Date: April 23, 1986  Donor: Earl Elam

FILE ENTRY: Elam, Earl

TITLE: LA JUNTA PRESIDIO COLLECTION, 1757-1789

CALL NUMBER: MSS 47

DESCRIPTION:

QUANTITY:

ITEMS:  LEAVES:  TOTAL

bound leaves  unbound leaves 1150  single 1150  1,150

ARRANGEMENT:

CORRESPONDENCE, 1760-1788 (15 leaves)
APPOINTMENTS, 1775-1789 (33 leaves)
REPORTS, 1757-1787 (1,102 leaves)

Inventoried By: Michael Fry
Approved By: Kenneth Perry
Typed By: Cindy Marquez
Provenance: The La Junta Presidio Collection of photographic copies was secured through the efforts of Colonel Russell Gardinier and Mr. Charles Stringfellow, both working with Professor Earl Elam of Sul Ross State University. Colonel Gardinier was instrumental in determining the existence and location of Spanish documentation on the Big Bend. Mr. Stringfellow arranged to have the original documents microfilmed at their home repository, the Archivo General do Indias in Sevilla, Spain. Although the microfilm remains in his possession, Professor Elam made photographic copies from the microfilm and donated them to the Archives of the Big Bend on 4 January 1984.

A proper understanding of the provenance of the collection and the exact location of the originals necessitates some knowledge of the Archivo General de Indias (AGI). It was established in the eighteenth century with a view of concentrating in a single place all of the papers relating to the conquest, colonization, and government of Spanish overseas possessions. The well-known analyst of the Indies, Juan Bautista Munoz and the influential Minister of the Indies, Jose de Galvez, pushed rigorously for its foundation. The new archives were formed from the American sources already existing in the Archivo General de Simancas and from the accumulated papers of the various branches of the government of the Indies. The AGI consists of more than 34,000 large legajos divided into fourteen sections: Patronato (Church-State Relations), Contraduria (Accounting), Contratacion (Trade), Justicia (Justice), Audiencias (See Glossary), Escribania de Camara (Notarial Office), Secretaria del juzgado de Arribadas (Tribunal of the Court of Arrivals), Papeles de Correos (Mail Records), Papeles de Estado (Papers of State), Ministerio de Ultramar (Overseas Ministry), Papeles de Cuba (Papers of Cuba), Papeles de Cadiz (Cadiz Papers), Titulos de Castilla (Castilian Titles), and Papeles de Espana (Papers of Spain). Each of the above sections is further subdivided, principally according to Audiencia: Santo Domingo (Cuba, Puerto Rico, Louisiana, Florida), Mexico, Guadalajara, Philippines, Guatemala, Panama, Santa Fe, Caracas, Quito, Lima, Charcas, Buenos Aires, and Chile. The original documents of the La Junta Presidio Collection are located in the major section of Audiencias and within the subdivision of Guadalajara.
Historical Background: The geographical focus of the collection is the region surrounding the confluence of the Conchas River and the Rio Grande, a place of human habitation since ancient times. In 1714, their land having been visited by Spaniards several times in former years, the natives there asked for missionaries. The following year the Franciscan priests, Gregorio Osorio and Juan Antonio Garcia, with a guard of thirty soldiers went to the region to begin the work of conversion. Five friars soon joined them, and they founded six missions, including eleven pueblos or towns. The largest of the towns was first called Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe. In 1716 it reputedly had a church, a priest, an Indian governor, a large plaza, and approximately 550 people. With time the name Guadalupe passed from existence, and the town was known by variants of the name Presidio del Norte. As such it retained its identity through a further change of name to Ojinaga, today the largest town in the vicinity. For about ten years, all went well until the Indians became dissatisfied at the government's neglect to accede to their petitions regarding irrigation works. Finally, they revolted, causing the friars to retire in 1725. For the most part the Spaniards abandoned the area until twenty-five years later when serious attention was given to the establishment of a presidio.

In the latter half of the eighteenth century, the pressure of Indian depredations and the mismanagement of presidios deteriorated frontier conditions in northern New Spain to such an extent that the Spanish crown ordered an examination of the entire frontier with the view of relocating presidios and making whatever other adjustments to prevent further abandonments of the frontier settlements. The Marques de Rubi was assigned the investigation and embarked on an inspection of frontier conditions. He was assisted by royal engineers, Nicolas de La Fora and Joseph de Urrutia, who drew plans of the presidios and drafted maps of the area. As a result of Rubi’s recommendations and La Fara’s and Urrutia’s maps and plans, a new line of defense was established, uniform fortification plans were prescribed, and numerous changes were made in regulations governing military personnel. This new line of fortifications entailed fifteen presidios situated at about 120 mile intervals extending from the Gulf of California on the west to the Gulf of Mexico on the east along what is now approximately the northern boundary of Mexico. The Big Bend region certainly played a role in that line of defense. Several presidios were established in the Big Bend region: San Elizario at El Porvenir, San Fernando de Carrizal, Principe at Pilares, San Carlos and San Sabas near present-day Big Bend National Park. Yet all of them were of less importance and of less strategic value than La Junta de los Rios.
Officially entitled Nuestra Senora de Belen y Santiago de Amarilla and commonly called La Junta de las Rios and Presidio del Norte, the presidia established in the Big Bend area was originally intended to be at Pilares on the south bank of the Rio Grande about midway between El Paso and the missions at the confluence of the Conchos. Instead it was placed at the hacienda of Agua Nueva, some sixty miles north of Chihuahua. Sometime after 1757 it was moved to La Junta, but was moved again in 1766 to Julimes, more than one hundred miles up the Conchas River. It was returned, finally in 1773 to the original site at La Junta where Ojinaga stands today and remained there well into the nineteenth century.

**Content:** The collection consists of correspondence and official military appointments to the presidia command, but the bulk of the documentation is made up of reports that are compilations of testimonies, proposals, recommendations, and descriptive accounts by military officers and civilian consultants involved in the planning of the new presidia at La Junta de los Rios. Major topics include revenue, location of the presidia, size and design of the fortress, the establishment of a Spanish town at the presidia site, relations with both friendly Indians and the unfriendly Apaches, propagation of the Christian faith, the acquisition of a stronger foothold in Texas, protection of Chihuahua and other cities to the south, availability of water and arable land, and the proper amounts of munitions and supplies assigned each soldier. Such discussion clearly reflected the concerns and reforms of the Rubi investigation and sheds light on the process of Spanish decision-making with regard to the hostile frontier conditions. An interesting aspect of that process is that most of the documents photocopied in the AGI are themselves certified copies made by hand. The originals are probably in Chihuahua or Mexico City. The official status of each of those copies, along with its location in the AGI, is noted in the inventory under the description of each item.

By: Michael F. Fry
Archivist
13 March 1986
GLOSSARY

Alferez: A first or second lieutenant in the army, often referred to as a "teniente".

Aranjuez: A Spanish town between Madrid and Toledo. It was the winter court of the Spanish crown.

Audiencia: A judicial and legislative council administering royal affairs over a substantial geographic area in the New World. Judicially, it was subordinate only to the Council of the Indies. In a legislative role, it acted in conjunction with the viceroy.

Cajon: Shelf. A designation of location at the AGI.

Carpeta: File or folder of documents.

Estante: Bookcase. A designation location at the AGI.

Expediente: Generally, a group of papers or documents pertaining to a specific issue or event.

Legajo: File, or a bundle of papers or documents, averaging in size from one half to one cubic foot. Also, a designation of location at the AGI.

Mexico: In the colonial times and in present usage this geographic designation denotes Mexico City, not the country.

Nueva Vizcaya: A province of the viceroyalty of New Spain under whose jurisdiction the La Junta de los Rios region fell. A governor headed its executive branch, working with a small audiencia located in Chihuahua.

Paracer: An opinion, usually filed prior to making a policy decision.

Presidio: A military fortress established in remote frontier areas whose purpose was to maintain the frontier, foster hispanization and Christianity, and protect more settled interior provinces from hostile intruders.

Provincias Internas: A separate administrative district in which the northern provinces of New Spain were taken out from under the direct jurisdiction of the viceroy and placed under that of a comandante-general with quasi viceregal authority in 1776.

San Ildefonso: A Spanish town just northwest of Madrid. It was the summer court of the Spanish crown.
LA JUNTA PRESIDIO COLLECTION, 1757-1789

BIBLIOGRAPHY*


*Also see Research Notes and Maps, a folder located at the end of the collection containing pertinent articles and maps gathered during the research phase of processing. (Box 3, folder BIB).
Box #1

CORRESPONDENCE, 1760-1788 (15 leaves)

Folder #1


Folder #2

Marquis de Cruillas to Julian de Arriaga. Mexico. 19 October 1765. Original. Statement that duplicates of the files of testimony concerning the establishment of a presidia at La Junta del Norte would soon be sent, as the originals had been lost in the Arroyo de Buitrago. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 511, Estante 104, Cajon 6, Legajo 16.

Folder #3


Folder #4

Julian de Arriaga to Viceroy [Antonio Maria de Bucarely y Ursua]. San Ildefonso. 11 August 1775. Draft. Statement that a dispatch would be forwarded to Juan Fernandez de Carmona, the Lieutenant at La Junta del Norte. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 516, Estante 104, Cajon 6, Legajo 16.

Folder #5

Box #1

Correspondence (cont.)

Folder #6


Appointments, 1775-1789 (33 leaves)

Folder #7


Folder #8

Nomination and appointment of Juan Cortez to the post of Alférez of La Junta del Norte. Mexico. 7 July 1775. Certified Copy. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 515, Estante 104, Cajon 6, Legajo 17.

Folder #9


Folder #10

Proposal by the Viceroy Antonio Bucareli Ursua to appoint Juan Cortez to the post of Alférez of La Junta del Norte. Mexico. 27 October 1775. Original. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 515, Estante 104, Cajon 6, Legajo 17.

Folder #11

APPOINTMENTS, 1775-1789 (cont.)

Folder #12


Folder #13


Folder #14


Folder #15

Official royal appointment of Domingo Diaz to the post of Captain of La Junta del Norte. Madrid. 1 July 1789. Certified Duplicate. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 506, Estante 104, Cajon 6, Legajo 8.

REPORTS, 1757-1787 (1,102 leaves)

First Report (323 leaves)

The first report consists of a series of testimonies, proposals, and descriptive accounts by military officers involved in the establishment of a presidia at the confluence of the Conchas River and the Rio del Norte, and the settlement of a new town called Carrizal. The various points of discussion include the following: revenue, location of the presidia, size of the fortress, the establishment of a Spanish town at the presidia site, the design of the fortress, and relations with both friendly Indians at La Junta and the unfriendly Apaches. More than half of the first report, however, deals with the foundation of Carrizal with fifty families and a squadron of twenty soldiers. There is a list of the fifty families giving the following data on each: head of the household and wife, their native towns, their ages, their children’s names and ages, an inventory of the amount of property that would be brought to the new site, including weapons, horses, oxen, cattle, saddles, farm tools, stores of wheat and maize, goats, and sheep. A map of the
First Report (cont.)

proposed site accompanies the list. Another important part of the report is a description of a fifteen day journey from Chihuahua to the La Junta region made by an expedition led by Alonso Ruben de Zeliz in 1759. Chihuahua. 28 June 1760. Certified Copy. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 327, Estante 103, Cajon 6, Legajo 21.

BOX#1

REPORTS (cont.)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Folder #</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Folder #16</td>
<td>First Report: Testimony</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder #17</td>
<td>First Report: Testimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder #18</td>
<td>First Report: Establishment of Carrizal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Folder #19</td>
<td>First Report: Establishment of Carrizal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder #20</td>
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<td>Folder #21</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder #22</td>
<td>First Report: Establishment of Carrizal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder #23</td>
<td>First Report: Zeliz Expedition to found La Junta (preparations only)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Folder #24</td>
<td>First Report: Zeliz Expedition to found La Junta (preparations only)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

BOX#2

Second Report (648 leaves)

The second report contains testimonies and recommendation of both military and civilian consultants on the protection of Nueva Vizcaya by establishing a presidia at La Junta de los Rios. In essence, it is a continuation of the first report, although more definite and specific plans are discussed and concluded. Most recommend that the presidio be built at La Junta for the following reasons: propagation of the faith, protection of the Christian Indians, stronger foothold in Texas, protection of Chihuahua and other cities to the south, good land, abundant water, and a docile Indian population. Six thousand pesos were allotted for the construction of the fortress. An investigation is made into the qualifications of the presidio. Inventories are included of the muskets, pistols, swords, lances, ropes, saddles, horses, and munitions to be assigned each soldier. The debts each soldier owed the treasury are listed as well. A census is included of the adult Indian men in the following La Junta villages: San Francisco, San Juan, Pueblo de los Conejos, Pueblo de los Mesquites, and Pueblo de Guadalupe. Mexico. 6 September 1757. Certified Copy. Location: AGI, Guadalajara 137, Estante 67, Cajon 3, Legajo 31.
Second Report (cont.)

Folder #25 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #26 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #27 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #28 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #29 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #30 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #31 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #32 Second Report: Testimony
Folder #33 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #34 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #35 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #36 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #37 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #38 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #39 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies

BOX#3

Folder #40 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #41 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #42 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #43 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #44 Second Report: List of Military at Presidio 1759
Folder #45 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #46 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies


Folder #49 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #50 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies
Folder #51 Second Report: Personnel Testimonies

Supplementary Reports (131 leaves) (Third Report)


Folder #52 Supplementary Reports: Testimony
Folder #53 Supplementary Reports: Testimony
Supplementary Reports (cont.)


Folder #54  Supplementary Reports: Testimony
**La Junta Presidio Collection**

[1757-1789]

**Donor**      Earl Elam

**Donation Date**  4 January 1984

**Reference File:**
- Biographical Data Sheet
- Summary Sheet
- Microfilmed

**Oral History Interviews:**
- None

**Type of Material:**

The La Junta Presidio Collection contains correspondence, official appointments, and military reports.

**Number linear feet** 1.5

**Number of items**  1,150

**Catalogued:**
- Date  13 March 1986
- By    Michael F. Fry

**Evaluation:**

The La Junta Presidio Collection is one of the few sources of Spanish colonial documentation on the Big Bend region.

**Principle Subjects:**

La Junta de los Rios, Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Mexico  
Presidio del Norte  
Chihuahua City, Chihuahua, Mexico  
Carrizal  
Mexico  
Conchas River  
Rio Grande River  
Gregorio Osorio

Friar Juan Antonio Garcia  
Nuestra Senora de Guadalupe  
Marques de Rubi  
Nicolas de La Fora  
Joseph de Urrutia  
Indians--Apache  
Pilares  
Antonio M. de Bucareli y Ursua  
Nueva Vizcaya  
Missions  
San Ildefonso  
Aranjuez  
Mateo Antonio de Mendoza  
Julian de Arriaga  
Juan Fernandez de Carmona  
Provincias Internas

**Location**

**Identification:**

See Collection Summary

**By** Michael F. Fry

**Date** 13 March 1986