the governor of Tlalmanalco leased land that he had inherited from his father, to twenty-one Spanish families including the Zavaleta family. The *Hacienda de Zavaleta* was established at Tlalmanalco by Coronel Joaquín de Zavaleta, of the Puebla Zavaletas, in 1703 at the beginning of the eighteenth century, and is considered to be a “magnificent” example of a Spanish Baroque hacienda in colonial Mexico.⁷⁴ Unfortunately, the family hacienda was lost due to “poor administration” and the inability of its founder to pay a debt of 4,850 pesos which had accumulated during the period 1700 and 1770. At the time of its loss, it is estimated that seventy percent of the native population in the area lived on and worked for the *Hacienda*.⁷⁵ There is evidence, however, that Zavaletas lived in the area well before 1700, since by that time there existed four mills in the province, one named San Nicolás de Zavaleta, indicating that the family had farming interests in the province in the 1600’s.⁷⁶ The *Hacienda de Zavaleta*, as indicated earlier, is located on the north side of the volcano in the Valley of Chalco-Amecameca. The Zavaleta family was well established in the State of Puebla on the southeast side of the volcano by 1600. By the middle of the 18th century, there existed 46 haciendas in the area of Chalco consisting of “rented” lands which produced wheat, corn and barley. These included the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* which was a speculative entrepreneurial enterprise, called “*haciendas aventureras*.”⁷⁷ Of

the 46, only 4 were irrigated, the others dependant upon rain for the crops and when crops failed debts to the actual land owners mounted to a point where they could not be repaid. This constituted a kind of indenture system for the privileged class of landless Spaniards. While considerable research remains to be done on this system, it is quite possible that Colonel Zavaleta's military profession made it impossible for him to properly attend to his hacienda. The *Hacienda de Zavaleta* was featured in the January 1993 issue of the magazine *México Desconocido*.⁷⁸

While the *Hacienda de Zavaleta*, in the State of México lives on and is immortalized in Mexican history as the site of the signing of "*El Convenio Zavaleta*," in reality the property which bears the surname was held by the family for less than a century. In 1832, General Santa Anna chose the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* as the site for a treaty (*convenio*) signed by the Generalissimo and General Bustamante, which returned General Gómez Pedraza to power, thus guaranteeing Santa Anna's own return to power.⁷⁹

Among the Christian given names passed on in the Zavaleta family, Antonio and Pedro, are two of the most prominent names linking Puebla to the Basque homeland. Antonio de Zavaleta was a family patriarch in Puebla during the seventeenth century from where Joaquin is believed to have originated and during the Mexican Revolution there was a Coronel Antonio Zavaleta in Toluca.⁸⁰ Records indicate that Zavaletas founded and built the hacienda and occupied it from 1700 to some point in the eighteenth century at which time ownership was passed on in succession to several other Spanish families who own the hacienda buildings and its ruins to this day.⁸¹ At the beginning of the 19th century and at the end of the colonial period, the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* was counted in the lands of Doña Gertrudis Ignacia de la Cotera Rivascacho, wife of the Conde de San Bartolomé de Jala.⁸² Like any large land operation, over the years, they experience both good times and bad, and one interesting record encountered during this study indicates that some *Hacienda de Zavaleta* farm equipment was to be auctioned for the payment of debts in 1870.⁸³ During the post-colonial eighteenth and nineteenth century ownership of the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* was passed to a series of Spaniards. In 1915, the region of Chalco-Amecameca, in which the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* is located, had a population of over 100,000.⁸⁴ Only approximately 50 percent of the land had been converted to Ejido due to the social and economic power of the Spanish families which controlled the lands. In the decade after the revolution seven Spaniards controlled approximately 67,000 (165,000 acres) hectares while all together non-campesinos controlled more than 102,000 hectares (252,000 acres).⁸⁵ At the beginning of the 20th century the lands of the *Hacienda de Zavaleta* were in the possession of José de la Macorra, and now a century later, while most of the original hacienda land is in *ejido* the beautiful buildings of the hacienda originally built by the Zavaleta family are

still owned by the Macorra family. It was the Macorra family that developed the *Industria papelera*, or paper mill in the area a century ago, and employed most of the town's people.⁸⁶ “*tenemos arreglados bien nuestra titulos pero carecemos de datos para justificar el despojo verificado despues del ano 1857.*” “*La fabrica San Rafael (Hacienda de Zavaleta), rodeada de hermosos bosques y majestuosas caidas de agua, controlaba los principales elementos para un adecuado funcionamiento: madera, agua, y vias de comunicacion. Los bosques cercanos y los viveros instalados en sus propiedades, como la hacienda de Zavaleta en Tlalmanalco...le proporcionaban la madera.*”⁸⁷ Translation: “We have good titles to our land but we lack data to justify the loss of land we suffered after 1857.” *La Hacienda de Zavaleta* at San Rafael was surrounded by beautiful forests and majestic waterfalls that provided the most important natural resources for a suitable operation: wood, water, and roads near forests and the plant nurseries that we built on the hacienda. The hacienda provided ample resources for all who lived on the Hacienda de Zavaleta in Tlalmanalco.” By 1936, and two decades after the Mexican Revolution, the *X-Hacienda de Zavaleta* had been reduced in stature to a “*ranchería*,” with fewer than 1,000 hectares (2,470 acres) of land, the amount that the law would tolerate for a single owner. *Campesino* or peasant claims for land on the “*rancheria*” continued well into the 1940's.⁸⁸ It was at that time that the attorneys for the Macorra family argued that the majority of claimants for land were in fact former paper mill workers, were not native to the area, and had no intention of farming the land. In March 2006, Tony and Gaby visited the *X-Hacienda de Zavaleta* and found its beautiful grounds and buildings in a state of decline.⁸⁹

The Zavaleta Diaspora in México

The highest density of Zavaletas found in sixteenth and seventeenth century records are found in the adjoining States of Veracruz, Puebla, México, Oaxaca, and Hidalgo. A family legend passed down from generation to generation recounts that, after the initial Zabaletas were established in Veracruz, the family split, with one branch establishing roots in the southeastern states (especially in Puebla, and Oaxaca), with another branch going north to the Mexican state of Hidalgo. Records place Zavaletas in the area of Huichapan, Provincia de Jilotepec, in the present Mexican State of Hidalgo as early as 1550. Oaxaca, Puebla and México, were major destinations for settlement by Spanish families in the early colonization period. By the early 1700s, a major branch of the Zavaleta family had been established in Oaxaca and, along with the Zavaleta family in Puebla and México, has a large kindred group that continues to thrive there today.

By the beginning of the sixteenth century, the Zabaleta family in Spain was vested with large land holdings, with family members playing major

roles at Court, in the Church, and in the Military. Additionally, the marriages of Spanish-born (*Españoles*) Zabaletas were routinely arranged for Spanish-born Zabaletas living in *Nueva España*, thus solidifying existing social and economic networks between families in Spain and México. Because Basque family statutes (*fueros*) required that control the family land be inherited by the firstborn son, second born children and other siblings had to be “married out” or strategically placed in political, military, and religious roles. The dawn of the seventeenth century saw a heavy flow of people and supplies from Spain to the New World, providing tremendous opportunity for service and fortune. By the early 1600s, family members were establishing positions with every wave of colonization in the Americas.

The Basque colony of Nueva Vizcaya, modern day Durango, was colonized in the 1630s, and the northern territories of Nuevo León, Coahuila and Chihuahua by the mid-seventeenth century. Durango and Zacatecas became launching points for the exploration and colonization of the North that continued through the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. Zavaletas were located in every Basque enclave along the major *Camino Real*, or King’s Highway. This major route ran northward to Chihuahua and Coahuila and into New Mexico. In his book, *Camino del Norte*, Erlichman describes how pre-historic Indian trails were used by the Spanish, Tejanos Texians and then by modern American highway builders. A good example of family movement can be seen from the presence of Zavaletas in Parras and Torreón, Coahuila, where Zavaletas were documented to have been born and to have lived throughout the sixteenth century. This is also true of the example of Fray Juan de Zavaleta, who most likely attended the Franciscan seminary in Zacatecas and lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, at the time of the Pueblo Revolt.

Zavaletas on the Northern Frontier in 1600

The Zavaleta family of Northeastern Mexico and Southern Texas traces its family origin to members who emigrated from the Mexican State of Hidalgo during the founding and colonization of Nuevo León around 1600. Historical evidence indicates that the Zavaletas living in the Mexican State of Hidalgo were very successful ranchers and growers. By 1600, the family was described as “wealthy Basque ranchers,” and they were asked by other Basque explorers and *empresarios* to participate in the exploration and colonization of Nuevo León, with the promise of more land as an important incentive.

Zavaleta family members José and Luis Zabaleta, listed as *Españoles*, from Hidalgo in the first census, established land holdings in Cerralvo, the birth place of Nuevo León. We know that, at the time, José and Luis moved northward from Hidalgo to Nuevo León, the Señor de Zabaleta in Huichápan, Provincia de Jilotepec, was Pedro Zabaleta. Pedro could have been their grandfather, their father, or an older brother. At this time we do not know. By 1635, the two brothers, José and Luis Zabaleta, were selected to “lead”

a group of colonists in the founding of the new town of Cadeyreta near Monterrey. The legal act that conferred the land to them for settlement is documented in the official records of Cerralvo.⁹⁰

Following both Basque and Spanish traditions, José and Luis were required to strike out on their own in order to establish new family land holdings. Most likely, the Señor de Zavaleta sanctioned their joining the exploration of the north, and because they had the coveted status of *Español*, they were guaranteed land. Records for the founding of Cadeyreta list the number of families, Indians, and livestock they brought to the new town. José Zavaleta was further designated as the first *alcalde* of the newly established town of Cadeyreta. Further research is required in Cadeyreta to determine the outcome of the family investment there. It is probable that they or their descendants subsequently moved to the metropolitan areas of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon and Parras, Coahuila. The dates of their appearance and movement coincide with the appearance of Luis Zavaleta in Coahuila, and it is most likely that Luis moved from Cadeyreta to settle in Parras or Torreón, Coahuila. Records indicate that there was movement of Zavaleta family members to the Mexican State of Coahuila at the same time as Nuevo León.

Within a single generation, the family's principal given name of Pedro began to appear in the records of Monterrey, circa. 1700. By the middle of the eighteenth century, with the formation of the Escandón expedition to colonize Nuevo Santander, Spanish towns were established along the *Rio Bravo del Norte* from Laredo down to Matamoros, Tamaulipas. Many of these Spanish pueblos had large Basque contingents. Basque marriages continued to be arranged between Spain on the one hand and Camargo and Matamoros on the other, well into the nineteenth century. Pedro Zavaleta and his wife María Encarnación in Monterrey in the early eighteenth century produced a son, Santiago (James) Zavaleta (1775) whose wife was Pascuala Hernández. Their son, Pedro Zavaleta was born in 1810 in Monterrey. Pedro Zavaleta married María Simona García, and they had sons Gabino (b.1830) and José Francisco (b.1834) and daughters María Luisa (b. 1838) and Telesfora (b. 1849), in Monterrey, Nuevo León.

The time between 1810 and 1840 was turbulent in northern México and the Mexican province of *Coahuila y Tejas*. Boundary disputes continued for decades as families moved back and forth from their ranches in México below the *Rio Bravo* to their land grant ranches north of the *Rio Bravo*. Family lore recounts that Gabino Zavaleta, the son of Pedro Zavaleta and María Simona García, was born in Tejas. At this point, this is impossible to verify, except that the death certificate of his son Bartolo records his father's (Gabino) birthplace as Texas (México). Gabino was married to Agustina Sáenz, of a family known to have had large land holdings in South Texas. Their son Bartolomé is listed as having been born in Monterrey. Bartolomé

was always known in legal documents as Bartolo and was the patriarch of the Zavaleta family in Brownsville, Texas. Data from original records and transcribed records do not always match and hence discrepancies are yet to be validated. For example, in the Mormon records, and searching for “Sabaleta,” suggest that Pedro Zabaleta who married Maria Simona Garcia produced two sons Francisco (could be Gabino) who married Maria Agustina Sanchez in Monterrey on April 26, 1854, and Jose Francisco. Francisco Zabaleta and Agustina Sanchez (probably Sanchez Sáenz) produced four children we have record for, Bartolome, Isabel, Petronilo, and Jose Abran Zabaleta Sanchez who was christened on March 17, 1865 in San Juan Bautista, Cadereyta Jimenez, Nuevo Leon. This is very significant, in that for the first time, we have a direct Zavaleta connection back to Cadereyta. Additionally, we now know that Bartolo and Abraham had a brother Petronilo and a sister Isabel. This information was heretofore unknown to the family.

Fray Juan de Zavaleta and the Pueblo Revolt

Years ago, in the early 1970’s, while a graduate student at The University of Texas studying in the “old stacks” in the UT Tower, Tony was looking through Castañeda’s *Our Catholic Heritage in Texas 1519-1936*. Having learned that Carlos Castañeda was a Brownsville native and a revered University of Texas professor, Tony took interest in Castañeda’s work. Tony had become accustomed in his library research to automatically check the index for “Z” on the offhand chance of locating an ancestor. On that day, and to his surprise, he first learned about Franciscan Fray Juan de Zavaleta and his place in Texas history.

In his mammoth seven volume work, published under the auspices of The Knights of Columbus of Texas in 1936, Castañeda provided a sketchy note on Father Zavaleta from the expedition diary of Juan Domínguez de Mendoza Cavo y Caudillo, who set out on December 15, 1683, from *Presidio de El Paso del Norte* (present day Cd. Juarez, Chihuahua) down river on a reconnaissance of the Jumano and Tejas Indians living at the confluence of the *Rio Bravo* and the *Rio Conchos*.⁹¹

A small group of Franciscans had set out down river in the direction of the confluence of the *Rio Conchos*, two weeks earlier, on December 1, 1683. This group included Fray Juan de Zavaleta, Commissary of the Spanish Inquisition in New Spain. Father Zavaleta was credited in Mendoza’s notes as having celebrated Mass for a group of Jumano Indians on the north bank of the river (today Texas) on January 1, 1684.⁹² Fray Zavaleta had in fact been one of a long line of Franciscans who Christianized the Pueblo Indians in New Mexico.⁹³ The Oñate governorship began nearly a century of constant bickering between the Spanish government and the religious authority, providing an opportunity for a revolutionary charismatic movement to develop among the Pueblo natives.⁹⁴

Fray Juan de Zavaleta was a presbyter at Santa Fe Mission in 1680, when the “Pueblo Revolt” erupted, resulting in the deaths of at least 400 Spanish settlers throughout Nuevo México, as well as the martyrdom of twenty-one Franciscan priests.⁹⁵ Eleven Franciscans managed to escape, among them Father Zavaleta and his *compadre* Father Acevedo.⁹⁶ Retreating to the safety of the Presidio at *El Paso del Norte*, Father Zavaleta celebrated the first Catholic mass in Texas at Ysleta Mission on the north bank of the *Rio Bravo* (today Texas) on October 12, 1680. Mass was celebrated for approximately 100 Tiguas and assorted Spanish refugees from New Mexico, survivors of the revolt.⁹⁷ Our last historical glimpse of Father Zavaleta recounts that he and Father Nicolás López accompanied the Mendoza expedition on further explorations of northern Texas.⁹⁸

Zavaletas in Chapeño, Tamaulipas/Texas

In the 1750’s, José de Escandón, Count of Sierra Gorda, was commissioned to establish the final Spanish settlements along the lower *Rio Bravo*. He selected thirty-eight families from Cerralvo, Nuevo Leon to join the existing nineteen in the formation of Laredo, Revilla, Mier, Camargo and Reynosa. The group was authorized to form *haciendas, villas, and lugares* (settlements).

After one hundred years of peaceful existence along the *Rio Bravo del Norte*, the Mexican American War (1845-1848) ended their, difficult but tranquil life, with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo on February 2, 1848. The treaty established the boundary between México and the United States at the *Rio Bravo del Norte*, causing México to lose half of her landmass, but ostensibly guaranteeing Mexican citizens living on the north bank continued rights to their land. The Zavaleta family was one of those families, and the village of Chapeño, Tamaulipas, (now Texas), located below the present site of Falcon Dam in Starr County, would become their point of origin in the United States.⁹⁹

The little village of Chapeño was destroyed by the creation of Falcon Dam in the 1950’s. Today the *pueblito* called Chapeño is one of the most important birding sites in South Texas, attracting hundreds of birders to the area each year.¹⁰⁰ Tony visited the abandoned location of Chapeño in the 1980’s by driving along Chapeño County Road in western Starr County to its terminus. At the dead end of the road Tony found the ruins of a very old building made of large sandstone blocks. He was approached by an old man from a nearby farm. When Tony asked the man what this was, he responded that it was the ruins of the old Chapeño elementary school. Tony told him he was a Zavaleta, and the man did not hesitate to tell Tony an amazing story. He said that the huge sandstone blocks were carved out of the river bank by hand a hundred and fifty years ago, an old Spanish method, and were originally taken from the ruins of the Zavaleta family home nearby (the Zavaletas family had moved to

Roma) to build an elementary school for Chapeño that was then abandoned in the 1950's.¹⁰¹

While Chapeño was a major family focal point in Texas, Gabino Zavaleta and Agustina Sáenz, who were said to have been born in Tejas. The Zavaleta family were well known merchants in Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas and were present in Mier at the time of the famous Black Bean Episode in 1843.¹⁰² Family stories handed down over the generations tell how Zavaletas lived in south-central Texas around Gonzáles, and watched the hostility toward Mexicans unfold there from the 1830s through the formation of Texas and eventually to the Mexican American War, when they returned to the safety of Cd. Mier, Tamaulipas. Gabino and Agustina had two sons: Bartolo and Abraham. Bartolo Zavaleta Sáenz was born in Monterrey, Nuevo León, México, on August 24, 1857,¹⁰³ the feast day of St. Bartholomew.¹⁰⁴ Little is known about the parents of Bartolo and Abraham, who are said to have died, leaving Bartolo and Abraham orphaned in their childhood. Family lore recounts that the two boys were then “adopted” by a family friend, the well-known Mexican General Francisco Estrada, in Nuevo León. At his death, General Estrada left the two Zavaleta brothers a *porción* of land (59) that had originally been granted to Juan de Dios García, along the *Rio Bravo*.¹⁰⁵ This story rings true in that the two Zavaletas, being from Ciudad Mier or Monterrey, had no original claim to *porción* 59 and had to have acquired it through another means such as a gift, as the story suggests. The Zavaleta *porción* was adjacent to the Chapa family *porción*, so, being sensible people, the two Zavaleta brothers married the two neighboring Chapa sisters. Bartolo married Eufémia Chapa Sáenz on January 27, 1875¹⁰⁶ at the Our Lady of Refuge Parish in Roma, Texas,¹⁰⁷ and on October 27, 1896, Abraham married Estéfana Chapa Sáenz, Eufémia's younger sister.¹⁰⁸

Descendants of Abraham and Estéfana

Over time and distance, families have a way of losing track of one another and this was the case of the descendants of the two Zavaleta brothers. Bartolo and Eufémia Chapa Sáenz Zavaleta stayed in south Texas, and their descendants mostly reside there today. Abraham who married Estéfana Chapa Sáenz Zavaleta, moved their family north into what is today Live Oak County, Texas.

Our great grandparents Bartolo and Eufémia died long before Tony was born. When Tony was a child, his grandfather Pedro, did not speak English and was in his eighties. At the age of fourteen, Tony Zavaleta was the only available grandson who had a valid Texas driver's license, and as such, was called upon to be the “regular” driver for “Papa Pete,” back and forth to his ranch at Nuevo Progreso. While they enjoyed a cordial relationship, there was simply no way that Tony, with his budding interest in family history, could

have asked his grandfather Pedro about his father Bartolo's brother Abraham and his descendants.¹⁰⁹ Our fathers and their siblings have always known that their grandfather Bartolo had a brother named Abraham, but as recently as the 1970's they could not tell us anything about what happened to Abraham's branch of the family.

In 1973, while on a Ford Foundation trip to San Francisco, Tony happened to look in the telephone book for Zavaletas, and found Juan Zavaleta, today 87 years of age (son of Santos, son of Abraham; "Tio Johnny" (b. 1919 Roma, wife Maxilinda Ravara). Juan owned and operated several highly regarded limousine services in the San Francisco Bay area including the Tri-Terminal Limousine Service at the San Francisco International Airport.¹¹⁰ In his prime Juan served as the Bay area chauffeur for Governor Ronald Reagan and once drove the King and Queen of Spain on their week long trip through California. His company was highly recommended by the Royal advance people and because they recognized his name as having a Spanish-Basque origin.

While on a trip to Michigan, and on his way to Michigan State University in the late 1970's, Tony opened the Detroit telephone book to find Rolando and Donald Zavaleta listed (Juan had told Tony that he had cousins in Detroit). Tony called the Detroit Zavaletas, mentioned Juan, and was instantly connected again. This time Tony discovered an even greater family treasure located in the Midwestern states of Michigan, Ohio, and Illinois, all cousins and descendants of Abraham and Estéfana.¹¹¹ There is considerable research still to be completed on the descendants of Abraham and Estéfana. We know that, at some time in the early twentieth century, they moved out of the Lower Rio Grande Valley and relocated to the area around Live Oak, Karnes and Bee Counties, and San Diego in Duval County, Texas.¹¹²

It is not known what their connection was to that area of south Texas. It quite possibly could have been a Chapa-Sáenz family connection since we know that there are Chapa-Sáenz in that area of San Diego, Texas. There could also have been an earlier Zavaleta connection to their father, Gabino, who is believed to have been born in Tejas and who fought with the Tejanos in the Texas Revolution. At this point we simply do not know, but it certainly predates modern Texas. Their connection to the area around San Diego stems from Spanish land grants and settlements prior to 1800.

Family connections long lost, Abraham and Estéfana had eight children: five boys, Santos (b. 1898 – d.1970 in Joliet, Ill.); Francisco (b.a 1902, d. unknown); Abraham, Jr. (1904-d. 1946 in Raymondville, Texas); Bartolo (b. 1910-d. San Diego, Texas 1976 in Gibsonburg, Ohio.); José María (b.1907 in Roma - d. at 10 months); as well as three daughters, María (d. 1938 in Runge, Tx.); Sylvestra (of Beeville, Texas) and the youngest, Petra (died in 2000 in Weslaco, Texas).¹¹³ Their mother Estéfana died very young, most likely sometime in the 1920s. While not confirmed, it is possible that she died as a

result of the complications from delivering her youngest child, Petra. We do not presently know where Estéfana died and is buried. Abraham was widowed in the 1920s, and raised his eight children. He did not re-marry. Abraham is believed to have moved back to the Lower Rio Grande Valley after the death of his wife Estéfana. Family history tells us that he died before his brother Bartolo, who died in 1936. Odes Zavaleta de Galvan the daughter of Bartolo and Adelaida, and who presently resides in Ohio, indicates that in a conversation with her father Bartolo he recollected that he was 12 years old when his father Abraham died. Therefore Abraham would have died in 1922 but we do not know where he is buried in South Texas. Quite possibly they are both buried around Three Rivers in Live Oak County, Texas. Bartolo was supposed to “pick-up” the daughters of Estéfana and Abraham to be raised by his wife, their *Tia* Eufémia, but they were “taken in” by other family members nearer to where they lived. It was largely the early deaths of Abraham and Estéfana that led to the two branches of the family being separated and unknown to one another for more than fifty years. There continued to be marriages between members of the Sáenz family with the children of Estéfana, who was a Chapa Sáenz.¹¹⁴ Abraham, Jr. lived for a while in Runge, Texas, in Karnes County, and then moved permanently to Raymondville, in Willacy County, working in agriculture. He is buried in Willacy County. He had three children: sons, Manuel; Guadalupe, who live in the State of Washington; and Francisco, who lived in Bakersfield, California. He also had two daughters: Epifania and Agrora.¹¹⁵

Tony also learned, in the 1980’s, that there were Zavaletas living in Bakersfield, California, and that they are the descendants of Francisco (d. 1995), the son of Abraham Jr. This branch of the family is quite well known as *conjunto* musicians, and their descendants continue to reside in Bakersfield.¹¹⁶ Abraham, Jr.’s sons Guadalupe (Wally) and Manuel live in the State of Washington and have worked in the contract agricultural labor industry for many years. Manuel and his eight sons operate a very large and successful trucking company that operates eighteen wheelers nationwide. Santos, the son of Abraham and Estéfana, lived in the mid-west and had one son, Juan, and three daughters, Elida, Goya, and Santos (female). It was Santos’ son Juan whom Tony met from San Francisco. Juan's father Santos is buried in Joliet, Illinois.

Abraham and Estéfana’s son Francisco had four daughters; Levina, Amelia, Hortencia, and Juanita (who died at 8 years of age). Francisco and his four daughters lived in the area around Runge, Texas, in Karnes County. Abraham’s and Estéfana’s son Bartolo was married to Adelaida Ledesma (now age 85), and they had thirteen children, including seven sons (Samuel; Mario; Rolando; Americo; Donald; Arnoldo and Abraham) and six daughters (Dolores; María Elena; Lovelia; Odes; Rosa María; and Melinda). Bartolo,

the son of Abraham the brother of Bartolo, died in Gibsonburg, Ohio, and is buried there. His widow Adelaida, age 85, lives in Ohio, next door to her daughter Odes. Children, Abraham, Rosa Maria and Arnolando today live in Ohio. Today the grandsons and granddaughters of Bartolo and Adelaida live and work in the Midwestern states of Michigan, Ohio, but a large part of the family, including sons and daughters of Bartolo and Adelaida, have returned to West and South Texas.¹¹⁷ Lovelia and Melinda live in Plains, Texas; Dolores lives in Lubbock, Texas; Mario lives in Edinburg, Texas; Americo lives in North Carolina, Samuel, Rolando and Donald all live in Michigan. Abraham and Estéfana's daughter María (daughter Olivia) died in 1938 in Runge, Texas, and Petra (b. 1914 - d. 1998, children Socorro and Ezequiel) died in Weslaco, Texas in 2000. Sylvestra, who lived in the Beeville area near her son Jorge, is unaccounted for.

Descendants of Bartolo and Eufémia

The Chapa sisters inherited the Chapeño Ranch, the boundaries of which conformed to those of *porción* 58 in Starr County, Texas,¹¹⁸ Bartolo also had the title for *porción* 55 conveyed from Juan Antonio Leal and 56 conveyed from Juan Panteleon Yzaguirre. Their marriages to two Zavaleta brothers united both halves of Chapeño within one family by adding *porción* 59. Bartolo and Eufémia had eight children: Santos (b. 1875 - d. c. 1945); Pedro (b. 1881 - d. 1965); Nazaria (b. 1885 - d. 1910); Bruno (b. 1886 - d. 1915); María Flavia (b. 1887 - d. 1974); Agustina (b. c. 1890 - d. c. 1985); Leocadia (b. 1896 - d. 1973); and Joséfina (b. 1897 - d. 1986).¹¹⁹

Bartolo was a rancher, although he was called upon to run for Starr County Constable, precinct two, and on November 8, 1904, after receiving 222 votes, he was elected to that position.¹²⁰ Bartolo also served as deputy sheriff, and was deputized on January 27, 1909¹²¹ and March 19, 1930.¹²² It is said that no other person knew the river above and below Chapeño as well as Bartolo. He served as its only law enforcement officer for the first quarter of the twentieth century. When petroleum exploration came to the area, Bartolo was recruited by the South Texas Gas Company to work as a "line-rider" for the area from Chapeño down to Roma.

In the early 1900's, the river between San Ygnacio below Laredo and Roma was still some of the wildest country remaining in the United States. It was literally the "Wild West," and only the most experienced people dared ride the river between those two points. During the Mexican Revolution, it was commonplace for Mexican incursions to cross over to the Texas side, but it was said that the respect people had for Bartolo Zavaleta was such that revolutionaries and bandits stayed away from his jurisdiction.

Bartolo was a devout Catholic who guided the Oblates of Mary Immaculate, "Cavalry of Christ," based in Brownsville, Texas¹²³ as they visited the *rancherías* of Starr and Zapata counties. Bartolo was a strong proponent of

education and sent his children to parochial schools.¹²⁴ His son Pedro was boarded at Saint Joseph College in Brownsville, Texas, some one hundred miles down river. Pedro was sent to Brownsville as a boy, and would return home via riverboat in the summers and during the holidays. Upon his graduation, the Oblates and the Marist Brothers helped to send him to Monterrey Nuevo Leon, to continue his study of Civil Engineering at the university a precursor of famed Monterrey Tech. He returned as a graduate engineer and surveyor around 1895.¹²⁵

Bartolo and Eufémia's daughter Leocadia was born on November 9, 1891.¹²⁶ Tia Calla, as she was known, was boarded with the Sisters of Mercy in Rio Grande City and at Incarnate Word Academy Convent in Brownsville. She never married, and was the General Manager for the General Telephone Exchange Company in Roma, their first dial system. In 1912, she began many years of service as an elementary school teacher in Zapata and Roma, retiring in 1936. She taught at both public elementary schools and at parochial schools run by the Sisters of Mercy. Because she knew everyone in the area, she is said have been a formidable campaigner, and a strong supporter of the Democratic Party.¹²⁷ Her assistance in political races was heavily sought by all of the "big name *políticos*" of the day, including those of Duval County's Box 13, where her cousins lived. She is said to have been a factor in the presidential election of Lyndon Johnson, who later invited her to the White House. Leocadia led a long life and died on February 22, 1973, in Edinburg, Texas¹²⁸ Leocadia lived to be 81.¹²⁹ At the age of 5 in 1952, while traveling from Southern California to Brownsville, Texas, Tony remembers the Ferdinan Zavaleta family stopping by the Roma home of Tia Leocadia for a visit.¹³⁰ A rock collector from an early age, Tony's recollection of the visit is probably due to the fact that Leocadia's home had a rock wall from the famed Starr County petrified forest rock. María Flavia was born on May 7, 1887,¹³¹ and died on February 5, 1974, in Hidalgo County, Texas. She never married.¹³² In 1910 Nazaria became ill, and Bartolo was forced to borrow money for her treatment, using some of his land as collateral. Nazaria Zavaleta Chapa succumbed to her illness at the age of twenty-five on December 22, 1910, and, like her parents, is buried in the old section of the Roma Cemetery known as the *Cementerio de Roma*.¹³³ The ranch land was lost.

Over the course of his nearly half a century as a lawman in Starr County, Bartolo was summoned from time to time to Brownsville to testify in cases in Federal Court. He would travel there first by horse-drawn ranch wagon on dirt roads and later by train. On a trip from his farm to Rio Grande City, when Bartolo was riding in his wagon with his grandson, Armando Ramirez Zavaleta, the horses pulling the wagon were spooked, and the overturned wagon mortally wounded Bartolo. Bartolo Zavaleta Sáenz died the same day, September 24, 1936, at the age of seventy-nine.¹³⁴ His widow, Eufémia

Chapa de Zavaleta, lived for another eleven years, dying on June 9, 1948, at the age of 94.¹³⁵ Eufémia received medical treatment for the last eight years of her life from Dr. Mary Headley Edgerton, the first female physician in Starr County.¹³⁶

Santos Zavaleta, the daughter of Bartolo and Eufémia was born on November 1, 1875 in Starr County, Texas.¹³⁷ Santos Zavaleta married Hilarión Ramirez and had four children: Bartolo “Lito” (b. c. 1904 - d. 1997)¹³⁸, Ruben, Armando, and Roberto. Santos Zavaleta died around 1945.¹³⁹ Agustina Zavaleta was born in Starr County, Texas, on February 28, 1893.¹⁴⁰ She married Virgilio Rodriguez, and had four children: Gilberto, Virgilio, Minerva, and Romeo.¹⁴¹ She died in the late 1980s. Bartolo and Eufémia’s youngest daughter, Joséfina, was born around 1897, and, like her brother Pedro, was also boarded in Brownsville. She graduated from Incarnate Word Academy Convent in 1912.¹⁴² Upon graduation, she served for many years as the executive secretary for revered Cameron County Judge Oscar C. Dancy.¹⁴³ Joséfina married Guadalupe Elizondo, and had two children: Ramiro, who died in childhood of appendicitis,¹⁴⁴ and Josefina Margarita, who lived to adulthood. Joséfina Zavaleta Elizondo died in Cameron County on December 23, 1986.¹⁴⁵ During the decades after the Second World War, my cousins and I knew that we had a large extended family but unfortunately the family did not invite the descendants of the daughters of Bartolo and Eufémia to family gatherings. Therefore, the younger generations do not know them.

The Zavaleta family of Brownsville, Texas

Pedro Zavaleta Chapa was born on June 29, 1881, in Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas.¹⁴⁶ He was the first-born son of Bartolo and Eufémia and their second child. His older sister, Santos, was born six years earlier, on November 1, 1875.¹⁴⁷ After completing his engineering training, Pedro returned briefly to Roma, and then took a job in Nuevo Laredo, where he met and arranged a marriage to his first wife, Rafaela Mireles Farías, member of a prestigious family from Torreón, Coahuila.¹⁴⁸ Familial accounts state that Rafaela was fourteen when she married Pedro and that they did not have their first child for six years. Family tales recount that Pedro took Rafaela on the arduous three-day journey from Roma, Texas, to Falfurrias, Texas, to seek treatment from famed Mexican folk faith healer and curandero “Pedrito” Jaramillo.¹⁴⁹ Not long after this visit, Rafaela conceived their first child, Pedrito. During the first decades of the 20th century, Pedro worked briefly on the family ranch, and developed a business as a civil engineer with a land leveling and clearing business, “*desenraiz*,” which became his lifelong professional specialty. Pedro Zavaleta was so familiar with the eastern part of Cameron County that he was often consulted by A.E. Anderson, Cameron County's first professional surveyor and famed Indian relic collector. Knowing that Andrew Anderson

was an arrowhead collector Pedro would often locate archaeological sites on Anderson's maps which had been uncovered by Pedro's workers in the *monte alto*.

Pedro and Rafaela had four children: Pedro Jr., "El Paso Pete" (b. 1906 - d. 1968; wife Consuelo, child Hector); Rafael, "Uncle Ralph" (b. 1907 - d. 1985; wife Eloisa Valdez, children, Roberto, Ralph, Jr., Rosario); Alfonso, "Uncle Al" (b. 1918 - d. 1976; wife Anna Maria de Leon, children, Al, Jr., Norma, Louie); and Enrique, "Uncle Henry" (b. 1920 - d. 1996; wife Herlinda Ramirez Bruni, child Theresa), and moved his family to Brownsville sometime before World War I. In September, 1918, Pedro signed up for the American military draft in Brownsville, although he was not conscripted.¹⁵⁰ Family oral tradition conflicts with documents on when exactly the family arrived in Brownsville. Pedro told his son Jesús that he had moved to Brownsville in 1905.¹⁵¹ However, his first two sons were born in 1906 and 1907 in Starr County.¹⁵² It is possible that Pedro established himself in Brownsville, and brought his family from Roma to Brownsville at a later time. Pedro's two younger children by Rafaela, Alfonso and Enrique, were both born in Brownsville.¹⁵³

Upon arriving in Brownsville, Pedro was formally introduced to R.B. Kreager, the powerful Chairman of the Republican National Committee and Mayor of Brownsville. Bartolo, who was a well-known and respected Lawman in Starr County, introduced his son to Kreager. Pedro moved to Brownsville to become the general manager of the Brulay Plantation in the deep Southmost region, the largest sugar cane producing farm in the area.¹⁵⁴ Pedro's brother Bruno soon joined him, becoming the plantation commissary. Bruno Zavaleta had been university educated in Saltillo, Coahuila, and was a Certified Public Accountant. It was not unusual for large labor-intensive farms to employ hundreds of workers during harvest season. Bruno married Esperanza Lavios in Brownsville sometime before 1906, and their marriage produced three children: Raul (b. 1912 - d. 1958), Magdalena (b. 1913, now 92 years of age) and Bruno Hugo (b. 1915 - d. 1969 Children: Bruno Jr., Cecilia and Carmelita). Regrettably, in late 1915, Pedro's brother Bruno was killed in a mechanical accident involving a wheel on a water pump at the Brulay Plantation.

After Bruno's death, the Lavios family "took in" Esperanza and her young children.¹⁵⁵ His son, Bruno Hugo (Tio Bruno) began a very successful Alamo Finance Company in Brownsville, and became part owner, along with his uncle Alfredo Lavios of the Cactus Restaurant, and co-owner of the Brownsville Lumber Company with his Brother in Law, Manuel Marquez. He died on March 29, 1969. His brother Raul joined the United States Coast Guard (died in the 1950's) and Magdalena, Tia Manena, never married, and is the oldest living descendant of Bartolo and Eufemia Zavaleta. Manena had a very successful career in retail and retired from Sears in Brownsville. Rafaela, Pedro's wife of 20 years, died at the age of 34 on August 2, 1920, as a result of

complications associated with the birth of their fourth son, Enrique.¹⁵⁶

Because of the tremendous land clearing and leveling activities taking place in Cameron County in the 1920s, and because he was experienced in this business in Starr County, and a land surveyor, Pedro was hired by Lon C. Hill, the founder of Harlingen, to head an enormous land-clearing operation in eastern Cameron County, from Los Fresnos north to Rio Hondo and west to Harlingen and San Benito. Since this work was performed by hand labor, it is reported that he was responsible for the day-to-day operation and for many hundreds of workers.¹⁵⁷ His “big city” experience in the 1890s changed Pedro from his south Texas ranching forbearers. Descriptions of Pedro the Monterrey-educated engineer were of an incredibly handsome, impeccably dressed dandy who was well known in the elite circles of Matamoros society all of whom were also formally educated.

Pedro was living in Brownsville with Rafaela and their four boys at the time of her death. After Rafaela’s death, Pedro was introduced to his future wife, Concepción García Gómez, through his connections to Matamoros Basque society.¹⁵⁸ Concepción was born on April 24, 1900, to Jesús García Cortina and María Guadalupe Gómez Chapa.¹⁵⁹ Concepción was a descendant of one of the original colonizing families of Nuevo Santander in 1750, and was descended from regional aristocratic families, including the de la Garza, Falcón, Treviño, and Cisneros. All of these families played a large part in the development of the region. Concepción García Gómez Cortina Cisneros had seven siblings. Pedro and Concepción’s children joined the ranks of the Matamoros-Brownsville elite European families.

The García family were prosperous cotton farmers in México. Manuel García Gómez, Concepción’s brother, opened the first wholesale warehouse in the Rio Grande Valley. Throughout her life, Concepción, who was the great-grand daughter of Don Juan Nepomuceno Cortina Goseascochea (1824-1894), remained connected to the prominent families of Matamoros. Both Pedro and Concepción were members of the extended Chapa family, who were amongst the founders of Ciudad Mier, Tamaulipas. The Gómez family was prominent in its own right, and General Irineo Gómez, from whom Concepción is descended, was an original land grantee and owner of the Las Barrosas Ranch, which is presently located in Kenedy County, Texas, and consisted of 24,660 acres granted in 1833.¹⁶⁰ This ranch was lost as a result of the outcome of the Mexican American War. Irineo Gómez’ hacienda was located at the present site of San Carlos, Tamaulipas. In the 1980’s after a conversation with Tia Minerva Pacheco, she told Tony how to locate the old Hacienda site of Iréneo Gomez in San Carlos, Tamaulipas. Tony visited there for many years.

Concepción, a statuesque woman approaching six feet was formidable in every aspect of her life. While a kind, generous, and loving mother and grandmother, Concepción was respectful of even the most humble (a Cortina

family trait) in the community. During the deportation of Mexicans from the United States and Texas in the 1930s, she “sponsored” numerous less fortunate Mexicans, providing them with a “pass” so as not to be forcibly removed from the country. To this day, her deeds are legendary, and people, when learning that she was our grandmother, always have a heartfelt story to tell us about her and her impact on their family.

Concepción was eighteen years younger than Pedro, and met him after the loss of his first wife Rafaela. According to family anecdotes, Pedro originally thought to marry his sister-in-law Esperanza, Bruno’s widow, but Pedro’s two oldest sons (El Paso Pete and Tio Rafael) insisted instead that he marry Concepción.¹⁶¹ On July 2, 1921, Pedro married Concepción at the Immaculate Conception Cathedral in Brownsville, Texas.¹⁶² Pedro had four sons from his first wife Rafaela, and with his second wife Concepcion he had an additional six children: Jesús “Uncle Jesse”(b.1922; wife-mother Corina Esparza Cavazos, children: Dr. Jesse, Diana, Dr. John); Fernando “Uncle Zip”(b. 1924-d.2004, wife-mother Eleanor Reid, children: Anthony Dr. Tony, Thomas Dr. Tommy, Ferdinan Jr., and Eleanor; children by other mothers include (Joe Alfred Garcia, mother Estella Robles; Ashley Contreras, mother Celia Contreras; and Lucy, Patty, Jo Ann, mother Lucinda Guevara); Emma “Tia Emma”(b. 1926 husband Tony Gutierrez, children: Concepción, John, Emma, Gerardo, Jay, Melinda, Melissa and Gus); Josefina “Tia Bebe”(b.1927, husband Leonel Garza, children, Pedro, Belinda, Concepción, Leonel and Josefina); Gustavo “Coach Gus”(b.1929, first wife, Rose Sanchez, children: Nannette, Dr.Rose Marie, second wife, Graciela Frago, children: Vanessa, Gustavo, and Bartolo); José “Dr. Joe”(b. 1932, first wife Rosalinda Guerra, children: Joseph Jr., Gina, Peter, second wife Susan Schoch, children: Nancy, Elizabeth, David, and Samuel).

The family of Pedro and Concepción lived initially at 212 E. Jefferson St. in a house that Pedro designed, but were forced to sell it due to the hard times during the Depression.¹⁶³ Pedro, who grew up on a farm, owned his own farm near Nuevo Progreso, Tamaulipas, in an area known as Empalme.¹⁶⁴ Despite the Great Depression, Pedro, while faced with difficult times, continued to thrive. It was told to Tony as a child that, during the Great Depression, our grandmother Concepción would bring produce from the farm and distribute it to the neighborhood on East Jefferson. Pedro and Concepción would work their farm until their deaths. Some of Tony’s fondest childhood memories are of the summer days at our grandmother’s farm. Concepción was a member of a pioneer family in Matamoros, and, as such, had her own considerable land holdings on the east side of Matamoros near Ejido El Gomeño and Ejido La Burrita, and part of the original Ygnacio Treviño land grant. Concepción was a direct descendant of Ygnacio Trevino and it is through her family line that the Historic Palmito Hill Ranch, and the battlefield of the last battle of the

Civil War has come into the family. It is important to note that Concepción Garcia Gomez' sister Tia Evangelina Garcia Gomez married Parxedis Orive III, a Brownsville policeman. Their only son, Parxedis Orive IV, known as "Uncle Prax" was raised as a brother with his cousins the Zavaleta boys. It is important to make mention of Prax Orive, Jr. and Tia Ventura and their five daughters (Evangeline; Olga; Teresa; Cynthia; and Jeannette Marie) in this article. He was a revered long time member of the Texas Southmost College board of trustees and was the family "owner" of Palmito Hill, a responsibility which has now fallen to his wife and daughters and to Tony. Prax helped Tony to acquire his small portion of the family's historic ranch site and the establishment of the "Historic Palmito Hill Ranch." Both Tony's ranch and Uncle Prax' ranch were designated "Family Land Heritage Ranches," by the Texas Department of Agriculture. This designation certifies that the ranches have been in continuous operation by the same family for more than 100 years.

The Great Depression was a difficult time, even for the landed families, who were "cash poor," as were so many others during this time in American history. To help the family make ends meet, Pedro's and Concepción's oldest son, Jesús, would send money to his family as he earned it.¹⁶⁵ When his younger brother Fernando moved to Arizona to work in the Civilian Conservation Corp Camp (CCC), he also sent money home.¹⁶⁶ This money was invaluable to the family, as Pedro and Concepción still needed to support their four younger children. When Jesús and Fernando moved out of the house, Gustavo became the oldest son in the house, and helped his mother during the depression by walking the fourteen blocks to the Fort Brown Commissary in order to get foodstuffs for the family. Gustavo recalled his mother hand sewing dresses for his two sisters Emma and Josefina.¹⁶⁷

Concepción had a diminutive Mexican housekeeper, "Santos Campos," who had been with her since the 1930s, having worked in the Edelstein family home at 1608 W. Levee (now the home of Tony and Gaby Zavaleta). The intrepid Santos, said to be an "Indian" who stood four feet tall, helped Concepción run the house and raise her kids. By the time that our cousins came along in the late 1950's, Santos was very much a family institution and very much in charge. She lived into the 1980s, and was reported to be over ninety years old at the time of her death, having raised three generations of Zavaletas in Brownsville.

Concepción's eldest son, Jesús Zavaleta remembers the morning of Sunday, December 7, 1941, and the news of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, which was cause for six of the eight Zavaleta boys to answer the call to serve their nation in the Armed Forces. The Zavaleta boys served in World War II and the Korean War. Alfonso and Enrique served in World War II, becoming Sergeants in the Army. Jesús served in WWII, and reached the rank of Technical Sergeant in the Army Air Corps. Tio Jesus tells the story about

the time he contracted malaria in the South Pacific, and upon reaching the hospital in New Guinea, received a grim prognosis about his poor chances for survival. Jesús stated that he simply zipped up his flight jacket and sweated it off.¹⁶⁸ His younger brother Fernando served in WWII and in Korea achieving the highest enlisted rank of Chief Master Sergeant in the United States Marine Corps. Fernando was a prisoner of war during the Korean War held by the Communist Chinese. He died in 2004 and is buried at the National Cemetery in San Antonio, Texas. Gustavo served in the Korean War reaching the rank of Sergeant in the USMC. The youngest of the family, José, who was the first to graduate from college, was a commissioned First Lieutenant MSC in the Army, and served in Korea.¹⁶⁹

During the war, the older brothers serving in the Armed Forces became known by the English equivalents of their names. Alfonso became Al; Enrique became Henry; Jesús became Jesse; Fernando became Ferdinan (although he was also commonly known in the service as “Zip”). The younger brother's names were anglicized by the Marist Brothers at Saint Joseph Academy when they enrolled in the early 1940's given the patriotism prevalent during World War Two. Gustavo became "Coach" Gus; and José (Dr. Joe) became Joe. After the Korean War, most of the Zavaleta boys returned to Brownsville. Pedro, Jr. had a very successful automobile repair business in El Paso.¹⁷⁰ Rafael was a Brownsville Fire Fighter and owned Zavaleta Auto Repair Service in Brownsville.¹⁷¹ Al worked at Union Carbide at the Port of Brownsville, moving to Florida in the early 1960s to work at Cape Kennedy. Henry worked in several positions with the Department of State and then had a full career as an Educator and business man.¹⁷² Jesse worked initially at Pan-American Airways and subsequently moved to Alamo Iron Works as a salesman until his retirement.¹⁷³ Ferdinan started a business in 1956 known as Star Paving Company,¹⁷⁴ which he managed until his death.¹⁷⁵ Gus went to college, obtaining a Bachelor's Degree in Kinesiology and becoming a successful coach at St. Joseph's Academy and then head football coach at the Instituto Tecnológico de Monterrey, ITESM, where he successfully coached two National Championship football teams. He retired from coaching after working at both Porter and Pace High Schools in Brownsville. Joe went on to medical school at UTMB, and became a successful physician and also completed a residency in obstetrics and gynecology. In his medical career of forty years in Brownsville, he delivered more than 10,000 babies. Both sisters Emma and Josefina graduated from Villa Maria High School in Brownsville and had successful careers in retail and at the City of Brownsville in their early years. Emma moved with her family to Louisiana and Josefina moved to Mexico City with her family.

In the mid to late 1950s, Gus and Joe Zavaleta added a “t” to their surname, which began the two “tt” spelling of Zavaletta. There are several

versions of how this occurred, but one account is that their half-brother Henry gave them a document in which Bartolo Zavaleta had signed his name Zavaletta prompting them to do the same.¹⁷⁶ More probably it was a reaction to the discrimination they faced as the first Zavaletas to attend Texas universities in the 1950's. Pedro Zavaleta Chapa, the patriarch of the family also known as "Papa Pete" died on March 15, 1965 in Brownsville, Texas,¹⁷⁷ and his wife Concepción García Gómez vda. de Zavaleta, also known as "Mama Chita" lived for another twenty five years, dying in Brownsville on February 1, 1991.¹⁷⁸ Throughout the latter half of the twentieth century, the various Zavaleta families have branched out of the Valley, moving as close as Edinburg, Austin, and Dallas and as far away as California, Florida, and Indiana. Today Zavaletas/Zavalettas are found in many professions and carry on the proud legacy of their pioneer ancestors.

Cameron County Election History 1968-2006

In the State of Texas, most local offices have non-partisan elections, whereas County elections are partisan, meaning that a party primary will first be held, followed by a general election in November. Texas also has Special Purpose Districts that are created by the State. In the current boundaries of Brownsville, Texas, there are several special districts, including the Brownsville Independent School District, the Texas Southmost College District, and The Brownsville Navigation District, all of which hold non-partisan elections. Brownsville City Commissioners were elected at-large until 2003, when the city opted to create four districts with two commissioners elected at-large. Brownsville's move to single member districts was Tony's dream and initiative for a more representative form of government for Brownsville. Tony initiated the change that took almost 15 years to implement.

Over the last forty years, the descendants of Pedro and Concepción have run for Local, County and Special District positions with great success. Zavaleta political service in Cameron County commenced when Dr. Joe Zavaletta became a Brownsville Independent School District trustee in 1968.¹⁷⁹ The boundaries of the Brownsville Independent School District generally conform to the city limits of Brownsville, but the district does encompass the rural areas surrounding Brownsville.

F.E. "Zip" Zavaleta (Ferdinand) ran for County Commissioner Precinct #2 in the Democratic Primary held on May 2, 1970. He received 1,526 votes, coming in second out of four candidates, and unseated the incumbent, Johnny Cavazos, a distant relative.¹⁸⁰ Since none of the candidates gained a majority, a runoff primary election was held between F.E. "Zip" Zavaleta and Miguel (Mike) Cortinas, Jr., another distant relative, on June 6, 1970. F.E. "Zip" Zavaleta received 2,815 votes to Mike Cortinas' 3,801 votes, thus losing the election.¹⁸¹ F.E. "Zip" Zavaleta ran for Cameron County Commissioner again

in 1972, for the Precinct #1 seat. In the Democratic Primary election held on May 6, 1972, F.E. “Zip” Zavaleta received 991 votes, coming in third of three candidates, and as such did not advance to the primary runoff election.¹⁸² This election ended F.E. “Zip” Zavaleta’s aspirations for political office.

In the early 1980's, Dr. Tony Zavaleta (son of Ferdinan) began his political career by running for Brownsville City Commissioner Place #2 against William A. Garza. Tony Zavaleta received 4,311, votes to William A. Garza’s 1,931 votes.¹⁸³ Tony Zavaleta began his first term in office on November 28, 1983.¹⁸⁴

Gus Zavaletta ran for Cameron County Judge in 1986. The County Judge presides over the County Commissioners’ Court Meetings and is the CEO for county government. Out of five candidates running in the Democratic Primary, Gus Zavaletta placed third, receiving 5,668 votes and failing to advance to the runoff election.¹⁸⁵

In 1987, Dr. Tony Zavaleta ran for reelection for his seat on the Brownsville City Commission Place #2 position. On November 3, 1987 Tony Zavaleta ran against Adolph E. Crixell. Tony Zavaleta received 6,361 votes to Alolph E. Crixell’s 4,140 votes.¹⁸⁶ Tony Zavaleta began his second term as City Commissioner on November 16, 1987.¹⁸⁷

In 1986, our cousin Prax Orive was elected to the Texas Southmost College Board of Trustees and he was re-elected twice, in 1992 and 1998. He served a total of 13 years and was a Board member at the time of his death on March 3, 1999.

In 1986, Reverend Marion “Pat” Robertson announced his intention to seek the Republican candidacy for President of the United States in 1988. Dr. Joe Zavaletta was selected to serve as Robertson’s Cameron County Chairman, and Pat Robertson was the top vote getter in the Republican primary election in Cameron County in March of 1988.¹⁸⁸ As a result of the historic Robertson victory in Cameron County, Dr. Joe Zavaleta was elected to represent Cameron County Republicans as party chairman at the State convention in 1988. It was at the Republican state convention that a little known George W. Bush in blue jeans introduced himself to Dr. Joe with the words, “Hi, I’m George Bush, how are you doing?” Little did Dr. Joe know that the young man would become Governor of Texas and later the 43rd. President of the United States.

In 1988, Gus Zavaletta tried again to gain County office when he ran in the Democratic Primary again for County Commissioner Precinct #1. He received 1,405 votes, coming in third place, ending his aspirations for County Office.¹⁸⁹

In 1991, Tony Zavaleta resigned his position as City Commissioner Place #2, which he had held for eight years, to run for Mayor of Brownsville. The duties of the Mayor of Brownsville are defined by the type of government

the city has. Like most home rule cities in Texas, Brownsville has a council-manager style of government. The role of the mayor is as “a voting member and presiding officer of the Council who also performs ceremonial functions”.¹⁹⁰ On November 5, 1991 Dr. Tony Zavaleta (a direct descendant of Juan Nepomuceno Cortina) ran against Ralph Cowen (a direct descendant of Rip Ford) and Pat Ahumada. Tony Zavaleta received 4,637 votes to Pat Ahumada’s 3,761 votes, and Ralph Cowen’s 2,898 votes.¹⁹¹ Since no majority was met, Tony Zavaleta faced Pat Ahumada in a runoff election held on December 3, 1991, where Tony Zavaleta received 4,712 votes to Pat Ahumada’s 4,894 votes.¹⁹² By defeating Tony Zavaleta, Pat Ahumada was elected mayor, and was soon to become the only mayor in Brownsville history to resign his position two years into his four-year term. Tony Zavaleta remained a major political force in Brownsville from his Mayoral defeat in 1991 through 2006, and is considered an elder statesman of South Texas politics. Tony is often called upon to provide commentary for the media.

The Southmost Junior College District is the Special District that was formed to administer Texas Southmost College in Brownsville, Texas, in 1926. The Texas Southmost College District defines its boundaries as follows. “The Southmost Union Junior College District is comprised of the territory in the Brownsville Independent School District, Point Isabel Independent School District, and Los Fresnos Consolidated Independent School District, all in the County of Cameron, State of Texas.”¹⁹³ On May 2, 1992, Dr. Joe Zavaletta ran for Texas Southmost Board of Trustees Place #5 against Ernest F. De León. Dr. Joe Zavaletta received 2,299 votes to Ernest F. De León’s 1,413 votes.¹⁹⁴ The Texas Southmost College Board of Trustees serves six-year terms. He served until 1998, when he did not seek reelection.¹⁹⁵

On May 4, 1996, Gus Zavaletta made his final attempt for political office after a ten-year hiatus. He ran for Brownsville Independent School District Trustee Place #6. In order to be eligible to be a Trustee, Gus Zavaletta retired from coaching at James Pace High School in Brownsville, Texas, effective May 4, 1996.¹⁹⁶ Gus Zavaletta received 1,904 votes to Joe Colunga’s 2,930 votes.¹⁹⁷ Dr. Joe Zavaletta returned to politics in 2001, this time running for the position of Brownsville City Commissioner Place #1. He ran against Marlys Cortinas on May 5, 2001, receiving 4,977 votes to Marlys Cortinas’ 3,210 votes.¹⁹⁸ In 2003, Brownsville started its move from at-large elected commissioners to four district commissioners and two at-large commissioners.¹⁹⁹ Joe Zavaletta became City Commissioner at-large “B” on June 10, 2003.²⁰⁰ The system of having four district and two at-large commissioners was completely in place by the 2005 City Commission elections.

The Brownsville Navigation District governs the Port of Brownsville and the Brownsville Ship Channel. In 2004, Peter Zavaletta (son of Dr. Joe) began his political career by running for the Brownsville Navigation District Board

Commissioner Place #1 against Sydney Lasseigne. In the election held on May 15, 2004, Peter Zavaletta received 2,151 votes to Sydney Lasseigne's 1,420 votes.²⁰¹ On May 26, 2004, Peter Zavaletta was elected as Board President, a position that is held for a six-year term.²⁰² In 2005, Dr. Joe Zavaletta ran for reelection in his position as City Commissioner at Large "B" against Ernie Hernández. On May 7, 2005 Joe Zavaletta received 2,869 votes to Ernie Hernández' 4,562 votes, at seventy-two, Dr. Joe retired from 35 years of public service.²⁰³

As of 2006, two Zavaletas held elected offices. Peter Zavaletta, who was elected to the Brownsville Navigation District in 2004, has a term which will expire in 2008. Dr. Tony Zavaleta, who grew up in historic West Brownsville recently moved back there with his wife Gabriela (a University of Texas at Brownsville-Texas Southmost College Student and Government Senator 2004-2005) purchased the historic Edelstein/Pacheco home at 1608 W. Levee in 2002. He was elected Democratic Precinct Chairman for Cameron County Precinct 11, which votes at Skinner Elementary School on St. Charles Street.

As of the publication of this book, the members of the next generation of the Zavaleta/Zavaletta family are growing-up and learning about their rich family history. They are preparing for their turn in the family history of public service, which has spanned eight hundred years.

The University of Texas at Brownsville

Endnotes

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- 117 Personal e-mail communication between Tony Zavaleta and Tammy Zavaleta, January 2, 2003.
- 118 Map of Starr County with *Porciones*, Starr County Courthouse Department of Vital Statistics, Rio Grande City, Texas.
- 119 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on eighteenth February 2006.
- 120 Certificate of Election for Constable Precinct 2 filed in Starr County, Texas on fourteenth November 1904.
- 121 Certificate of Deputation of Bartolo Zavaleta as Deputy Sheriff filed in Starr County, Texas on 27th January 1909
- 122 Certificate of Deputation of Bartolo Zavaleta as Deputy Sheriff filed in Starr County, Texas on nineteenth March 1930
- 123 Bernard Doyon, OMI, *The Cavalry of Christ on the Rio Grande* (Milwaukee: Catholic Life Publications, Bruce Press, 1956).
- 124 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 125 His Surveyors Transit, "Teodolito" was given by his widow Concepción to Tony in 1969 after Pedro's death.
- 126 Index to Birth Records Vol. 1 Starr County (Rio Grande City, Texas: Starr County Department of Vital Statistics, no date given), p.199.
- 127 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 128 <http://ssdi.genealogy.rootsweb.com/>
- 129 <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/tx/hidalgo/vitals/deaths/1973/hidad73b.txt>

- 130 Personal recollection of 5 years old Tony Zavaleta from 1952 trip from Santa Monica to Texas.
- 131 op. cit. May 8, 1887
- 132 <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/tx/hidalgo/vitals/deaths/1974/hidad74b.txt>
- 133 Tombstone of Nazaria Zavaleta in the *Cementerio de Roma*, Roma, Texas
- 134 op. cit. April 26, 1936
- 135 Certificate of Death for Eufemia Chapa Zavaleta, Starr County, Texas on April 26, 1948
- 136 op. cit. 26th April 1948
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- 138 "Obituary for Bartolo E. Ramirez". The Brownsville Herald, 13 June 1996
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- 141 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on eighteenth February 2006
- 142 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on eighteenth February 2006
- 143 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 144 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on eighteenth February 2006
- 145 <ftp://ftp.rootsweb.com/pub/usgenweb/tx/cameron/vitals/deaths/1986/camed86a.txt>
- 146 Certificate of Death for Pedro Zavaleta filed in Brownsville, Texas on 22nd March 1965
- 147 Index to Birth Records Vol. 1 Starr County (Rio Grande City, Texas: Starr County Department of Vital Statistics, no date given), p.199
- 148 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 149 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 150 Draft Card for Pedro Zavaleta filed in September, 1918 by the Local Board Cameron County, Brownsville, Texas
- 151 Interview with Mr. Jesús "Jesse" Zavaleta on 24th January 2006
- 152 Index to Birth Records Vol. 1 Starr County (Rio Grande City, Texas: Starr County Department of Vital Statistics, no date given), 199
- 153 Index to Birth Records "M-Z" Cameron County (Brownsville, Texas: Cameron County Department of Vital Statistics, no date given), No page given
- 154 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006
- 155 Interview with Mr. Bruno Hugo Zavaleta Jr. and Ms. María Magdalena Zavaleta on 21st January 2006
- 156 Index to Death Records Brownsville (Brownsville, Texas: Brownsville City

Department of Vital Statistics, no date given), 16

157 Norma Martínez the mother of Tony Zavaleta, Jr. has in her possession a very old photograph taken from this era, circa 1910, in which Pedro Zavaleta and Mucio Martínez are pictured. These two men are Tony Zavaleta, Jr.'s. great grand fathers.

158 Gómez family genealogy copy in possession of Tony Zavaleta

159 Certificate of Death for Concepcion García Gómez de Zavaleta filed in Brownsville, Texas on 7th February 1991

160 <http://vsalgs.org/stnemgenealogy/ugrants.html>

161 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 27th January 2006

162 Marriage License for Mr. Pedro Zavaleta and Miss Concepcion García filed in Cameron County, Texas on 6th August 1921

163 Interview with Mr. Gus Zavaletta on 22nd January 2006

164 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006

165 Interview with Mr. Jesús “Jesse” Zavaleta on 24th January 2006

166 Interview with Mr. Gus Zavaletta on 22nd January 2006

167 Interview with Mr. Gus Zavaletta on 22nd January 2006

168 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 22nd January 2006

169 Interview with Mr. Jesús “Jesse” Zavaleta on thirteenth September 2005

170 Interview with Mr. Hector Zavaleta on 26th January 2006

171 “Obituary for Rafael Zavaleta, Sr.”. The Brownsville Herald, 14 January 1985.

172 Interview with Ms. Theresa Zavaleta on 25th January 2006

173 Interview with Mr. Jesús “Jesse” Zavaleta on thirteenth September 2005

174 Interview with Ferdinan E. Zavaleta, Jr. on fifteenth February 2006

175 “Obituary for Ferdinan E. “Zip” Zavaleta”. The Brownsville Herald, 16 March 2006. http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/obituaries_comments.php?id=58310_0_8_0_C

176 Interview with Mr. Gus Zavaletta on 22nd January 2006

177 Certificate of Death for Pedro Zavaleta filed in Brownsville, Texas on 22nd March 1965

178 Certificate of Death for Concepcion García Gómez de Zavaleta filed in Brownsville, Texas on 7th February 1991

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- 186 City of Brownsville Minutes Vol. 105 (Brownsville, Texas: City of Brownsville Office of the City Secretary, no date given) p.20
- 187 op. cit. Vol. 105, p.21.
- 188 Personal communication with Dr. Joe Zavaletta, e-mail 2/18/2006
- 189 op. cit. “E” Cameron County
- 190 Robert H. Angell, Texas Politics & the Legends of the Fall (Boston: McGraw Hill Custom Publishing, 2003), p. 90.
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