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***“Doña Ana María del Carmen Calvillo
(1765-1856)”***

By

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Doña Ana María del Carmen Calvillo (1765–1856) descendent of early settlers of San Antonio and once the owner/operator of Rancho de las Cabras in what is now Wilson County, Texas [1, 2]. Rancho de las Cabras was the ranch land where live stock was raised to feed the inhabitants of Mission San Francisco de la Espada; this rancho is now part of the National Parks System and a World Heritage Site.

Doña María (Doña pronounced dawn-yah is the Spanish term noting the head of a family) was born at the Villa of San Fernando de Béxar (San Antonio) on July 9, 1765, the eldest of six children born to Ygnacio Francisco Xavier Calvillo (descendant of a Presidio San Antonio de Bexar employee) and Antonia de Arocha (descendant of Canary Islanders). Her father acquired a portion of Rancho de las Cabras (the Goat Ranch) after the mission and its lands were secularized. María Calvillo married Juan Gavino de la Trinidad Delgado around 1781. The couple had two sons, Juan Bautista and José Anacleto (who both died young) and adopted three additional children, Juan José, María Concepción Gortari, and Antonio Durán. Between 1811 and 1814 Gavino played a major role in the overthrow of the Spanish Government; as a result of his activities he was declared a rebel against the crown of Spain. María apparently separated from her husband at this time [1, 2]; it is thought she did so to protect the ownership of her family's land.

On April 15, 1814, Ygnacio Calvillo was murdered at his ranch, Paso de las Mujeres [3] (the women's passage), during a raid initially thought to have been perpetrated by Indians, but subsequent investigation revealed that the attackers included Ygnacio's own grandson. At this time María gained control and ownership of the property. On August 28, 1828, she formally

petitioned the Mexican government for a new title to her father's ranch; it was granted the next month. Later grants in 1833 placed three leagues of land under her control [1, 2].

To show Doña María Calvillo accepted the responsibilities of land ownership she had to perform the required ritual of “quiet and peaceable possession, threw stones, pulled up herbs, drew water and poured it out and did other acts of actual possession, and ordered that no person despoil her of them without being first cited, heard and conquered by judgement,” as required by the State of Coahuila and Texas [4]. María Calvillo increased the livestock operation and has been noted to have been a rancher who peaceably got along with the nomadic Native Americans by offering them certain cattle to eat and area to camp, before they moved on their journey [6]. Doña Anna María del Carmen Calvillo was a strong, courageous, and spirited Spanish/Texas [7] woman, experienced in riding horseback, handling guns, managing her ranch, getting along with others, and a proud steward of her land [6]. In her will she passed ownership of the property to two of her adopted children, María Concepción Gortari and Antonio Durán [8].

María Calvillo died on January 15, 1856; at the Age of 91 [6]. Her burial record states she was buried in “composs santos” (“sacred ground”) in San Antonio de Bexar. As per historian, Mrs. Gloria Cadena, María Calvillo’s remains were either buried on the grounds of the Alamo or in what is now Milam Park, both in downtown San Antonio, Texas. She had a remarkable life; born in a Spanish mission then on the frontier of Nueva España (New Spain), enduring the Mexican War of Independence from Spain, the turbulents of the Texas Revolution, and Texas becoming an Independent Republic; then when María Calvillo was 80 Texas became the 28th state of the United States of America [6]. She experienced many changes in two centuries and in four countries yet all in the same area of what became Wilson and Bexar Counties of Texas!

REFERENCES:

REFERENCE 1: *Handbook of Texas Online*, I. Wayne Cox, "Calvillo, Maria Del Carmen," accessed May 27, 2016. <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fcabz>.

REFERENCE 2: Frederick Charles Chabot, *With the Makers of San Antonio* (Yanaguana Society Publications 4, San Antonio, 1937). Julia Kathryn Garrett, *Green Flag Over Texas: A Story of the Last Years of Spain in Texas* (Austin: Pemberton Press, 1939). 1. Wayne Cox

REFERENCE 3: Sabers and Longhorns Chapter X-Liles pg 146

REFERENCE 4: Document of Possession granted by the State of Coahuila and Texas, 1828 and 1829

REFERENCE 5: Collations in the Center for American History The University of Texas at Austin

REFERENCE 6: Archaeological Testing at Rancho de las Cabras, 41WN 30, Wilson County, Texas Second Season, James E. Ivey with an Appendix by Joseph H. Labadie, Center for Archaeological Research The University of Texas at San Antonio Archaeological Survey Report, No. 121, 1983 pg. 34

REFERENCE 7: Doña María La Ranchera, Woman Rancher in Spanish Texas by Maurine Walpole Liles, Eakin Press Austin, Texas 2000

REFERENCE 8: Rancho de las Cabras Historical Background Information for Interpreters at San Antonio Mission National Historical Park by Rosalind Z. Rock, Ph.D. Park Historian September 29, 1995

AUTHOR'S NOTE 1: The image by artist Thom Ricks is used with permission from The Institute of Texan Cultures of San Antonio. Doña Anna Maria del Carmen Calvillo (1765-1856) shall be inducted into The First PALS of Texas Hall of Honor during "The Spirit of STAR DAY 2017 Celebration" conducted in the Texas Capitol Rotunda on February 20, 2017 to celebrate the 171st birthday of the State of Texas featuring a San Augustine High School Band performance.

AUTHOR'S NOTE 2: I am so very thankful to Maurine Liles; for many years she has mentored me with her thorough historical research standards. Maurine Liles, Tom Shelton (ITC), and the Texana section of the San Antonio Downtown Public Library, helped me to complete research for this article on Doña Anna María del Carmen Calvillo; my own research of her done in the 1990s was damaged with water and mud due to the 1998 flood of the Cibolo Creek! I do appreciate and I am so grateful for all of the support to preserve our rich history!

EDITOR'S NOTE: Dennis M. Kulvicki is a founder and president of The STAR DAY Foundation established in 1999 as a Texas nonprofit 501(c)3 tax exempt organization with a primary mission to carryout the legislative intent of the STAR DAY bill passed in 1999 in partnership Texas schools and other organizations by celebrating each year the birthday of the State of Texas on February 19th each year to inspire and motivate students to explore and discover the founding and founders of the State of Texas at partnering schools.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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