

HISTORIC SUMMARY  
OF THE  
MEXICAN COLONY OF JOLIET, IL  
U.S.A.

BY:  
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TRANSLATED  
BY  
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## **DEDICATION**

TO MY WIFE MARGARITA, lady, who entangled me in sweet affection of her heart and giving me joy and happiness, has perfumed my life with sweetness of her love.

TO MY CHILDREN TONY, JOE AND MARGARETH whom smiles have made me forget my hardships and sufferings offering me the purest joy that a human can enjoy.

## THE COLONY

The Mexican Colony of Joliet, IL, is the same as the rest of the Mexican Colonies that exist in the United States, with the exception of those in the South states such as Texas, Arizona, New Mexico and California. In these states the Mexican Colonies are permanent since the beginning, while that in the rest of the North America they are composed in their mayor part, by citizens which came from various states of Mexico.

Three fourths of Mexicans emigrants came from large and small farms and small towns. One fourth came from different cities. These last ones, more prepared, applied themselves to small commerce. If they didn't do it in a large scale it was because they didn't know English or the customs of these lands. For that same reason, some of them knowing some trade, couldn't practice it and resigned to take jobs some of them had never practiced.

The emigration of Mexicans to this place was during 1905, but their duration was not long. This was due to the fact that most men were contracted to work for the railroad, which only took place during the summer. When fall was near they all returned to the Southern states to their place of origin.

Like this many years passed until 1914, epoch in which the number of emigrants grew, many of them stayed and their families came to establish with them. Grouping themselves these Mexican families originated what we know now with the name of the Mexican Colony of Joliet.

The first permanent families that registered here were the Sanchez family, the Orozco family, the Elizalde family and the Rivera family. Later on also the Quiroz family.

The first birth was Beatriz S. Rivera, daughter of Mrs. Cleofas and Mr. Ubistano, in 1916. Later on November 25 of 1917, Catalina Orozco followed, daughter of Mrs. Ma. de Jesus and S. Atilano.

The first death, is believed, was that of Mr. Tomas Venegas in 1916. Later that of Mr. Ubistano Rivera in 1917, there is people who assure there were others prior, but it hasn't been possible to obtain their names.

The first registered matrimonies, which we have memory of were: Mr. Julian Sierra with Miss. Pabla Velazquez on Oct. 4, 1919, sponsored by Mr. Guadalupe Hernandez and his wife Mrs. Ramona A. Hernandez.

On July 15, 1920 the following was registered: Mr. Clemente Elizalde with Miss. Matilde Reyes, as witnesses Mr. Fermin Gallegos and Mrs. A. Elizalde.

On December 1, 1920: Mr. Lois Briones with Miss Bernabe Casarez.

## **-I "SOCIETY"-**

The members of the Mexican Colony have always loved reunions and social activities, it was because of that, that even if there wasn't a formal group, we celebrated national holidays like: May 1st and 5th, September 15th and 16th. For the celebrations all the families united in a determined place and there the Festivity took place.

### **FIRST PATRIOTIC MEETING**

Feeling the need of having people in charge of the preparation and management of the Patriotic Festivities, the thought of establishing an official group who would manage the festivities and be responsible of such activities. This group was given the name of Junta Patriotica (Patriotic Meeting). The board of directors was formed in 1918.

President	Mr. J. J. Cota
Secretary	Mr. J. R. A. Ramirez
Treasurer	Mr. Antonio Zendejas
Speakers	Mr. Louis Briones, Mr. Ezequiel Briones and Clemente Elizalde

These fellow countrymen are worthy to mention because they were the first to integrate such meeting and the first, that with their attitude, established the custom to formally celebrate our Patriotic Festivities.

### **MOCTEZUMA SOCIETY**

This society was founded in 1924 by a group of men, eager for a better social life in the Colony.

It was formed in this matter:

President	Mr. Louis Sanchez
Secretary	Mr. Antonio Barrera
Treasurer	Mr. Guzmaro Venegas

The activities of such mentioned society were limited exclusively to the benefit of its members, for which reason it didn't have greater reach and its existence was of a few month.

### **LATIN CLUB**

This group was established almost at the same time as the above-mentioned and was directed by the following people.

President	Mr. P. Cabrera
Secretary	Mr. Jose Zaldivar

This Club functioned in benefit of a few and it was considered to be brief almost provisional.

## HONORABLE COMMISSION

Not fulfilling the necessities of the period, the above-mentioned groups, it was necessary to organize a Society with more vision and founded with strong and stable base. The occasion was favorable, statistics showed the largest number of Mexicans in Joliet during this time. During this time the colony had men very competent and with great capacity to organize and manage.

During the first months of 1925 the wish to organize every element available was public. On March 8, 1925 a general meeting was called so that the base of the new organization can be discussed.

In the meeting Mr. Carmen Garcia stood out, manifesting the meanness of prior groups and the need of one who would see for the common good of everyone in the Mexican Colony.

It was decided to name it Honorable Commission, because the existing Mexican Councils in the United States supported it. After discussions and wishes to postpone the meeting it was proceeded to establish the board of directors, that was composed by the following men.

President	Mr. J. Carmen Garcia
Vice-President	Mr. Jose Hernandez
Treasurer	Mr. Juan B. Lopez
Secretary	Mr. Antonio Contreras
Pro-Secretary	Mr. Salvador F. Razo
Speakers	Mr. Antonio Maldonado
	Mr. Luis Sanchez
	Mr. Juan Aguirre
	Mr. Toribio Villagomez
	Mr. Rafael Castellanos
	Mr. Jose D. Jimenez

See here in detail, the minutes the session on March 8, 1925. Joliet, IL. United in Polasky Hall, a part of the Mexican Colony, also the Patriotic Meeting, elected in 1924, the meeting evolved in the following program.

- I.-Opening of the session
- II.-Secretary Inform
- III.-Treasurer Inform
- IV.-Reading of the Rules
- V.-Presentations of Candidates for President
- VI.-Presentation of Candidates for Treasurer
- VII.-Election of both Candidates
- VIII.-Protest and establishment of Board of Directors
- IX.-Diverse Topics

While doing Protest of Law in the meeting they came across a case not expected and it was agreed upon to form a Commission from the group to which this Protest could be presented. During this meeting the Patriotic Meeting was also formed by the following people:

President	Mr. Antonio Contreras
Secretary	Mr. G. Jose Hernandez
Treasurer	Mr. Martin Molina

There were some topics still pending for the definite formation of the Honorific Commission, they were postponed for Sunday March 15, 1925. During this second meeting it was determined to let the Central Committee of the Confederation of Mexican Societies of the United States, know of the existence of this new society so that it would officially be recognized

and supported.

The official location of this Confederation of Mexican Societies was, 1616 W. Taylor St. Chicago, IL, integrated by three members: Mr. Luis Lupian G. -Mexican Council of Chicago, Jose B. Armendariz-Secretary, and Jesus S. Dominguez-Council member.

Mr. Carmen Garcia, in name of the colony he represented, let the Confederation know of the creation of the Honorific Commission on March 17, 1924. Its theme was: "Help mutually in everything and for everything." He showed the appreciation of the colony and gave him the names of the Board of Directors.

Again on March 24, 1924, the president of the Honorific Commission wrote to the Central Committee of the Confederation, requesting all type of information and requirements needed to be able to affiliate to that chain of Societies. In response he was told they could belong when judged appropriate, according to specifications on the Constitution mailed to him.

The official inauguration was on May 9, 1925. This Commission, for the first time, took an official census of Mexican residents.

### **"BLUE CROSS BRIGADE"**

During the same period, a group of women were organizing the Mexican Blue Cross Brigade of Joliet.

The center of this organization was the Maldonado family residence, who offered their home as a social movement center. With cooperation from the Honorific Commission there was more movement and their organization was faster. Its official inauguration was on set for June 1, 1925, but unpredicted causes made it impossible. Due to that its definite date was July 4, 1925.

The board of directed was as follows:

President	Mrs. Luisa T. de Maldonado
Vice-President	Mrs. Joaquina S. de Lomeli
Secretary	Mrs. Concepcion A. de Calcanas
Treasurer	Mrs. Ma. Refugio Gomez G.
Sub-Treasurer	Miss. Catalina Martinez

This Brigade was officially recognized by the Confederation of Mexican Societies of the United States of North America, who issued a memo dated June 18, 1925 requesting a meeting to take place on June 28 at Hull House located at 805 S. Halted St. This memo also invited the any women interested in forming the Blue Cross Brigade so that it would be officially be installed on July 4, 1925.

Once established, each of both organizations dedicated its work to what was initially imposed.

The existence of these two organizations was not long. Various of its members not content with their positions left to other places in search of better economical conditions. This separation brought a disintegration.

### **GUADALUPANA MUTUAL SOCIETY**

With the disintegration of the both above-mentioned organizations there was no one in charge religious or patriotic activities. A group to come take charge of the situation was desired. It was the when Mr. Andres Ruiz and Mr. Clemente Elizalde took the initiative to reorganize the element in disposition.

After several reunions taken place in the homes of such said men, it was agreed upon to form the Guadalupeana Mutual Society. As its name indicates, this society was religious and

patriotic. It was formally established on November 15, 1926. Father Louis Balleto of San Antonio church also recognized it. This church was the center of religious activities for Mexicans in Joliet, Rockdale and Lockport.

The Board of Directors was composed in the following matter:

President	Mr. Andres Ruiz
Vice-President	Mr. Salomon Garcia
Secretary	Mr. Aurelio Ruiz
Treasurer	Mr. Clemente Elizalde
Manager of Public Finance	Mr. Tomas Garcia
Commissioner of Order	Mr. Navor Rodriguez

The first activity after a work intensive preparation was on December 12, 1926 (Day of Our Lady of Guadalupe). Fulfilling its goal, this Society was in existence until 1929.

### **BENITO JUAREZ MUTUAL SOCIETY**

A group of women, lead by Mr. J. Guadalupe Jorge and Mr. Felix Cervantes, men who didn't sympathize with the noble ideas of the Guadalupe Society, organized this new society which had congregated in this colony coming from various parts in the U.S.A.

Its board of directors is as follows:

President	Mr. Manuel Rivera
Vice-President	Mr. Felix Cervantes
Secretary	Mr. Juan Ortega
Treasurer	Mr. Armando Garcia
Sub-Secretary	Mr. Jose Ayala
Sanitary President	Mr. Rodolfo Garcia
Instructor	Mr. Sabino Cervantes
Speaker 1.	Guadalupe Jorge

It was only in social events that they met with the Guadalupe Mutual Society, in this since they both celebrated the National Mexican Holidays.

The great pianist Mr. Rosendo Garcia was part of this society. It was he, that for the first time organized a Music Band. This band was publicly presented on March 19, 1929 at "Polasky Hall."

Due to the circumstances this society lasted only until 1931.

### **DEPRESSION PERIOD**

From 1931 to 1934 there was an ill-fated period which was called "Depression Period." It was an adverse time not only for those emigrants who had recently come here, but also for those who had a set residence on this ground.

It was an economically unbalance period, of life with no future, of sacrifices with no outcome and of financial desperation. A period in which men of different economic life styles were affected by the defeat, many of them left deplorable to the extent of suicide.

Due to this situation, the Colony was abandoned. There was no society that could guide an individual or have interest in the community. It was like a national catastrophe, everything was considered unstable and insecure. No migration or relocation was favorable to obtain a job. It was a time of dissolution for any association.

Many companies along with some local authorities, considering the depression would last, offered help to those who wanted to go back to their county of origin. Various people were assigned the duty of gathering those who would accepting the help. A date and time was set and trains were available.

Those were scenes full of sorrow and sadness which were seen resembled on the faces those who left just as on those who stayed. It was similar to seeing our young ones go to military camp during 1941 to 1945, during World War Two.

Lets consider the fact that those who left south of the Rio Grande didn't complain about leaving or not leaving, but of the situation they were with no resources and exposed to go back to their home towns in worst circumstances than when they came for the first time.

The question was, if there were good years why weren't they precautions and saved some money? How far can savings of a simple worked with or without family go? It is true that the majority had their savings, since the situation was prolonged they had to make use of them. Not being able to sustain themselves any longer they saw themselves obligated to go back home. Those who resigned to confront the situation stayed willing to live a life of sacrifices with hope of better times.

### **VICENTE GUERRERO MUTUAL SOCIETY**

In transit through this place engineer Luis Soto y Gama, who held a conference before the Colony in the Baptist Mexican Church of Joliet and knowing that there were no Mexican groups, proposed to a group of people the need to establish a society to serve Mexican residents. The idea was accepted and Mr. Arnulfo Ramirez and Mr. J. Trinidad Vazquez, active men of society called several meeting in order to make such suggestion reality. On January 15, 1936 the last meeting was held. The Society was established and the Board of Directors formed.

President	Mr. Julio Rodirguez
Vice-President	Mr. Luis Briones
Secretary	Mr. Castulo Lara
Treasurer	Miss. Eloisa Acosta

Once the Board of Directors was established, they agreed to present the Society to the Colony on January 23, 1936. That was the day in which it would formally start its functions. Since there was still an economical crisis and there was not enough funds for the society's expenses and due to differences among it's members, this society like the others didn't last long.

### **AZTEC EAGLES JUVENIL CLUB**

During this same epoch, before the Vicente Guerrero Society was formed, a small group of youngsters lead by Manuel Cortes, Moises Fonseca and Tony Fonseca, eager to have a place to unite and spend free time and since there was no group, came up with the idea to form a Club.

They applied themselves the task of selecting a place, which there were many of, to serve as their location. Once they had the location they spent hours of fun there. They were not content with that sort of group, they wanted the group to have different activities. In order to have different activities they need funds they didn't have since they were minors so they solicited help from older people. Since adults were know involved it was necessary to give the group a change.



Therefore the Aztec Eagles Juvenile Club was recognized on February 15, 1936, having in its Board of Directors the following.

President	Mr. Trinidad Vazquez
Vice-President	Mr. Juan G. Salas
Secretary	Mr. Juan Escobedo
Treasurer	Mr. J. Rosario Gutierrez

The principal objective of the Club was to involve youngsters in sports and social activities.

This was the first time the youth of the Colony demonstrated their initiative. It was like the first step of the future generations.

### **AZTEC EAGLES FAMINE CLUB**

It was in April of 1938 when females felt the need to organize themselves and take part in an active manner in the civic and social life of the Colony. They wanted to be a integrated, making their cooperation, talent, and forces available. Mrs. Maria Jesus Orozco was assigned the duty to carry out the idea of this Club. It was in her house that which came true. After interviews, consultations and meeting, the female group was organized on May 1, 1938. The Board of Directors was:

President	Miss Tomasa A.
Vice-President	Mrs. Catalina Orozco
Secretary	Mrs. Rosa M. Fonseca
Sub-Secretary	Mrs. Josefina R. de Jorge
Treasurer	Miss Amalia Orozco

Once the board of directors was established, May 12, was the set date for the official presentation. An evening party, which turned out excellent, was prepared for the occasion.

### **-II "RELIGION"-**

Every Mexican is very attached to their catholic faith and won't forget easily their customs and religious traditions. Since the beginning, the first founders of the Mexican Colony approached the parish of San Antonio. Back then there was a Priest, Father Louis Balleto, who could speak Spanish.

Eager to put an image of Our Lady of Guadalupe to satisfy their devotion, as true Mexicans, funds were raised to buy a beautiful image. An altar was made especially for her and a celebration was held every 12th of December following a Mexican tradition.

### **THE CARMELITE ORDER**

On October 1, 1935 Cardinal Mundelein let Carmelite Laurecen Diether, that the Church of Santa Maria of Joliet was going to be in hands of the Carmelite Order. Father Matthew O'Neill was to be the head pastor of that Parrish, which established officially on March 26, 1936.

Sylvester Snee, Terence Fitzgerald, Philip Irvin and Timothy Moore were designated as \_\_\_\_\_. Fr. Victor Nowak, Fr. Albert Dunne and Stephen McGovern were also sent.

On June of 1936, Priest Matthew O'Neill, was elevated to Provincial of the Order of the United States, but didn't take the position until 1939. During the time that Father O'Neill remained in this location he worked very hard and reached out beyond his limits, more than any

other priest had ever done.

As he came in contact with the congregation he realized the Mexican Colony lacked a location for its spiritual needs. Seeing the situation, he dedicated himself to organize the Colony members, expecting to come up with a solution. Everyone corresponded to his call in anxiety to have a sacred place to worship God and satisfy his or her religious needs.

The effort of the notable Father O'Neill flourished on July 16, 1939 when the "Mexican Chapel of Our Lady of Carmen" opened. Since there was many things to do and time didn't permit total dedication to the activities of the Chapel he assigned Father Aquinas Colan, who then was the Chaplain at "Chaplain of Lewis of Aeronautica of Lockport." He didn't speak Spanish, but soon was familiar with our customs.

He worked constantly in the Colony and was dedicated with enthusiasm to the youngsters during 1939-1942. Since we were in War on June 1942 he enlisted in the United States Armed Forces. He served as Chaplain on the 31st Division and the 124th Infantry Regiment. He boarded at the Pacific Coast of the U.S.A., disembarked on March 1943 at the Philippines Islands. He spent two years on the battle field, serving God, helping others and fighting faithfully for his Country, until he died like a hero at the Island of Mindanao on May 1945, when there was a warlike encounter between the Allied Forces and Japan. When we all found out about his death, we cried for him as a Father and glorified him as a hero, his memory is alive in us.

When Father O'Neill stepped into his position as Provincial, Father Sylvester Snee became Parish Priest of Santa Maria Parish, which financially supported the Mexican Parish due to the situation of the congregation due to war.

Mr. Guadalupe Jorge and his wife Josefina R. de Jorge, in charge of the Parish, considered the idea of becoming economically independent, the majority of the congregation supported this idea. They set a monthly quote that would be collected by Mr. Carlos Estrada. This was around 1940 and 1942; such noble work didn't last due to the war. Because of that, it was decided that who ever could help would mail their donation directly to the Parrish of Santa Maria.

Since the withdrawal of Father Aquinas we lasted one year without a Priest in our Chapel until July 1944 when Provincial Priest O'Neill named Father Germain.

#### **EXISTENCE COMMITTEE OF 1944-1947**

It was know to all, that the current Chapel would not fulfill the need of the future, therefore it was proposed to the Colony to unite funds to acquire a property large enough to build a Chapel and a social hall. Once accepted, the project was presented to Father P. Snee. He proposed a committee be formed for authorization and start on the project right away. A general meeting was held on July 9, 1944 in the Mexican Chapel of Our Lady of Carmen, most men were there and proceeded to form the committee with the presence of Father Snee.

President	Mr. Navor Rodriguez
Secretary	Mr. Enrique Haro
Treasurer	Mr. Guadalupe Jorge
Sub-Secretary	Mr. Carlos Estrada

In that meeting the Mexican group was named "Mexican Catholic Congregation." The following men attended the meeting: Julio Rodriguez Torres, Felipe Rodriguez, Jose Cabrera, Jose Fonseca, David Gonzalez, Francisco Gutierrez, Gumersindo Rodriguez, Jose Cordoba, Blas Calcanas, Pedro Marquez, J. Guadalupe Ramirez, Juan Saucedo, Jose Olvera and Elias Gutierrez.

The committee named the following as collectors:

First Zone: Tamayo Family, 705 Bruce St.  
 Second Zone: Mr. Jose Cordoba, 822 N. Collins St.  
 Third Zone: Mr. Navor Rodriguez, 421 N. Collins St.  
 Lockport: Mr. Felipe Rodriguez, Yale Ave.  
 Rockdale: Mr. Enrique Haro, 500 Moen Ave.

Taking into consideration Father Snee' words and the interest of the majority of the Colony, donations were made by the good will of the following:

David Gonzalez	\$ 118.00	Jose Lopez	33.75
Gonzalo Gutierrez	60.00	Julio C. Fuentes	33.75
Navor Rodriguez	55.50	Jose Cabrera	30.75
Guadalupe Jorge	49.50	Jose Fonseca	32.00
Domingo Lopez	49.50	Ciriaco Chavez	32.75
Epifanio Hernandez	47.50	Cirilio Estupillan	33.75
Carlos Estrada	43.00	Catarino German	33.75
Jose Olvera	37.50	Sabino Arellano	31.75
Pablo Zaragoza	37.50	Ramon Orozco	28.75
Victor Gutierrez	36.75	Salvador Garcia	28.75
Leandro Gomez	28.75	Jovita Delgado	11.00
Bonifacio Lopez	28.75	Rose Fynick	10.00
Juan Rodriguez	23.75	Severa Vazquez	9.00
Jesus Tamayo	20.00	Epifanio Razo	8.00
Jose Cordoba	30.75	Rafael Martinez	7.00
Jacinta M. Cruz	17.00	Jeronimo Roa	3.00
Vicente Cruz	18.75	M. Mireles	3.00
Jesus Ortega	18.75	Blas Calcanas	1.50
Jesus Lopez	18.75	LOCKPORT	
M. Carmen Rodriguez	18.75	Felipe Rodriguez	38.00
Francis Orozco	18.75	Elias Gutierrez	36.75
Jesus Sambrano	18.75	Gonzalo Tafoya	31.25
Remedios Lopez	18.75	Francisco Gutierrez	20.00
Guadalupe Ramirez	18.75	Lorenzo Rodriguez	10.00
Jose Baltazar	18.75	Ismael Zepeda	3.00
Alfonso Izquierdo	18.75	Ambrosio Padilla	3.00
Cirilo Lazaro	18.75	ROCKDALE	
Primitivo Cervantes	18.75	Enrique Haro	43.00
Urbano Portales	15.75	Amador Serratos	30.75
Rodolfo Chavez	15.00	Jesus Padilla	28.75
Ricardo Roa	12.00	Juan Gomez	20.00
Pedro Zavala	12.00	Ramona Pacheco	20.00
Guadalupe Rodriguez	12.00	Felipe Ayala	18.75
Ramon Ramirez	13.00	Juan Padilla	18.75
Vicente Mejia	12.00	Juan Serratos	4.00
Eulalio Delgado	28.75		

This was the result of the collection since the committee was formed on July of 1944.

### **FATHER GERMAIN**

Social activities began on July 1944, when Father O'Neill assigned Father Germain O Hanrry to take charge of the Mexican Chapel of our Lady of Carmen. He took charge at the best time for the Committee, who had just begun functioning and needed a guide.

From the beginning Father Germain manifested enthusiasm in all social activities. He expected to occupy some of his Ministry. While getting to know the congregation he noticed there weren't many activities. The young didn't have any social activity and much less a place to develop.

### **FEMENINE RELIGIOUS CHOIR**

Once aware of the congregation's situation, women and men, the first thing Father Germain did was organize a Chapel Choir. He chose young voices with assistance from the tireless Miss Collins, who put a lot of effort into the progress of the Mexican Chapel. The following young Colony girls were among the group gathered by Father Germain: J. Jaxo, L. Lopez, P. Jazo and J. Rodriguez. This initiative had little result, but should still be recognized as the first effort of Father Germain. This effort later blossomed with cooperation from daughters of Mr. Felipe Rodriguez and his wife Ramona. His daughters had at their charge the choir, who functioned expensively at our Chapel and had activity worth praising.

### **MEXICAN SOCIAL CENTER**

Once the group of young ladies was active, Father Germain dedicated himself to organize the youth under the name of Mount Carmel C.Y.O. This was of importance for the social life of the Colony and was integrated by: David Gomez, J. Gonzalez, I. Ramirez, V. Tobias, M. Calcanas, A. Delgado, R. Frausto, P. Lopez, T. Gutierrez, J. Rodriguez and F. Castillo.

Since there wasn't a meeting center available, by petition of Father Germain, Santa Maria Parrish offered an adequate place in school of their Parrish. Once available, the young men set it up to serve its purpose and inaugurated it on November 7, 1944 with the name of "Mexican Clubroom and Social Center." This club was made available to all the Colony.

### **KAPPA GAMMA KAPPA SORORITE GROUP**

It was Father Germain who formed the young female group and with this name it began existing in 1944. This group understood young girls from 14 to 18 years of age, its Board of Directors was:

President	Miss Esther Estrada
Vice-President	Miss Nellie Rodriguez
Treasurer	Miss Mary Louise Zaragoza
Secretary	Miss Carmen Gutierrez
Sub-Secretary	Miss Eleonor Gomez

Among its participating members were: Miss Gloria Acosta, Miss Rita Martinez, Miss Elvira Martinez, Miss Jennie Jaso, Miss Paulina Jaso, Miss Mary Louise Lopez, Miss Ann Hernandez, Miss Celia Dominguez, Miss Mary Medina, Miss Lina Gomez, Miss Mary Gomez, Miss Mary Delgado and Miss Celia Gutierrez.

## PAN AMERICAN CLUB

The above-mentioned group attracted new members, girls and women, which didn't conform to its name or to the reason why it was founded. Due to that, it was considered necessary and practical to change its name, reorganize it and give it a new structure and organization that would allow it to be homogeneous to both girls and women. This was how the name, Pan American Club, was chosen.

The Board of Directors was established in this manner:

President	Miss Dorothy Baldingo
Vice-President	Mrs. Theresa G. Zaragoza
Secretary	Mrs. Ruby C. Lopez
Sub-Secretary	Miss Carmen Delgado
Treasurer	Mrs. Petra Partida

During the time this committee was in force from 1944 to 1947 was when these groups were in existence.

Among the patriotic activities of such said committee, were that of independence. Since in 1944 this committee was only two months old it was impossible to organize, but did cooperate with Father Germain and the group of girls and women. It was the girls and women who for the first time formally organized the festivities they were the soul and life of such festivities. That celebration outstood with the cooperation of the Mexican Braceros, who were in charge of the civic act of the night of September 15th. It was a very recognized celebration. As a tribute of admiration we mention the name of those in the group:

Organizers	Josefina R. de J. and Ramona S. P.
President	Mrs. Maria Luisa Flores
Vice-President	Miss Carmen Delgado
Secretary	Mrs. Martina E. Campos
Treasurer	Miss Theresa Gomez
Master of Ceremony	Alfonso Izquierdo

During this committee Mexican women were given a more active participation which they knew how to fulfill always being faithful to the confidence they received.

In 1946 to give the May 5th (Anniversary of the glorious triumph of our military when they defeated the invaders) Patriot Festivity more splendor, Mrs. Carmen O. de Karales and Mrs. Josefina R. de Jorge organized a "Sympathy Contest" among the young ladies of the Colony to elect a Queen.

The Participants were:

Carmen Gutierrez  
Gloria Acosta  
Theresa Orozco  
Maria Gomez

This challenge also had the objective of raising funds for the project everyone was interested in.

At the closing of the Contest, the winner was Miss Maria Gomez and was crowned as queen by City Mayor A. O. Yanke on May 1, 1946. The financial results were of great satisfaction for all cooperators. In it they saw the good will originated in the Colony.

Father Germain, in charge of the Mexican Colony of Joliet, agreed to the idea of taking a trip to Mexico and know it to better interpret the idea and understand the spirit and feeling of

Mexicans. He took advantage of August vacations for his trip. He arrived in Mexico anxious to see our picturesque country and immediately began to travel. Besides knowing our capital he visited Guadalajara, Puebla, Cernavaca, Taxco among other places. He said that what most remained engraved in his heart was the maternal palpitation of Our Lady of Guadalupe, when he celebrate a mass at the \_\_\_\_\_, privilege wished for and carried out with great satisfaction.

He had a conversation with at that time Mexican Archbishop Luis Maria Martinez. When the Mexican Archbishop found out of the interest he had in Mexicans gave him a letter of salutation for his congregation. The letter read as follows:

"Residence of Mexican Archbishop"

I have felt great satisfaction knowing through Father Germain himself that he is in charge of Our Lady of Carmen Parrish, integrated by Catholic Mexicans. I gladly take advantage of this opportunity to send you, through your Parrish Priest, a special Benediction assuring you identical blessing from above and the protection of the Holy Virgin.

Mexico, D.F. August 30, 1946

Luis M. Martinez  
Mex. Archbishop.

After seeing the beauty and scenes of Mexico City Father Germain returned emotional and happy. He realized how religious its people are and valued the Mexican history. He carried it all in his imagination and with great details he would have his Mexican congregation filled with nostalge when speaking of their Country. This all made the Father-congregation relationship stronger.

### EXISTING COMMITTEE 1947-1950

The committee before ended its third year, it was realized, the time was convinent to elect other personnel to direct the Committee and take charge of activities.

Father Geramin along with the majority of the Colony was consulted and everyone agreed. A meeting took place on June 15, 1947. Members of the Catholic Congregation of Joliet, Lockport and Rockdale participated in this meeting. Father Fabian and some congregation members spoke at this meeting. Due to the majority of votes the new elections would take place on Sunday July 6. On July 6 the majority of the congregation united at the Social Center.

After opening the meeting, the president presented a manner of how to carry out the elections. He gave everyone the right to vote and elect their candidates. At the end the Committee decided that the Current Committee would elect the candidates. Two candidates were elected for each position and the best was chosen. The election was of absolute conformity. The new Committee was as follows:

President	Mr. Jose Fonseca
Vice-President	Mr. Manuel Campos
Secretary	Mr. Moises Fonseca
Sub-Secretary	Mr. Felipe Macias
Treasurer	Mr. Felipe Rodriguez
Speaker 1	Mr. Primitivo Zaragoza
Arms Sergeant	Mr. Francisco Espinoza

Mr. Espinoza, due to health problems, left to find a better climate therefore couldn't carry out his position.

When elections were over they did their severity protest, in which they promised, under word of honor to work and do as much possible in favor of the Congregation.

The president of the Committee spoke, in the following manner, to the new members and all those present to thank them for their cooperation.

“Approximately three years ago, when we were honored by your votes to take charge of this organization, we offered to serve our organization with all our energy. We asked for loyalty and cooperation from each of you. In exchange we received the promise that you all would always be on our side. Now, dear colleagues, greatly thankful we come to speak to you as directors for the last time. Yesterday we heard a promise and today we are in front of a multitude of noble doings, all good and verified by all of us. Our good-bye is from the heart as a vow of admiration to all of you.

Shortly you will here a summarized inform of the steps and progress we have made. We can truly say we always moved forward thanks to your effort which facilitated our task. As we leave the place you gave us we will take the memory of your partnership. We will go back to the lines of the congregation positively, satisfied and proud because we will be among you.”

The meeting ended in applause and congratulations for the members filling the Social Center with enthusiasm and joy.

On the 13th a meeting was held to present to Father Geramin the new members of the New Committee. He congratulated them encouraged them to continue working together, overcome problems and bear sacrifice wishing them great success in their undertaking.

During the intervention of this Committee, Father Fabian informed the acquisition of a site to build the Chapel and Hall together. This would serve as Social Center for various groups.

Father Fabian was Parish Priest of Santa Maria Church, to which our congregation was affiliated. We thank him, Father Germain and other actual Committee members, all eager to see this project made reality.

On April 3, 1948, a special meeting was held, where Father Fabian informed everyone of the project and showed the project drawing he had as of that date.

Months later we heard news that saddened us; we were advised that Father Germain would no longer be with our congregation. He would be going to a distant place far from us. We felt his leaving us very much; he had been with us for the past four years. We were used to his work and friendship. With resignation we saw him leave on August 10, 1943. Five days prior, in a meeting, we showed our gratefulness for his actions in favor of our Congregation. We will always have in mind his enthusiasm, his advice, his orientations and his actions. If showing our thankfulness exteriorly is not possible we will cultivate the memory of good received in form of love, light and truth.

### **FATHER GABRIEL N. PAUSBACK**

On September 5, 1948, Father Gabriel was introduced to the Mexican Catholic Congregation, as the new Chaplain of Our Lady of Carmen.

He had an excellent preparation and experience. He had studied in Rome and ordained there on June 14, 1930. He was dedicated to teaching for four years in Chicago and Joliet. He had been in charge of Saint Bernard Church during 1934 until 1937. He was then named Gral. Assistant of the Order of 1937 to 1947 in Rome. He was able to visit and work in Australia, Malta and Spain. At his return to U.S.A. on June 1, 1948 he was assigned our Chapel. He came to us eager to work and expand social and religious activity. Immediately he visited families, he personally interviewed many to get to know and understand them to make it easy for everyone.

He reorganized the youth groups of both genders and with his orientation they were so well prepared that they were able to participate in the “San Francis Youth Center” of Chicago on December 26, 1948.

When Father Gabriel took charge of the Mexican Catholic Congregation, work in the new



chapel was advanced, with his effort it was finished all though not completely on December 24, 1948. That was an unforgettable date for us, since what once had been a project was now reality.

### **DEDICATION AND BENEDICTION OF THE CHAPEL**

The project was completed, thanks cooperation and interest of all the Congregation and the efforts of the Carmelite Priests. The Solemn Benediction of the Chapel was though to be dedicated to Our Lady of Carmen. May 1, 1949 was chosen for that matter. Rev. Bishop Martin McNamara, accompanied by Father Fabian W. Donlan, Parrish Priest of Santa Maria, Parrish personnel and other Joliet Priests, presented benediction. The Rev. Bishop was received by Father Gabriel Pausback, Father Fabian W. Dolan, Fahter Gerald Henrice and the congregation of the Chapel.

Father Gabriel spoke in the ceremony, he talked about the history of the Mexican Colony in Joliet, he praised all who with sacrifice and strong spirit cooperated. He manifested the pride they should feel and urged to conserve in memory and in heart all those who helped but couldn't attend. Before ending the ceremony the Bishop touched some points:

- a) Nobleness and strong Faith of Mexicans
- b) Mission and purpose of humans on earth
- c) Necessary virtues for those present
- d) Appreciation of supernatural gifts
- e) Cultivation of social virtues

We all give thanks to our Creator for the benefit of knowing to live happy moments of unity, reality and prayer.

### **DATA WHICH INITIATE HISTORY**

The Chapel immediately began being the center of catholic cult and religious ceremonies began.

The first inscriptions in the Chapel books were the following:

DEATH- The first registered death in the Chapel was of Mrs. Eduarda Ayala on January 18, 1949.

BAPTISM- The first Baptism noted was that of Theresa P. Carreño, daughter of Mrs. Pagge P. and Mr. David Carreño, on January 22, 1949.

MATRIMONY- In the matrimony book the first was that of Mr. Miguel Bravo, son of Mr. Joe Bravo and Mrs. Ines de Bravo, with Miss Richael Gutierrez.

### **FATHER GERALD HENRICE**

Father Gerald came to substitute Father Gabriel, who had been in charge of the Chapel for the past two years and know due to health issue was absent.

Father Gerald has called Father "Brave" because of his decision and energy. He took upon commitments some considered fearful, but everyone knew they were necessary. Father Gerald wanted to make the Chapel, in regards to commodities, at the level with other Chapel of great category. Lets read one of the request he did to the Congregation so that we can get to know his management.



My dear Mexicans:

In sight of the extended betterments we have been making to the Mexican Chapel, we have the need to ask for financial assistance from each one of you. I am sure, from what I know you, we will soon receive your cooperation to give God's house what it deserves.

To this date all Mexican families have cooperated, as soon as it's been possible, to advance the project which still needs a lot. Up to November 1, we have spent \$8,190.24, amount that has been completely covered. We know need an amount of \$2,500.00 to finish our Social Center.

We trust you will accept this burden with good spirit and willingness. We have assigned a quota for each family accordingly to economic status, trying not to sacrifice anyone.

We reiterate in Christ,

Father Gerald Henrici(signature)

### **THE SPARROW HAWKS CLUB**

During this time there were no youth groups. The previous ones had vanished slowly. Due to that a group of men, after meeting, wished to organized one to have activities and representation with in and out of the Congregation.

Such club was created on July 29, 1950 with the name of "A.C. Sparrow Hawks," electing the following as the Board of Directors:

President	Jimmy Padilla
Vice-President	Fabio Castillo
Secretary	Marco Calcanas
Treasurer	Peter Lopez

This club, with time, advance in its social activities. It's determination was of advantage and dedicated to the Congregation.

### **AMERICAN EAGLES CLUB**

Expansion in our Congregation was seen through activities, movements and stability. This club was originated by the need to satisfy the wish and establish activity.

The founder and organizer of such club was Mr. Armando Garcia, who later with few hardships, was able to establish it on October 4, 1952, headed by the following members:

President	Mr. J. Guadalupe Castillo
Secretary	Mrs. Ma. Jesus Orozco
Treasurer	Mr. Armando Garcia

### **OTHER CHAPLAINS (Priests)**

During this time there was instability, in regards to Chaplains, during a relevant short period we have a few.

1. Father Gerlard, who after almost two years (1950-1951) had to leave.
2. Father Piox, who came in 1952 and that same year left to join the U.S.A. military.

3. Father Gordon, who substituted the prior Priest, he lasted a few months and then left as missionary to South America.
4. Father Dunsan, who just the same lasted a short time with us, just as the Prior Priest was sent to South America to take charge of a Parrish.
5. Father Valentine, who came to take charge of the Chapel in January 1953.

### **JOLIET LATIN AMERICAN SOCIAL CLUB**

In sight of the development of the Colony, the growth of families and never ending needs, this group which had higher abilities was created to work within and out of the Congregation. To perfectly develop it was necessary to register it so it would legally be recognized.

The people who joined are the following:

Mr. Jose Fonseca	Mr. Navor Rodriguez
Mr. Alfonso Izquierdo	Mr. Benn Rodriguez
Mr. Primitivo Zaragoza	Mr. Juan Carrillo
Mr. Guadalupe Jorge	Mr. Carlos Estrada
Mr. Amador Serrato	Mr. Miguel Reyna
Mr. Juan Gomez	Mr. Jesus Cabrera
Mr. Juan Gomez	Mr. Pablo Dominguez
Mr. Pedro Hernandez	Mr. Arnulfo Jimenez
Mr. Jesus Garcia	Mr. Juan Serratos
Mrs. Elena Izquierdo	

This group of men always worked tirelessly for the Congregation and its determinations were in benefit of our Mexican Colony.

## PROLOGUE

Hear you have, dear Reader, an entirety of events that I have tried to coordinate to let you know of the ups and downs which many Mexicans have had to go through to found or enlarge our Mexican Colonies here in the U.S.A., and leave, in this beautiful brother country the everlasting memory that Mexico has enthusiastic, hard working, and overall thankful sons and daughters that know how to correspond to the generosity of this prosperous country, that years ago opened its frontiers to cultivate our future.

This writing shall be:

A CONTRIBUTION to History so that the origin of the Joliet Colony won't get lost in the darkness, which is linked to the Colonies of LOCKPORT and ROCKDALE, IL.

A TRIBUTE of admiration for all those men that with their effort made it reality.

A CALL to children of Mexicans, so they can see with pride and remember with reverence those who left them in a strange Country, the warmth of their Fatherland.

In this information I can't overlook all those, that some how, made my longing possible. Among them are Mr. Elizalde, Mr. J. Vazquez, Mr. A. Garcia and mainly some members of the Carmelite Religious Order.

The Lord willing, these pages shall conserve the glorious remembrance of those who we have in our heart, shall awaken in those who read them the longing to exceed in the presence of this meritorious labor cultivated by the spirit of the Mexican, that taking advantage of the light that God has put in his hands, has served the cause of the good being and progress.

The Author.

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## CONCLUSION

You have been able to know, through these words, the spirit of a Mexican, that battles to leave in other places a mark of his/her tenacity and struggle for life.

You have seen in great ways the eagerness of union that encourages social Life.

You have felt the religious soul of a Mexican, who attached to his/her faith evolves around it like the center of his/her life. Just like loves fly around our church bells, symbol of our believes.

You saw him flourish in his/her civic activities, with worry ness of generously participating.

You contemplated him/her full of patriotic sentiment, trying to raise prestige, liberty and independence of his/her natal grounds and raising the virtues and heroic gestures of his/her bronze colored race.

You admired him/her climbing to the top of his/her ideal and fighting to conserve cultural triumph.

You considered it is always a nice and a pleasure to examine into his/her soul, thirsty to let others get to know his/her Country, with it's wealth, men, beauty and moral values.

I hope another Mexican emigrant will take the commitment I leave in his hands to and continue making history and will reveal what has happened in the last years in our Joliet Colony. This way the fine personality of a Mexican can be known, that if he migrates due to necessity as an obligation and with his/her life he/she raises his/her Country.