Fugitives from Servitude: American Deserters and Runaway Slaves in Spanish Nacogdoches, 1803-1808

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Before the antebellum South, there was another South, the area of the eastern Spanish Borderlands. From 1783 to 1795 Spain claimed much of present-day Tennessee, Arkansas, Missouri, Georgia, Alabama, Mississippi, Louisiana, and Florida. Spanish governors and commanders made brilliant but unsuccessful improvisations to maintain claims to the area. In 1795 Spain gave up her claims to the Ohio Valley and the Natchez district to the United States. Spain’s retreat from the South was just beginning. In 1803, after convoluted diplomatic dealings, the United States purchased Louisiana from France, which had just recovered it from Spain.  The eastern Spanish Borderlands, less parts of the Gulf Coast and Florida, became the Anglo-American Old Southwest. In studies of this area, little notice is given to the Spanish story.  

Attempts to tell any story from the Spanish Borderlands must first deal with two barriers. One is the national tale of the seemingly irreversible Anglo-American advance across the North American continent. Another “is the old ‘Black Legend’ of Spanish cruelty deeply imbedded in the mentality of the English-speaking world.” This paper will present the actions of army deserters and runaway slaves to show that not everything went the Anglo-American’s way all the time. The experiences of these two groups also show a humanitarian and inclusive side of Spanish frontier society not often realized.

Deserting soldiers and runaway slaves have neither been studied extensively nor together. The successful acts of desertion or running away left little evidence except reports or notices. No moral comparison can be made between soldiers and slaves, yet both their status’s deprived them of many, if not all, rights before the law. Resistance to the demands of servitude often led them to flee. Further, in early American Louisiana, slaveowners linked soldiers and slaves. Soldiers provided a “psychological function” for slaveowners, who believed soldiers a deterrent to the ever-present fear of a slave insurrection. So when deserters and runaways both fled to Spanish territory, it was a cause for concern for slaveowners. Also troublesome would have been the general inclusiveness of Spanish society on the northern frontier.

Northern New Spain possessed a heterogeneous population composed of Europeans, Native Americans, and Africans. In particular, Texas was a racial melting pot by the end of the eighteenth century. Foreign settlers always had entered Texas, although officially forbidden to do so by law. The inhabitants of Spanish Texas did not take such royal prohibitions too seriously. Foreigners often were classified as “Spaniards” (españoles) from their country of origin, such as a “Spaniard from France.” Spanish frontier society offered social and ethnic mobility and a place for both deserters and runaways from Louisiana.

In December 1803, General James Wilkinson led the United States’ military occupation of Louisiana with 300 regular soldiers and 200 Tennessee militiamen. The new governor, William C.C. Claiborne, wanted such a large force in case the mulatto and slave populations used the transfer to stage an
insurrection. The insurrection did not occur and Wilkinson and Claiborne completed the transfer of New Orleans on the twentieth of December. Not until April 26, 1804, did Captain Edward D. Turner, First United States Infantry, occupy Natchitoches on the new U.S.-Spanish frontier. American deserters had crossed the frontier months ahead of him. Spanish officials in Texas now encountered American deserters and runaway slaves at their frontier post of Nacogdoches.

Nacogdoches was the eastern entrance to Spanish Texas. At the time it was a settlement of almost 200 families with a total population of over 800. Given its place on the trade and contraband route, most immigrants to Texas from Louisiana preferred to stay in Nacogdoches. Nacogdoches was also an important military post. As early as 1795 Spain positioned a military detachment in Nacogdoches to prevent foreigners from entering Texas, and its importance grew following the occupation of Louisiana by the United States. The commandant of Nacogdoches typically was a captain or lieutenant assigned from a company in San Antonio. He commanded 100 to 200 men on patrol or at posts along the frontier, especially the Sabine River crossing. At least seventy-five Americans, runaway slaves and army deserters, crossed this river into Texas between 1803 and 1808.

The American military establishment from which the deserters fled numbered 2,732 men in 1804. The garrison of Orleans Territory, the modern state of Louisiana, was 547 men of which 119 served in posts on the United States-Spanish frontier. The army recruited many soldiers in Tennessee and Kentucky, some in eastern areas, and many foreigners also enlisted. The soldiers were well paid compared to foreign armies, but not by civilian standards, and well clothed, though often not well-housed. They faced harsh discipline, including flogging and branding. Not surprisingly, the soldiers exhibited many disciplinary problems, especially drunkenness. Desertion was also common, especially in posts near Indian lands or foreign territory.

Desertion continued as a drain on American military manpower throughout the nineteenth century. The problem preceded the Army of the United States. At one point in the 1780s, sixty men deserted from the Pennsylvania contingent of the Army of the Confederation. Thirty of these were foreigners, including nineteen Irish. In February 1792, the First Regiment of Infantry of the United States Army reported thirty-four deserters. All were in their first year of enlistment and included twelve Irish. The regiment, acknowledging the Irish presence, offered a pardon to any who turned themselves in before the next Saint Patrick’s Day. Desertion obviously remained a problem in the following year when one-half of all courts-martial were for desertion.

The reasons why men deserted remains a thorny question. An individual who deserted betrayed his word, broke his contract, and stained his honor. Nevertheless, a number of factors encouraged desertion. These early American soldiers faced a bleak life, with poor quarters, a disorganized commissariat, and a dull, routine existence. The only diversion soldiers had was hard physical labor or mind-numbing drill. Turning to desertion or drink was understandable under these conditions. In Detroit, at the end of the eighteenth century, drunkenness and desertion went hand-in-hand.

Desertion was not without its risks. Deserters faced punishments that often were against the Articles of War. The commander in Detroit sentenced
deserters to 180 lashes, administered twenty-five at a time, and even had one deserter shot.\textsuperscript{13} By the 1820s the United States Army had begun to take steps to deal with desertion. A report by the adjutant general in 1826 noted that most desertions took place in the first year of enlistment. The report blamed the desertions on the poor class of recruit attracted by the low pay offered for military service. It noted that a deserter "commonly reverts to original society."\textsuperscript{14} Two years later the Army forwarded another report to Congress entitled "Increase of Pay to Non-commissioned Officers and Privates of the Army as a Means of Preventing Desertion."\textsuperscript{15}

All of this official concern was too late to influence one John Nicolas, who presented himself to the Spanish commandant in Nacogdoches on November 9, 1803. The commandant did not know what to do with Nicolas and requested instructions from the governor of Texas. He also wisely noted that he expected more American deserters. The governor, in his turn, requested guidance from his superior, the commandant general of the Internal Provinces. Meanwhile, deserters kept arriving. John Smith, Scottish, and John Davis, American, were in Nacogdoches by New Year's Day, 1804.\textsuperscript{16} Michael Brown, an Irishman, showed up on January 26. Six more arrived during February. Four, James Breon, William Numan, Francis Born, and Francis McCoy, were Irish, the last two from Donegal. David Korkens and Sergeant Robert Tarp were both Americans.\textsuperscript{17}

The commandant of Nacogdoches, obviously feeling overwhelmed, recommended moving the deserters to San Antonio or even farther to Coahuila. The group of ten deserters did not initially move and appear to have settled into life at Nacogdoches. They planted crops in June, and Vicente Michaly, a Spanish settler, wanted Tarp to accompany him to San Antonio, though the governor did not allow it. The commandant general ordered that they be allowed to harvest crops before sending them on farther into Texas.\textsuperscript{18} By August 1804, Brown, Numan, Born, and Davis had returned to Louisiana to receive pardons, Smith had gone to San Antonio, and the rest of the deserters stayed in Nacogdoches.

The Spanish commandant recorded detailed information about the five who remained. John Nicolas was a forty-five year-old laborer from Connaught, Ireland. David Korkens, from New London, Connecticut, was thirty years old, and also a laborer. James Breon was another laborer from Leinster, Ireland, and forty-three years old. Robert Tarp, thirty, a carpenter from Northhampton County, North Carolina, and Francis McCoy, also thirty, a laborer from Donegal, Ireland, completed the group. Presumably, these five eventually made their way to the interior of northern New Spain.\textsuperscript{19}

This first group of deserters receded and not for another year did the problem of deserters appear to have confronted the officials of Nacogdoches. Then, on August 2, 1805, Jacob Boyens deserted to Spanish territory. He was the first of three more Americans: Peter Patterson, William Grey, and John Gretis. American troops apprehended two other deserters on Spanish soil. The commandant in Nacogdoches requested that his American opposite at Natchitoches turn these two over to him and the governor of Texas supported this bold demand. Unfortunately, there is no evidence if the demand met with success.\textsuperscript{20}

The governor expressed a concern that some deserters might be spies. He advised officials in Nacogdoches to send any suspicious deserters to San
Antonio immediately. He also noted that if any of the deserters possessed needed skills, they were to work for their subsistence at Nacogdoches. No matter what, however, the governor ordered that deserters were not to be turned over to the Americans. By the beginning of November 1805, most of the deserters were helping to harvest corn. Two were on their way to San Antonio, where they arrived on the twentieth of the month.11

In 1806, more deserters from the U.S. came to Texas. On January 23, one deserter presented himself in Nacogdoches. Two more appeared on February 5. Again, the governor warned the commandant in Nacogdoches to beware of spies posing as deserters. Apparently officials did not perceive these three deserters as spies, for they did not depart for Coahuila via San Antonio until August. The youngest deserter suffered from syphilis and did not continue to Coahuila. He entered the military hospital in San Antonio. The commandant there made preparations to send the other two on to Chihuahua. They apparently did not relish the idea of life in northern New Spain. The commandant caught Pito, and the other deserter, name unknown, trying to flee San Antonio early in September. The commandant recommended sending them back to Nacogdoches, presumably so that they could return to American territory.22

One especially interesting case of a deserter in 1806 was that of Stephen Richards. Richards deserted to Nacogdoches on August 1. By October he was in San Antonio, where officials discovered that he was a Spanish citizen. He did not wish to continue his military career in the service of Spain, declining to serve as an interpreter, so the commandant at San Antonio ordered him escorted to the frontier to carry out this service.21

Spanish fears that some deserters might be spies or would spread false information may have had some basis in fact. In May 1806, an American deserter from the post in Opelousas claimed to have crucial information. The commandant in Nacogdoches provided him a horse to go to San Antonio. The governor later reported that his information had been unimportant. But Spanish commanders derived some intelligence from the deserters. One reported the number of American troops in Natchitoches and that the militiamen refused to serve. The commandant general appeared to have believed the information accurate.24

By the end of 1806 approximately twenty American deserters had passed through Nacogdoches into Texas. Spanish authorities allowed those who professed the Catholic faith to settle in Coahuila or Nueva Vizcaya (modern-day Chihuahua). Protestants had to remain in Texas under close supervision, but a search of San Antonio by the commandant revealed no American deserters at the beginning of 1807. Other evidence exists about these newest of northern New Spain's settlers, however. On December 28, 1806, the commandant general, returning to Chihuahua from San Antonio, encountered the American Martin Henderson on the northern bank of the Río Grande. The commandant general believed him to be a deserter who had been living among the Indians and sent him to the Presidio of Río Grande.25

There the story would have ended, except Zebulon Montgomery Pike reported on Henderson in his journal. He interviewed Henderson in June 1807, while leaving Spanish territory under escort. Henderson stated he had been born in Virginia but was in Louisiana by 1806. With several companions he entered Texas, became separated from his friends, and Indians captured him
and took most of his possessions. They directed him to San Antonio, but he missed it, and ended up on the Río Grande. Pike learned from his soldiers that Henderson was actually a man named Trainer, who was wanted for the murder of a Major Bashier in Tennessee. Upon Pike’s report, the Spanish seized Henderson/Trainer and incarcerated him, much to Pike’s satisfaction. 26

This was not Pike’s only encounter with deserters in Spanish territory. On May 19, 1807, he met a deserter to whom he gave some money. For unknown reasons, the commandant general reported this to the governor of Texas. A few days later Pike met Christopher Pratt. Pratt had deserted from Louisiana to Texas in July 1806. Pike also encountered a man named Griffith, who infuriated Pike with his insolence. 27 It is possible that this was the John Grefis, who had deserted in September 1805. It appeared that many American deserters were now part of Spanish society and another deserter petitioned the governor of Texas to remain so on May 10, 1807.

Peter Brady had deserted from the American Army to Spanish Louisiana in 1798. He moved to Nacogdoches in 1799 and now wished to stay; his petition met with success on July 12, 1807. 28 Desertions continued throughout the year and by September 22, there were three more deserters in Nacogdoches and more arrived on December 9 and 17. These deserters worked to support themselves until a patrol could escort them to San Antonio. Again, some deserters did not relish the thought of leaving Nacogdoches. Two fled their escort to San Antonio on January 10, 1808. But more kept arriving. On January 25, John D. Hardy, a Lutheran, crossed the Sabine River into Spanish custody. Another, name unknown, had preceded him on January 6. Hardy, along with two unnamed deserters, arrived in San Antonio on March 2, 1808. 29

The economy of Nacogdoches may have gotten a boost on February 23, when three carpenters deserted American service. Two, Edward Inkos and John Estepleten, were English and Protestant. One, James Oro, was Irish and Protestant. Yet the commandant of Nacogdoches could not allow them to stay as what had been practice now became policy. The commandant general ordered all deserters removed from Nacogdoches on March 18, 1808. They were to go to San Antonio where arrangements would be made to send them on to Chihuahua where they would work to support themselves. All deserters from now on, without exception, would be sent to Chihuahua. 30 The commandant of Nacogdoches, perhaps forewarned, began to move the deserters out of his post on March 21. By the end of April 1808, fifteen deserters were in San Antonio awaiting arrangements to send them to Chihuahua. The commandant general acknowledged and approved the governor of Texas’ plan. 31

One deserter from this group, Henry Norman, fell sick and stayed in the military hospital in San Antonio. 12 Deserters continued to be sent from the frontier to the interior of New Spain throughout the summer of 1808. Some deserters continued to be less than enthusiastic about the trip. On July 8, two escaped their escorts. The commandant general was not happy with such dereliction of duty by his men. By mid-August the last of the deserters which concern us were in San Antonio. Arriving in Chihuahua on September 18, they settled in the province. 13 All that was left in Nacogdoches by 1809 were the weapons brought by the deserters. With due bureaucratic process, these ended up with the Spanish garrison. 34

In 1809 Spanish officials considered not allowing any more deserters into
Texas. The new governor protested, wishing either to continue allowing deserters to enter or to establish an exchange program with the Americans. The commandant general did not agree and denied deserters entry to Texas by 1810.35 So the five-year example of American deserters to Nacogdoches ended, but it is illustrative of the inclusive nature of the frontier society of northern New Spain. The deserters to Nacogdoches were often more mature than the typical deserter and not all appeared to have been in their first year of enlistment. Instead, the decision to desert to Nacogdoches may have been based on a desire for a better life. Spanish officials, for their part, protected and did not detain the deserters, though they did not trust them. This distrust may have contributed to the decision to send all those to the interior who professed Catholicism. Many deserters obviously disliked the policy and it may have cut down on desertions to Texas. But some obviously thrived in Hispanic society, a surprisingly inclusive society. Runaway slaves also took advantage of this inclusiveness.

Runaway slaves pose as interesting a historical subject as do army deserters. Research on runaway slaves in eighteenth-century South Carolina and Virginia has revealed that, typically, a runaway was a single young male. In Virginia during the eighteenth century, of 1500 runaway slave notices in newspapers, only 142 listed women, the remainder were men, and only 138 had been born in Africa. They had undergone acculturation and had an “altered perception of self” leading to their resisting slavery by running away.36

In South Carolina, the average runaway was, again, a male, single, aged eighteen to thirty, and had at least two previous owners. Only one in five was female. Group runaways, which did occur, often posed a threat to the community because they stole to survive or attacked other people. Fugitives, when caught, suffered punishment by being placed in irons, whipped, or mutilated. Slaves ran away for any number of reasons, but major ones included being sold often or overworked. Some runaways attempted to join the maroons, independent bands, or flee to other communities. In South Carolina runaways sometimes succeeded in joining the Florida Indians and the Spanish government in Florida offered them protection.37

In French Louisiana, runaways often fled to Spanish territories. An established route for runaways appeared to have followed the Mississippi River up to the Red River, then to Natchitoches and the Spanish post at Los Adaes. Requests from French to Spanish officials asking for the return of fugitive slaves to stand punishment appear in the mid-eighteenth century.38 Following their takeover, American authorities found themselves in a situation similar to the French. The Spanish crown offered asylum and protection to any runaway slaves who entered its lands. This did not please American slaveowners, who played on official fears by suggesting a slave insurrection would occur if runaways were not returned.39

The runaways involved ran away in the summer and fall of 1804 to Spanish Nacogdoches. On October 23, Alejo Cloutie of Natchitoches arrived in Nacogdoches with five militiamen, two mulattos, and a free black. Cloutie’s party searched for four black males, two male mulattos, a black female, and a two-year-old boy. The runaways had stolen eleven horses and five firearms with plenty of ammunition. Cloutie threatened to pursue the runaways all the way to San Antonio if necessary. The governor of Texas refused to allow Cloutie to come to San Antonio and ordered the commandant of Nacogdoches to protect
any runaways until the commandant general in Chihuahua reached a decision concerning the fate of the runaways. The Spanish consul in New Orleans requested that the commandant in Nacogdoches turn over any runaways to the Americans with a pledge of non-abuse. The royal orders should be suspended, the consul felt, due to rumors of a slave insurrection in Louisiana. 40

The pressure on the commandant in Nacogdoches proved too much and he turned the runaways he had caught over to the Americans. He explained that a Spaniard, probably one of the mulattos, had instigated the flight. He also stated he was unfamiliar with the royal order granting protection to runaway slaves. The commandant did offer to protect any runaways in the future. The commandant's actions infuriated his superior, the commandant general. The commandant general wished to know why the commandant of Nacogdoches sent out a search party without orders and why he personally delivered the runaways to Natchitoches in November, also without orders. The commandant general further instructed the governor of Texas to obey the royal order on runaways, despite the consul in New Orleans. Runaways were to be kept in Nacogdoches, for to return them would disobey the king and infringe upon their rights. While awaiting a decision about their fate, they were to live by their own labor and not to leave Texas. 41

The commandant in Nacogdoches now realized he would have to answer for his actions. He defended himself by again stating a Spanish subject had caused the flight. He also repeated the fear of an insurrection in Louisiana, but his protests proved futile and the governor replaced him. The new commandant in Nacogdoches reported to the governor of Texas that he understood the orders on runaways clearly and knew what to do. The governor also informed the consul in New Orleans that runaways would be protected in Nacogdoches. The commandant general would, in turn, request a decision from the king. 42

Runaways did not test this policy until 1806. On May 23, eight runaways presented themselves in Nacogdoches. Interestingly they had a passport, or travel papers, signed by a judge in Kentucky. It is possible they were traveling to join their owner and took a side-trip. The owner, Jacob Been, unsuccessfully attempted to recover them. The governor of Texas informed his American counterpart in New Orleans that he had orders to retain runaways in Nacogdoches until Spanish authorities reached a decision. The commandant general approved the governor's actions and restated his orders that the runaways were to be protected and were to work while awaiting a decision. 43

The frustration the Louisianians felt at this Spanish bureaucratic stonewalling flared-up in the spring of 1807. Monsieur Pavie, a United States citizen, visited Nacogdoches on April 20-23. On the road to the Sabine River crossing, and back to American territory, Pavie encountered a Spanish settler escorting a black male. Pavie identified the black as a runaway slave belonging to Monsieur Roquier. Pavie pulled a pistol, threatened the Spaniard, and took the runaway by force. A Spanish corporal stationed at the crossing did not attempt to stop Pavie, perhaps fearing his pistol. The commandant in Nacogdoches protested to the judge of Natchitoches, though nothing came of his complaints. The abduction appears to have emboldened others. In July 1807, a runaway reached Nacogdoches and a month later Michael Gamar and Abran (Abraham?) came to claim him and others. The commandant sent Mr. Gamar away, presumably in a huff, as he did not have the proper passports to enter Spanish territory. 44
Unable to personally abduct the runaways, Americans next attempted to use the law and diplomacy to regain what they regarded as their property. In September, Judge John C. Carr sent a petition to the Spanish commandant requesting the return of runaways. He and his fellow petitioners felt that the royal order protecting runaways was against the spirit of Article 20 of the Treaty of 1795 between Spain and the United States. The article guaranteed free access to tribunals of justice to both sides. Specifically, the petitioners wished to send three commissioners to Nacogdoches or to San Antonio to plead their case in a Spanish court. The petition listed seven runaways that their owners believed to be at Nacogdoches.

The first were Juan Luis and Margarita, who had run away from Madame Julina Bessom, a widow, on August 11, 1807. They stated they had been mistreated and wished Spanish protection. Juan Luis, when questioned, admitted that he was not married to Margarita. His master had purchased her for him fifteen years earlier and they had lived as husband and wife. Juan Luis also added that another reason he and Margarita had fled was that both were good Catholics and wished to be married by the Church. The commandant separated them until a ceremony could be performed; the governor soon legalized their marriage.

Other runaways included Luis, owned by Lieutenant Rambien, Peray or Yery, by Monsieur Bloodworth, and another Luis owned by San Prie Davien. Francisco Roquier, who seems to have had a runaway problem, claimed that Caffé and Narcisco were in Nacogdoches. Only Narcisco reached Spanish protection; pursuers seized Caffé before he crossed the Sabine River. Roquier assumed that both were in Nacogdoches, a reasonable assumption under the circumstances. The Spanish bureaucracy took the petition of Mr. Carr and had passed it along by mid-September.45

Governor Claiborne attempted to put his weight behind the petition, asking the commandant general to turn all the runaways over to him as chief magistrate of Orleans Territory. At the same time, Claiborne complained to Secretary of State James Madison that runaways still received Spanish protection. Perhaps because of this interest, the Spanish responded quickly, though predictably. The commandant general replied on October 28 that the treaty clause cited only covered recovery of property, payment of debts, and satisfaction for damages. It did not cover persons who fled because of mistreatment and who could fear more of the same if returned, or runaways, in other words. However, the question of what to do with the runaways still awaited a royal decision, and the commandant general felt that any action by him might do unnecessary harm.46

Meanwhile, the runaways in Nacogdoches settled into their new community. The commandant employed Juan Luis and Margarita as servants. Luis, who had fled because he had been whipped and the judge of Natchitoches had refused to intervene, worked for another settler. Narcisco, whom Francisco Roquier had whipped when he asked for food, Ambroisio, who fled from Opelusas after receiving punishment for not picking 100 pounds of cotton, and the other Luis, who ran away when his master whipped his wife to death, all found employment with settlers.

The last runaway in this group, Peray or Yery, who fled when Roquier's son-in-law mistreated him, found work with William Barr, the Indian trader. There were another eight runaways in Salcedo, a settlement further into Texas.
The commandant general ordered all to remain where they were in March 1808. Three more runaways joined these in the next month. A male, Ponpe, owned by Joseph Babens, a female, Maria, owned by Miniquit Babens, and a baby, fled to Nacogdoches. Ponpe and Maria had been mistreated and showed the scars of it. Again, the commandant separated them until a priest could conduct the proper marriage ceremony.47

While runaways escaping to Nacogdoches received much attention, an incident occurred in September 1807 concerning a slave running away from Nacogdoches. Santiago, belonging to Bernardo Portolant of Nacogdoches, was sold. Before his new owner took possession, Santiago ended up in jail as punishment for another incident. He escaped and headed to Natchitoches. On the way he met a group of runaways guided by an Indian going to Texas. This encounter later led the American commander of Natchitoches to accuse Santiago of inciting slaves to runaway. Santiago answered that if he were going to run away he would do it with his relatives and no one else. Feeling that Natchitoches was now too dangerous, Santiago returned to Texas, going to San Antonio, where his story came out.48

As with the group Santiago met, the Native Americans of the area played a part in the last episode involving the runaways in Nacogdoches. On April 14, 1808, three of the runaways in Nacogdoches petitioned the governor to be allowed to move farther into the province. Rumors had reached Nacogdoches that the Americans, legally blocked and unable to abduct their slaves themselves, were asking Indians to take runaways from Nacogdoches by stealth. The commandant general acknowledged the possibility of abduction and authorized the runaways to move to the interior of the province at the end of May 1808. However, he cautioned the governor of Texas that if enough work could not be found, the runaways should move on to San Antonio. 49

The departure of runaways from Nacogdoches authorized in the summer of 1808 ended this part of their story. Runaways to Spanish Nacogdoches appear to have been within the historical norms—single males who ran away due to mistreatment, often at the hands of a second owner. Groups of runaways were common, perhaps due to the presence of Spanish settlers and Native Americans who incited and guided them along an early nineteenth-century “underground railroad.” Most interesting were the runaway couples, sometimes with children, who stated they wished to be married. How much this was a motivation and how much it was a quick adaptation to Spanish mores is an open question. The runaways to Texas soon became free subjects of Spain and then Mexico. Speaking the Spanish language, with Spanish names, and practicing Catholicism, they became a part of the society of northern New Spain.50

The experiences of the deserters and runaways in Spanish Nacogdoches are a remarkable illustration of the frontier society of northern New Spain. After fleeing to Nacogdoches to escape poor conditions or to have a better life, both groups received official Spanish protection, though Spain exhibited no coherent policy towards deserters and slaves. The protection offered may have been as much to annoy American officials as for any humanitarian desires. Yet, Spanish frontier society provided a place for both deserters and runaways, though admittedly not at the top. Both groups worked for their own survival. Both appear to have adapted to their new conditions. Those deserters who did not wish to adapt could return to the United States, but runaways had no such
choice. In the end, the example of deserters and runaways in Spanish Nacogdoches should provide a point "from which thinking persons may see themselves and reconsider their own myths. No stronger argument could be advanced for incorporation of the Hispanic Borderlands into this nation's knowledge of itself."1

NOTES


2In Thomas D. Clark and John D. W. Guice, Frontiers in Conflict: The Old Southwest, 1795-1830 (Albuquerque, 1989). Spain is only mentioned on twelve out of 255 pages of text.


Mattie Austin Hatcher, The Opening of Texas to Foreign Settlement, 1801-1821 (Austin, 1927), pp. 105, 41; Sebastian Rodriguez, Nacogdoches, January 1, 1806, Béxar Archives, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, microfilm in Willis Library, University of North Texas (hereinafter cited as BA); Juan Ignacio Arrambe, Béxar, December 31, 1805, BA.


9See Prucha, Sword of the Republic, pp. 324-326.


12Jacobs, Beginnings of the United States Army, pp. 201; Coffman, The Old Army, pp. 24.

13ASP, MA, III, pp. 228.


15José Joaquin Ugarte to Juan Baptist de Elguezábal, Nacogdoches, November 26, 1803, BA; Elguezábal to Nemesio Salcedo, Béxar, January 4, 1804, Béxar Archives Translations, Center for American History, University of Texas at Austin, microfilm in Willis Library, University of North Texas (hereinafter cited as BAT); Ugarte, Nacogdoches, January 1, 1804, BA.

16Ugarte, Nacogdoches, February 4, 1804, BA; Ugarte, Nacogdoches, March 1, 1804, BA.

17Ugarte to Elguezábal, Nacogdoches, February 4, 1804, BAT; Ugarte to Elguezábal, Nacogdoches, April 3, 1804, BAT; Salcedo to the Governor of Texas, Chihuahua, July 16, 1804, BAT.

18Ugarte, Nacogdoches, August 3, 1804, BA.

19Dionisio Valle to Elguezábal, Nacogdoches, August 7, 1805, BA; Valle to Elguezábal, Nacogdoches, September 5, 1805, BA; Antonio Cordero to Commandant of Nacogdoches, Béxar, October 16, 1805, BAT.

20Cordero to the Commandant of Nacogdoches, September 20, 1805, BAT; Sebastian Rodriguez to Cordero, Nacogdoches, November 6, 1805, BA; Cordero to Rodriguez, Béxar,
November 20, 1805, BA.

21Rodriguez to Cordero, Nacogdoches, February 5, 1806, BA; Cordero to Rodriguez, Béxar, February 15, 1806, BAT; Ugarte to Cordero, Béxar, August 30, 1806, BA; Ugarte to Cordero, Béxar, September 13, 1806, BAT; Ugarte to Cordero, Béxar, October 3, 1806, BA.

22Valle, Nacogdoches, August 31, 1806, BA; Ugarte to Cordero, Béxar, October 17, 1806, BAT.

23Francisco Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, May 25, 1806, BA; Cordero to Viana, Béxar, June 14, 1806, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, March 24, 1806, BAT.

24Hatcher, Opening of Texas, pp. 116-118; Salcedo to Cordero, Béxar, December 9, 1806, BA; Ugarte to Cordero, Béxar, January 22, 1807, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, February 15, 1807. BA.


26Peter Brady to the Governor of Texas, Nacogdoches, May 10, 1807, BAT; Cordero, Béxar, July 12, 1807, BA.

27Andrés Benito Courbiere, Béxar, September 22, 1807, BA; Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, December 10, 1807, BAT; Viana, Nacogdoches, January 1, 1808, BA; Viana, Nacogdoches, January 26, 1808, BA; Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, January 26, 1808, BAT; Viana, Nacogdoches, January 31, 1808, BA; Cordero to Viana, Béxar, March 2, 1808, BA.

28Viana, Nacogdoches, February 29, 1808, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, March 18, 1808, BAT.

29Viana, Nacogdoches, March 31, 1808, BA; Cordero to Salcedo, Béxar, April 27, 1808, BAT; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, May 30, 1808, BAT.

30Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, July 11, 1808, BAT.

31Pedro Lopez Prietto, Trinidad de Salcedo, August 1, 1808, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, September 20, 1808, BAT; Mariano Varela to Cordero, Béxar, August 19, 1808, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, September 18, 1808, BAT.

32Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, July 26, 1808, BAT; José Guadiana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, August 30, 1808, BA.

33Hatcher, Opening of Texas, pp. 169-170, 182. Many deserters would have now gone to the Neutral Ground between Texas and Louisiana, see Faulk, Last Years, pp. 126.


38Elguézabal to Salcedo, Béxar, November 7, 1804, BA; The Marquis of Casa Calvo to Governor Claiborne, New Orleans, November 6, 1804, in Carter, Territorial Papers, IX, pp. 323-324; Marqués de Casa Calvo to Ugarte, New Orleans, November 10, 1804, BAT; Casa Calvo to Salcedo, New Orleans, November 10, 1804, BAT.

39Turner to Claiborne, Natchitoches, November 21, 1804, in Carter, Territorial Papers, IX, pp. 335-337; Ugarte to Elguézabal, Nacogdoches, December 4, 1804, BA; Salcedo to the Governor of Texas, Chihuahua, January 22, 1805, BAT.
"Ugarte to Elgueázabal, Nacogdoches, February 4, 1805, BA; Dionisio Valle to Elgueázabal, Nacogdoches, February 22, 1805, BA; Elgueázabal to Marqués de Casa Calvo, Béxar, May 22, 1805, BAT; Salcedo to the Governor of Texas, Chihuahua, June 18, 1805, BAT.

"Cordero to Commandant General, Béxar, June 14, 1806, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, August 14, 1806, BAT; Cordero to Claiborne, Nacogdoches, October 2, 1806, in Carter, *Territorial Papers*, IX, pp. 683; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, February 9, 1807, BAT.

"Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, May 12, 1807, BA; Cordero to the Commandant General, May 27, 1807, BAT; Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, May 27, 1807, BA; Cordero to Viana, Béxar, August 18, 1807, BAT.

"John C. Carr to Commandant of Nacogdoches, Natchitoches, September 5, 1807, BAT; Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, August 12, 1807, BA; Cordero to Viana, Béxar, August 18, 1807, BA; Cordero to Viana, Béxar, September 16, 1807, BA; Cordero to Salcedo, Béxar, September 16, 1807, BA.


"Viana, Nacogdoches, January 21, 1808, BA; Cordero to Salcedo, Béxar, February 9, 1808, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, March 8, 1808. BAT; Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, May 1, 1808, BA.

"Viana to Cordero, Nacogdoches, October 11, 1807, BAT; José Ignacio de Elguez, Béxar, October 30, 1807, BA.

"Cordero to the Commandant of Nacogdoches, Béxar, May 2, 1808, BA; Cordero to Salcedo, Béxar, May 2, 1808, BA; Salcedo to Cordero, Chihuahua, May 31, 1808, BAT.
