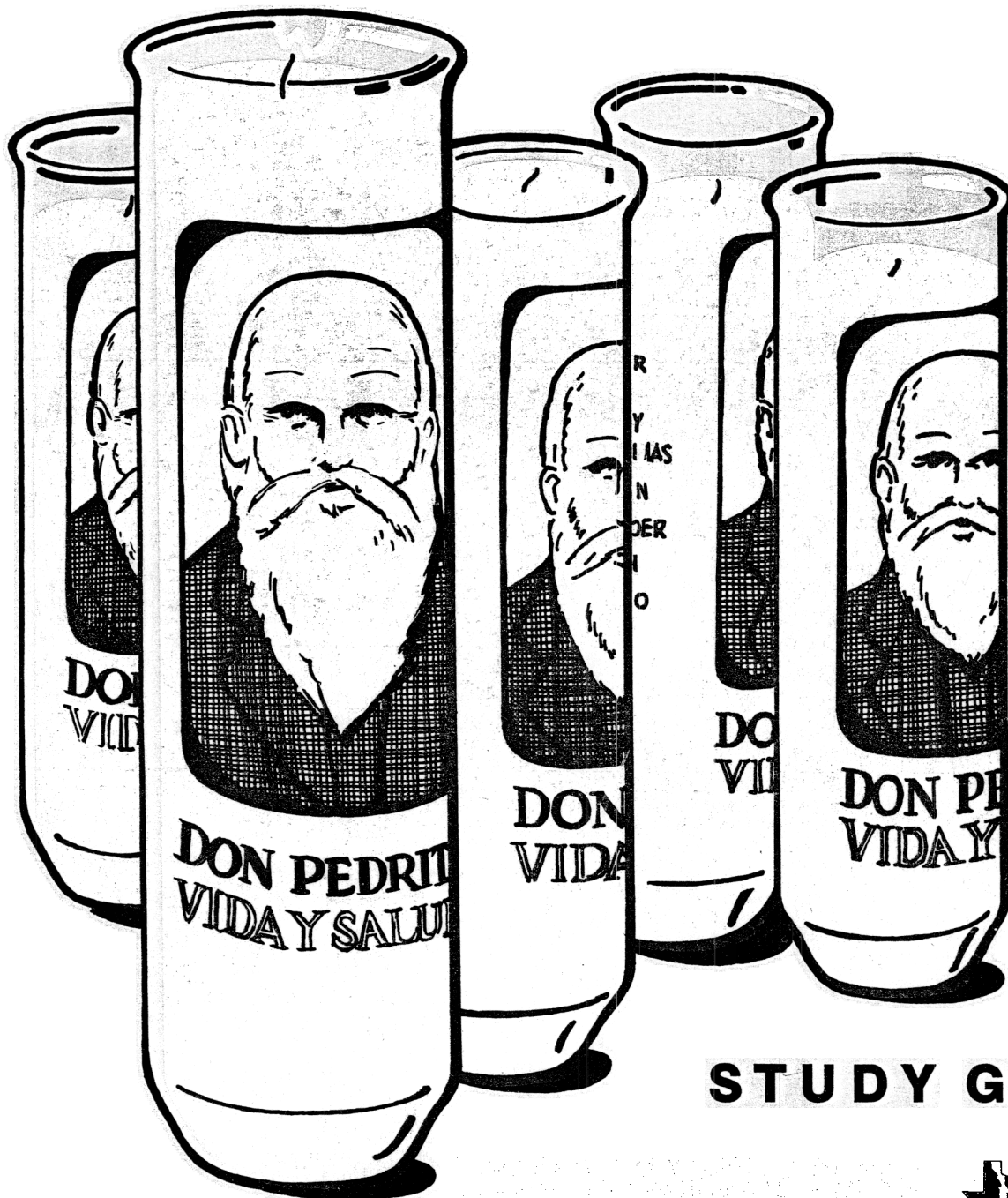


# Don Pedrito Jaramillo: **FOLK HEALER**



## **STUDY GUIDE**

The University of Texas Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio



## Credits

### Program:

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STUDY GUIDE

For use with The Institute of Texan Cultures' slide set or filmstrip

Don Pedrito Jaramillo:  
**FOLK HEALER**

Marian L. Martinello



The University of Texas  
Institute of Texan Cultures at San Antonio

## **How to Show the Program**

### **VISUALS**

**Slide Set**—The slides are numbered in sequential order for your convenience. To project properly, the number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the mount on the side away from the screen. Position the carousel in the “O” position to begin.

**Filmstrip**—The filmstrip may be projected through any standard 35mm filmstrip projector. The strip includes a “focus” frame at the start. Advance the strip once to the next black frame to start.

### **AUDIO**

**Cassette**—Half-track monaural recorded at  $1\frac{7}{8}$  i.p.s. Only one side of the tape is recorded. “Manual” versions use an audible beep to cue the operator for frame changes. “Automatic” versions use an inaudible tone (at 50 Hz) to cue an automatic projector for frame changes.

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## Introduction to the Study Guide

The practice of folk medicine is at least as old as recorded history. There are biblical accounts of the medicinal characteristics of certain plant and animal parts and the powers of healers. References to the use of natural substances to treat illnesses are found in the folk literature of most culture groups. Many of us today may recall a grandmother's remedy that worked. Cold and flu sufferers acknowledge the benefits of drinking chicken soup—a home remedy, like others, for which medical science has found sound reason.

In the Mexican-American culture of the Southwest, folk medicine combines beliefs and traditions which were brought to the New World by the Spanish with those of the indigenous Native Americans. The Spanish view of health was being in harmony with the environment; illness was an imbalance between persons and their social, spiritual or physical surroundings. They also brought with them the beliefs of the Catholic religion concerning divine healing, including the ability of humans with divine gifts to heal.

The Spanish belief in the power of the devil to harm and of God to heal was similar to the beliefs of Native Americans in the areas colonized by the Spanish. Certain persons in both culture groups were believed to have healing powers. The mix of these similar ideas in the New World contributed to the concept of the faith healer as understood in the American Southwest.

Spanish medical practice included the use of substances obtained from plants and animals. Eighteenth century explorers on the Spanish Colonial frontier found additional sources of medicine in the flora and fauna of the New World. They were quick to tap the knowledge of the Indians on native herbal remedies.

The Spanish verb *curar* means to heal. The term *curandero* (one who heals) and *curanderismo* (the practice of healing) are derivatives of that Spanish term. In the American Southwest *curanderismo* refers to faith and folk medicine, both in spiritual and medicinal treatment of illness that has developed from the mix of cultural beliefs, knowledge and practices in New Spain. It encompasses types of healing which are addressed to the social, spiritual and physical imbalances believed to cause illness.

### Purpose

Designed to accompany the audiovisual presentation, "Don Pedrito Jaramillo: Folk Healer," this guide examines *curanderismo* and the *curandero* from the perspective of the cultural anthropologist. Its educational purposes are: (1) to develop the student's general understanding of *curanderismo* and *curanderos*; (2) to acquaint the student with the life and times of a particular *curandero* of exceptional reputation who is viewed by many Mexican-Americans as a folk saint; (3) to develop the student's abilities to use primary source materials for research.

By using the cultural anthropologist's approach to inquiry, the guide intends to provide young people with experiences in primary document and material culture research which can develop their skills and interest in humanities detective work.

Many young people have experience in using encyclopedias and other secondary sources to gather information about a topic. While these sources can serve as a useful beginning place for the novice report writer, their continuing and exclusive use tends to keep students dependent on other people's synthesis of information. They may also subject the novice to inaccuracies and errors which occur in printed compilations of even the most informed treatments of historical content.

An even more critical educational concern is that students who learn to rely solely on secondary sources don't experience the intellectual challenge involved in the detective work of the humanities researcher. Accordingly, students may not develop fully their skills of inquiry and interpretation—abilities to hunt for information and to search for its meanings. Without experience in asking interpretive questions and finding their answers, students cannot become self-directed learners.

### Instructional Objectives

Students who have limited experience with humanities detective work need guidance in exploring primary sources. The very able but inexperienced young researcher cannot develop maturity in humanities research without initial explicit direction. The less able students need some modeling of the process before they can achieve independence in its use. This study guide for "Don Pedrito: Folk Healer

of Los Olmos" is designed to help middle and secondary school students learn efficient ways of:

1. finding clues in written documents which can help to direct research into a person, place, event or time;
2. reading visual materials such as photographs, drawings and artifacts to find information and interpret their meanings;
3. asking interpretive as well as fact-seeking questions when examining documents and artifacts, and when interviewing people;
4. detecting patterns in accumulated information to find missing links and gaps which can give rise to new questions for research;
5. drawing inferences from detected patterns, i.e., making accurate interpretations of categorized sets of facts.

### Application

"Don Pedrito: Folk Healer of Los Olmos" takes as its theme a person and subject which are best studied through the use of primary sources. The activities which complement the slide-tape presenta-



tion are structured and sequenced to guide students' exploration of a humanities issue:

#### "Why has Don Pedrito become a folk saint?"

Sets of primary source materials are included for students' study of this issue. These sources are written documents (letters, firsthand recollections and articles) and visual materials (photographs). Worksheets and suggestions on how to probe each type of source presented in this guide accompany the source materials. All worksheets and source materials may be duplicated for class distribution.

The instructional exercises in this guide are focused on supplied questions to provide a beginning place for the novice humanities researcher. It is hoped that students will generate their own questions as they become involved in these studies.

The exercises for exploring this issue are sequenced from least to most difficult. They are designed to build on one another so that the information and skills developed through the completion of one may be applied to the completion of the next and so on through the sequence. Suggestions for further, more self-directed research are also included for interested and able students.

## Humanities Detective Work

### Finding Clues in Written Documents

Ruth Dodson was born and raised on a ranch in Nueces County. When she was a child Don Pedrito was alive. His curing powers were well known to many people in south Texas. Some years after his death Dodson documented some of Don Pedrito's cures by interviewing people who had experience with the curandero's healing. A few of the interviews which Dodson recounts are reproduced here as illustrations of Don Pedrito's cures for a variety of ailments. The interested student who would like to read other interviews that appear in Dodson's collection is directed to: *The Healer of Los Olmos and Other Mexican Lore*, ed. Wilson H. Hudson, The Texas Folklore Society (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1951).

The following are samples of Don Pedrito's cures taken from Dodson's accounts.

### **A Grassburr in His Throat**

The wife of Don Albino Canales of Premont, Texas, told me a story about a man who lived in Mexico and became very thirsty one day while traveling. He came to a pond and stopped to drink. He drank fast and didn't see the grassburr that was in the water, and it went down into his throat and stuck there.

He went to a doctor, but the doctor couldn't get it out. He went to several doctors, who told him that only through an operation could the grassburr be removed. The man didn't want to have an operation, and he didn't know what to do. He suffered greatly.

At last he resolved to go to Texas to see the famous curandero, Don Pedrito Jaramillo, since he had heard much talk of the difficult cures he was making.

The remedy for the man was to drink all that he could of water with salt in it. He did so. This nauseated him at once and caused him to vomit and expel the grassburr. This burr had sprouted two little leaves.

### **The Night of the New Moon**

Felipe Lerma said that once he was sick without knowing what was the matter with him. At that time Don Pedrito came to the town of Beeville, in Bee County, where Felipe lived. He went to consult him. The curandero asked him what his sickness was. Felipe told him that he didn't know, only that he didn't feel well.

Then Don Pedrito told him that what he had was *susto*, fright arising at a certain time and continuing afterwards so as to cause chronic sickness.

"If you don't want to tell the cause," Don Pedrito added, "I shall tell you. There were four men together; one of them killed one of the others and the dead man fell at your feet. At this your heart stopped, and from this resulted your sickness."

And it was the truth that this had happened, Felipe said.

Don Pedrito gave him a remedy. On the night of the new moon, after he had eaten his supper and was about to go to bed, he should take a bottle of beer and empty it into a *jarra*, or some other vessel, and drink it all at one draught. He should do this three times, each time on the night of the

new moon.

Felipe said that this remedy cured him of the fright.

### **The Marvelous Cure of a Shepherd**

Monico Hinguanza was a shepherd who had been sick for some time. He took various home remedies, but they did him no good, and instead of getting better he grew worse.

His friends told him of the cures that Don Pedrito had made, and they advised him to go to the curandero. But as Monico lived sixty miles from Los Olmos, he thought it too difficult to make such a long trip.

Finally, when he found that he had to get help, he borrowed a horse and started out for Los Olmos Ranch and Don Pedrito. He reached there the second day at dark. It had rained and the creek was swollen; Don Pedrito's hut was near the bank.

When Monico asked him for a remedy, Don Pedrito got up and took a piece of heavy canvas and a pillow. Telling the shepherd to come with him, he took him to the edge of the creek, where the water made an eddy. He threw the canvas into the eddy, which caught it and extended it in the turn of the water; then he tossed the pillow onto the canvas. The curandero then picked up Monico and placed him also on the canvas, which instead of sinking supported him. All night Monico remained on this canvas bed, rocked by the movement into a pleasant sleep. In the morning Don Pedrito came and took him out of the water, sound and well.

Monico was so thankful that he made Don Pedrito, who had never married and had no family, a present of one of his boys, to live with him and serve him in all that he might command.

### **The Cripple**

A man brought his son, crippled since birth, to Don Pedrito to see whether he could give him a remedy that would help him. The boy was able to get around only by dragging his body with his arms.

Don Pedrito told the man that for six nights he should put a wool blanket in hot water, take it out and wring it quickly, and then wrap the boy in it, with his legs perfectly straight. In

the morning the father was to unwrap him and take him by the arms and hold him standing straight no less than five minutes each time. Don Pedrito said that the boy would be well in six days, but that before getting up the last day he was to have his entire body rubbed with a sheet as warm as he could stand it.

On the seventh day the boy began getting around like a child that was beginning to crawl. The healer told the father that little by little the boy would straighten his body until he walked perfectly.

The boy recovered entirely, and when he grew to manhood he was completely normal, it was reported.

### **A Vaquero Who Failed to Follow Directions**

One time when a vaquero was running some horses through mesquite brush, a limb struck him in the face with such force as to hurt his eyes very badly. He doctored his eyes with different home remedies in vain. Then he sent to ask Don Pedrito for a remedy.

The remedy that Don Pedrito prescribed was that this vaquero should do hard work for nine successive days; that he work with an ax every day, from early in the morning until night; that he take no siesta, nor rest during the day; and that he make no charges for his work.

The vaquero followed directions until Sunday came; but instead of continuing the work on this day also, he rested. The consequence was that he was blind the rest of his life.

### **Faith Healed Him**

The woman who runs a tortilla factory in San Diego, Texas, said that her father, Marcelino Saenz, had trouble with his teeth, which were in a very bad condition. There were no dentists in the part of the country where he lived; so he went to Don Pedrito and asked for a remedy. Don Pedrito told him to cut up an onion, put salt on it, and eat it for each of nine days.

On the first day, the salt and onion were very painful. The next day when he prepared the onions and salt, he found the remedy so difficult to take that he couldn't force himself to. So he pronounced, "In the name of God," as instructed, but instead of eating

the remedy, he threw it over his shoulder. He did this the following seven days. His teeth ceased hurting him, and all of them fell out, one by one.

When he saw Don Pedrito, he told him that he was cured. Don Pedrito told him that he hadn't carried out instructions, but that nevertheless his faith had worked a cure.

### Nine Onions and Nine Baths

Mrs. Minnie Alexander, who lived in San Antonio at the time, said that Don Pedrito was there around 1895 making so many cures that the papers gave an account of them each day. This woman was in bad health. She resolved to go to see if the unique healer could cure her. She found him

on the edge of town, surrounded by people. Through an interpreter, he asked her what her sickness was. She told him that it was that she became very weak with the slightest exertion. He prescribed a remedy which seemed so difficult that Mrs. Alexander thought it impossible to take.

Nevertheless, she stopped at a store on her way home and selected nine onions, not too large; they were to be part of the remedy. Another part was cold baths. These she thought she couldn't take because her customary tepid baths gave her such chills that she had to wrap herself in a blanket until she got warm.

But she risked the treatment. For three mornings she ate one of the onions without salt or water. Each

time she did this, she became very nauseated. Following this, for three mornings, she took a cold bath. She would leave a tub of water outside all night, according to directions, and at daylight would bring it into the house and take a bath in it at once. The first time, she got into the cold water very slowly, in fear that she would have a chill. But she experienced no bad effects whatever; on the contrary, she found the bath pleasant. And she felt so well that she dressed and went for a walk in the city.

After the three days in which she took baths, she took onions for another three days; and so on alternately until she had eaten nine onions and taken nine cold baths. When this course was finished, she found herself in excellent health. ■

Students may also include the accounts of Dionisio Rodriguez and Doña Tomasita Canales contained in the slide show narrative. After reading them and recording the information requested on the "Finding Clues in Don Pedrito's Cures" Worksheet (page 9), students should be able to identify the following clues to belief in Don Pedrito's healing powers:

- All of the cases involve people who came from south Texas or Mexico.
- The people were poor.
- The people could not reach or afford or did not trust medical doctors.
- Remedies worked when the people had faith in Don Pedrito's ability to heal.
- Herbal remedies for some ailments were accepted by the people.
- Don Pedrito cured a wide variety of ailments.
- Don Pedrito's remedies were intertwined with strong religious beliefs.

Students can be asked to share the information and ideas they recorded on their worksheets. The chart may be reproduced on the blackboard for summary recording of the students' ideas, especially the clues and questions they derive from the data.



W O R K S H E E T

**FINDING CLUES IN DON PEDRITO'S CURES**

Read the report of cures that Don Pedrito made to find answers to the questions at the head of each column on this worksheet. Record your answers to each question for each case. Then look for clues in your answers to why people believed in Don Pedrito's healing powers.

Who asked for a cure?	Where was that person from?	What symptoms did the person have?	What remedy did Don Pedrito give?	Did the remedy work?

Look over the information you recorded about the cases. Although each case was different, what was similar about the people and their health problems? Discuss all the possible reasons you can think of that made the cures work.

## Humanities Detective Work II

### Reading Visuals

In preparation for the following exercise, students should be encouraged to think about the people who reported Don Pedrito's cures: What were they like? How did they live? In what ways might these people have been like or unlike the students themselves?

Photographs and illustrations of a people, time and place contain a great deal of information. The capable reader of printed text may overlook the rich contents of many visuals, especially if they are captioned or accompanied by narrative. Visual literacy is as important as print literacy in humanities research because visual artifacts may often present less corrupted information than that which is communicated through language. The message of the written word may be altered in translation and by the perspective of the writer. Photographs and illustrations are also influenced by the perspective of the maker, but what is recorded is less subject to errors in reproduction and subtle inaccuracies in the expression of thoughts.

The study of Don Pedrito must take into account his social context. Visual records of his times aid that study. The photographs and illustration included here supply useful information about the south Texas of Don Pedrito's time. They also serve to develop the students' visual literacy.

When read carefully, visual records can tell stories about people and their lives, often by providing the viewer with many details that can elude the casual observer. The photographs and drawing reproduced in this guide are rich in detail and human interest. The photo- and illustration-viewing worksheets are intended to guide students to find clues to Don Pedrito's social environment:

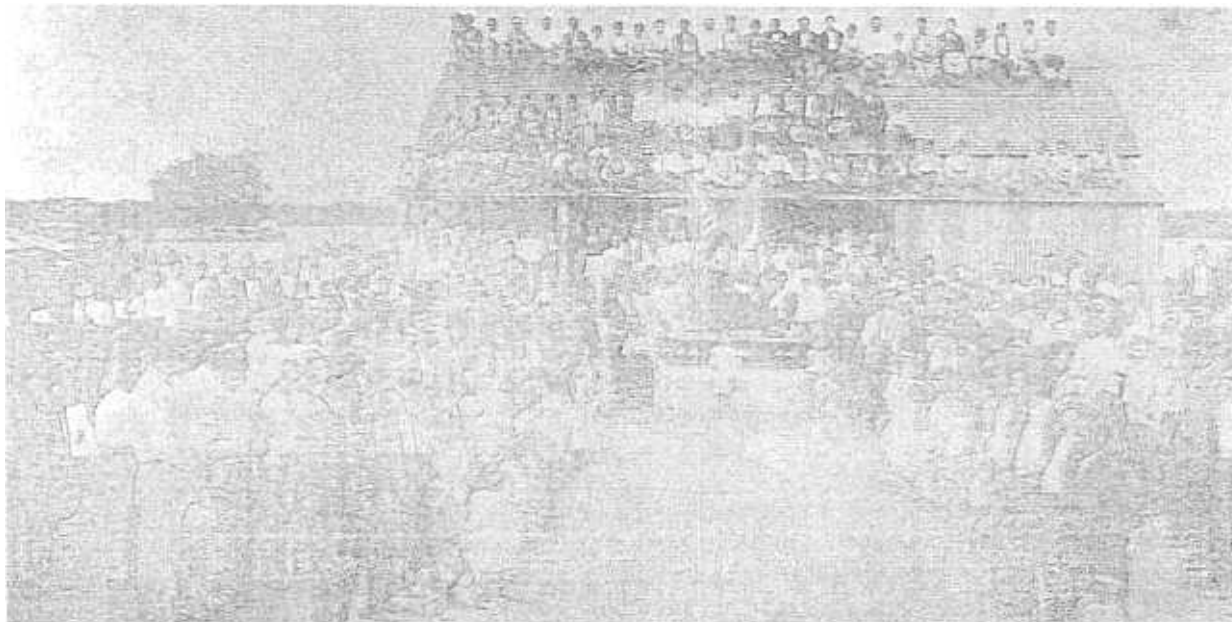
■ Many of the people in rural south Texas were very poor, living off barren land by farming and by working on ranches.

■ Those in urban areas such as Laredo and San Antonio had access to trade; most businesses were owned by Anglos.

■ The horse was an important means of transportation for those who had one; many people had to walk.

■ Urban areas were developing faster than rural areas; buildings were sturdier and made of more durable materials in cities; electricity was in its early stages of use in cities; active trade in cities helped to make people less dependent on what they could grow or make for themselves.

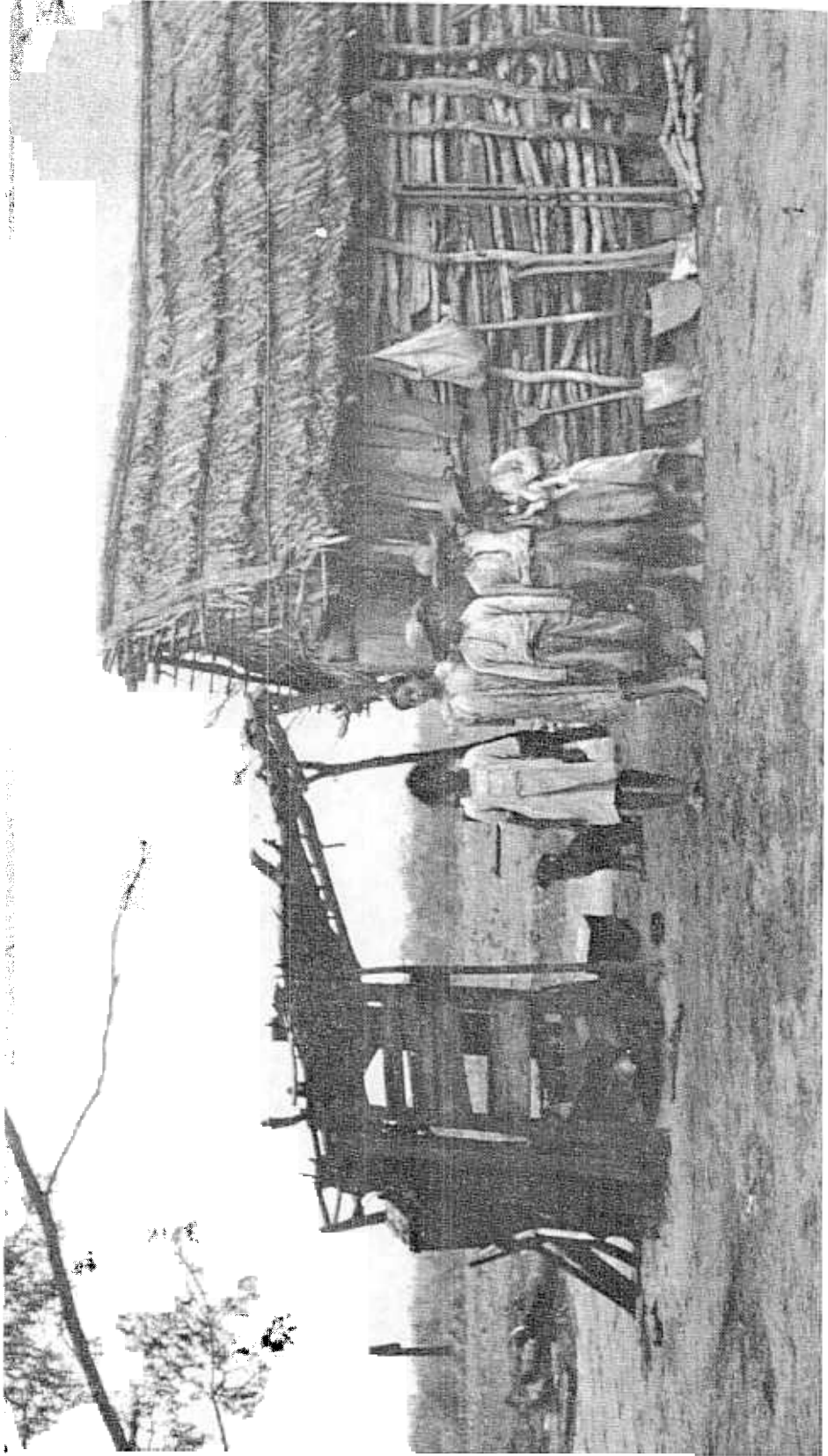
■ The socio-economic distance between Mexicans and Anglos was large; most rural Mexicans were living in poverty.



## W O R K S H E E T

- Five children are pictured in the photo. Describe their clothing.
- The children are standing in front of a jacal. List the materials that were used to build the jacal.
- What kinds of tools are leaning against the side of the jacal?
- Describe the land on which the jacal is built and which appears in the distance.
- What other things can you find in the photo which tell you something about the people who live in the jacal.
- What can you tell about their daily lives?

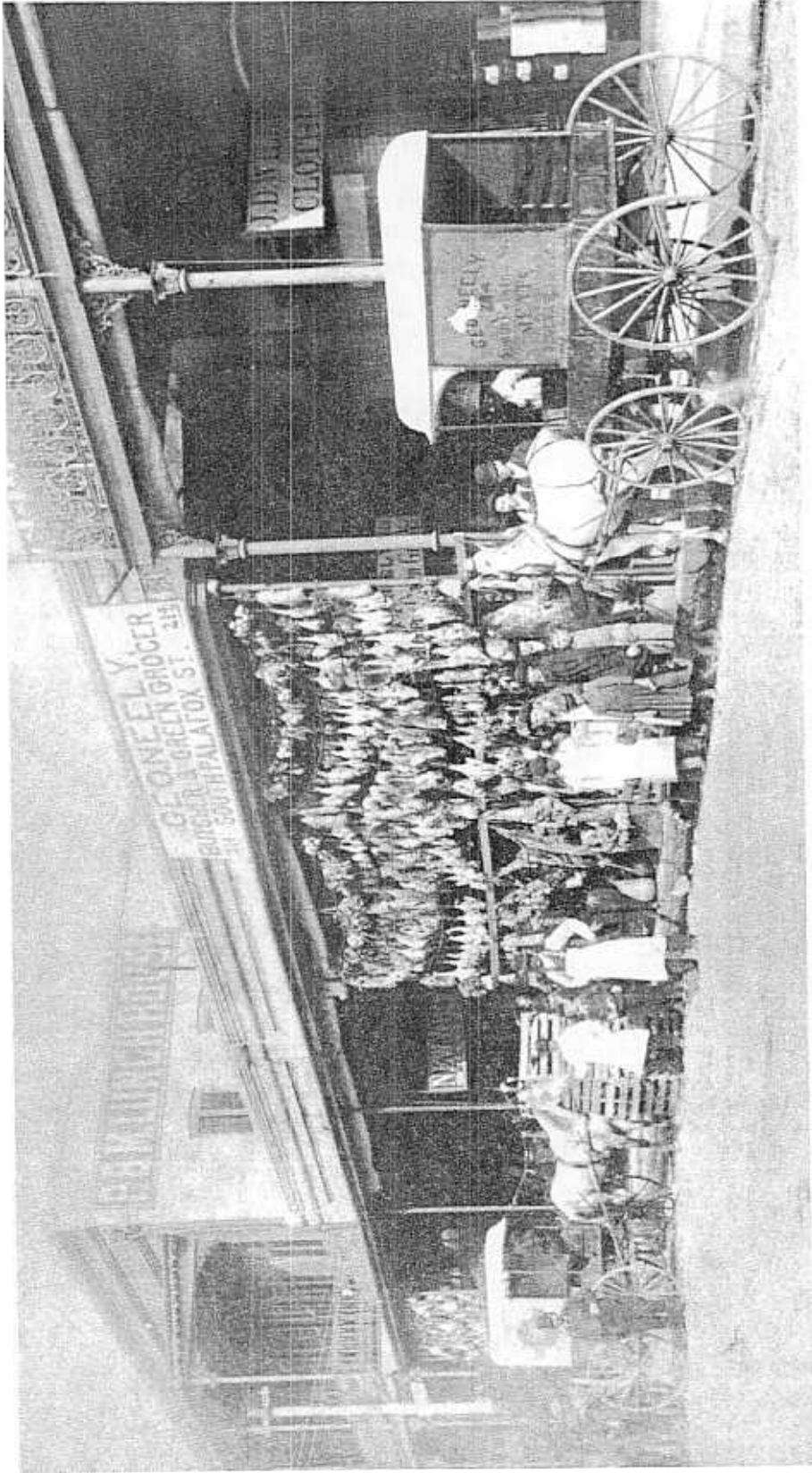
Photo of a jacal and children near Brownsville, Texas, ca. early 1900's.



## WORKSHEET

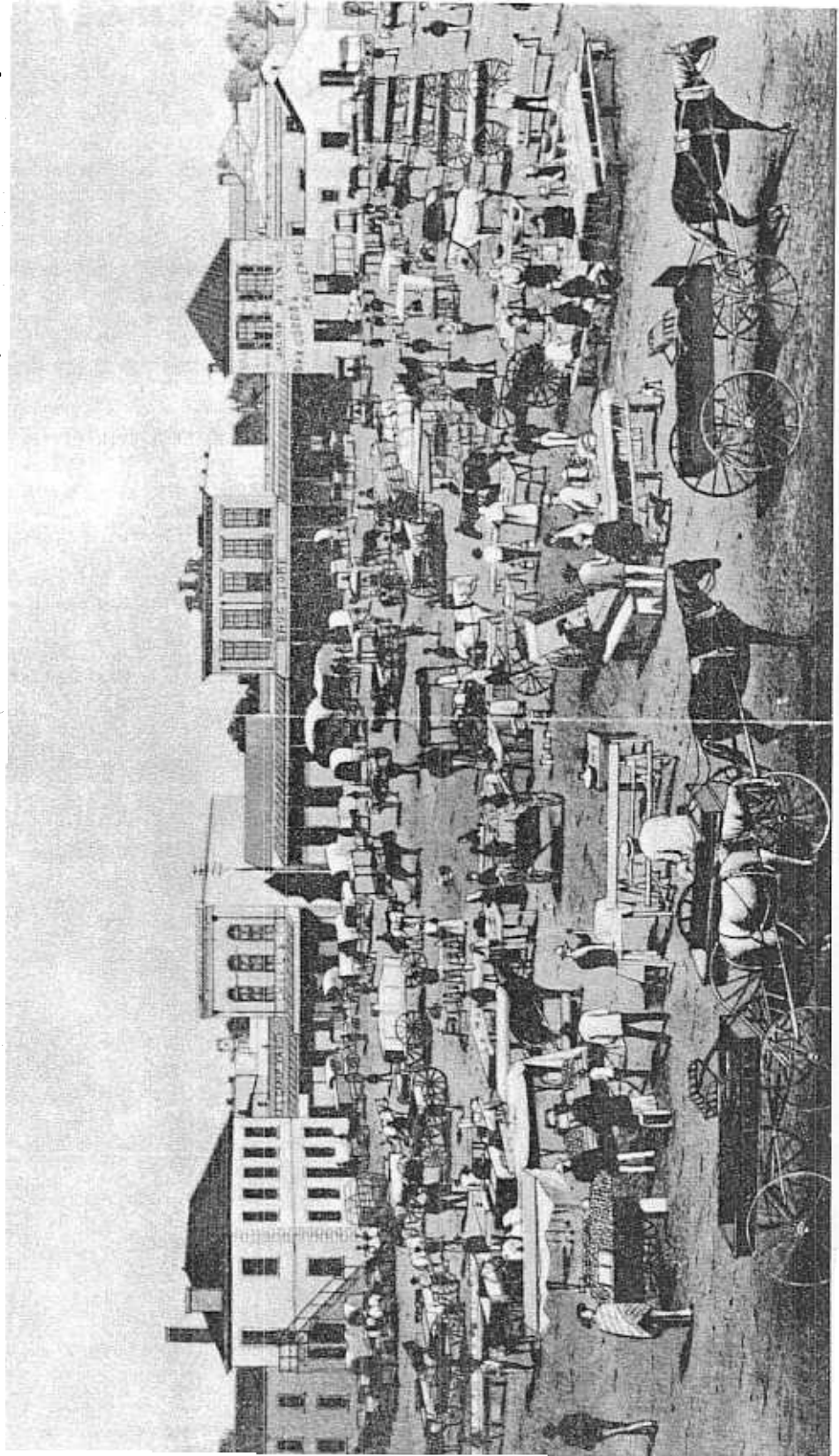
- What types of stores are in the photo?
- List the names of the stores.
- What is displayed in front of George Neely's store?
- Describe the clothing worn by the people in the photo.
- What means of transporting food is depicted?
- What do the wires and pole suggest the town had at the time?

Photo of South Palafox St. in Laredo, ca. early 1900's.



## WORKSHEET

- What types of stores are depicted in the drawing?
  - List the names of the stores.
  - Describe the clothing worn by the people in the drawing.
  - What appears to have been going on in Military Plaza when this drawing was made?
  - Name the different types of transportation, food and people depicted.
  - What does the pole beside the building with the Moke and Co. sign suggest that the town had at the time?
- Drawing of Military Plaza, San Antonio, ca. early 1900's.



## S U M M A R Y   W O R K S H E E T

Comparing Laredo and San Antonio of the early 20th century.

Study your answers to the worksheet questions about the photo of Laredo and the drawing of San Antonio during the time Don Pedrito was doing his work in Los Olmos.

1. What do you think city life was like in south Texas during the early 1900's?
  - A. What types of businesses were important?
  - B. Who ran them? What was the ethnic group of the owners? Why do you think so?
  - C. How did people get around and transport their goods?
  
2. By comparison with today, how was life different in Texas in the early 1900's?

Comparing rural and urban life in south Texas of the early 20th century.

Compare what you saw in the photo of children in front of a jacal near Brownsville, Texas, with the photo of Laredo and the drawing of San Antonio.

3. What do the visuals suggest to you about the economic condition of people in urban and rural Texas of the early 1900's?
4. What were some economic differences between Mexican and Anglo people of the time?
5. What may have been some major differences in the daily lives of rural and urban people of the times?
6. What health hazards do you think the people of rural and urban areas experienced?
7. Why do you think the rural Mexican people sought help from a healer like Don Pedrito rather than a doctor?

## Humanities Detective Work III

Usually, when we first look at an artifact, fact-seeking questions come to mind: Who made it? Where did it come from? How was it used? When was it made? Answers to such fact-seeking questions often lead to interpretive questions.

Interpretive questions are characterized by open-endedness. They usually have a variety of plausible responses. By asking them, the inquirer seeks to determine directions for research rather than just hard and quick answers.

The instructional activities in this section of the guide are intended to encourage students to ask questions to interpret primary sources and to direct inquiry. Examples of such questions are:

- Why was the material written or made?
- What values influenced it?
- What does it suggest about the people of its time?
- How does it compare to similar documents or objects of the time or of today?

Two activities which can help students learn how to ask interpretive questions are oral history interviewing and cemetery transcribing. Examples are presented here to acquaint students with each. Suggestions for more ambitious field work are offered in the hope that students will use community resources for their humanities research.

### Oral History Interviews

Oral history interviews can uncover a wealth of ideas about the why and how of history—provided that the interview is well planned and conducted. The keys to a good interview are insightful questioning and sensitivity.

Students can be prepared for oral history interviewing by learning how to:

- locate knowledgeable interviewers with first-hand experience;
- set up and plan interviews;
- ask questions;
- organize collected information.

### Classroom Practice

Excerpts from a letter to *Texas Monthly* magazine from the great-granddaughter of Teofilo Barraza, who knew Don Pedrito, are reproduced on the following page. The letter may be used as the

testimony of an individual with knowledge of Don Pedrito. Students can develop their questioning skills in reverse, so to speak, by imagining an interview with Ms. Barraza and constructing questions which might elicit the information she gives in her letter. (Sample questions appear in the margins of the excerpts of the letter reproduced here.) The instructional process might be structured as follows:

1. Acting as Ms. Barraza, the teacher or a student reads aloud each segment of the letter.
2. After each letter segment has been read, students should formulate questions which might have caused the writer of the letter to share information contained in the excerpt. The intent is to examine the letter as if it is a transcript of an oral history interview, the writer being the person interviewed and the students being interviewers.
3. For each excerpt, students should also make note of questions which would develop further the information contained in the excerpt. The relevant questions for the students are: What else would you like to know about the topic the letter writer is discussing? How can you solicit that additional information?
4. Questions are recorded on the chalkboard.
5. The students may be asked to select from their compiled questions those which could be helpful in conducting an oral history interview. They may be guided to match question types to interview purposes. This exercise will help them develop a guide which can serve as a model for oral history interviews.



**Excerpts of a Letter from Santa Barraza,  
Great-Granddaughter of Teofilo Barraza**

**Do you know anyone who knew  
Don Pedrito Jaramillo?**

Ruth Dodson, in her book, mentions "the old man, a friend" who escorted him (Don Pedrito) on his travels. Well, that "old man, a friend" was my great-grandfather, Teofilo Barraza, an early resident of Los Olmos who, in the 1890's, moved to Santa Rosa Ranch where he lived until his death in the 1930's at the age of 120. His wife, Rosita Fuentes Barraza, assisted Don Pedrito for 15 years.

**How did Rosita Fuentes Barraza  
assist him?**

**What do you know of Teofilo Barraza  
... where did he come from, what  
kind of work did he do?**

Teofilo was a full-blooded North American Indian, probably Caddo. He lived in an Oklahoma Indian reservation and later became a scout and settled in south Texas in the 1850's-60's, the prime of the cattle barons, Mifflin Kenedy and Richard King. If you will note, Texas history books refer to Teofilo Barraza as the surveyor who surveyed the Mifflin Kenedy Estate when the partnership with Richard King dissolved. By the time Teofilo settled in south Texas, he had traveled widely in North America, south into deep central Mexico and even in Europe.

**Why did he travel to Europe?**

**How are you related to  
Teofilo Barraza?**

Teofilo had two children, Eloisa and Simon. Eloisa died when in her twenties, leaving three young daughters behind. As was customary, Teofilo took his granddaughters in and raised them as his daughters along with his young son, Simon. Simon was a little older than his nieces. He grew, married and became my grandfather. However, before my interest in folklore was aroused, both my grandparents passed away. So I relied on my elderly aunts and other elderly residents for my oral history.

**Who was your main source  
of information?**

Pauline Cavazos Villarreal, who claims to be 75 (but I speculate her age closer to 85), was the eldest granddaughter that Teofilo raised. Teofilo later also raised my father, Joaquin. Pauline remembers tales that Rosita and Teofilo recounted about Don Pedrito. Although some of the stories sounded ridiculous, upon interviewing the other aunt and other elderly people, the story was retold to exactness, including names of those involved, location, etc.

**What made you think Pauline was 85?**

**In class we learned that medical  
doctors did not believe in Don  
Pedrito's methods. Were you told any  
stories which might support that?**

Because of his popularity, as many as 500 people . . . would camp at Los Olmos Creek awaiting his return from a curing trip. Medical doctors were amazed at his popularity. The doctors began to lose patients to Don Pedrito. They retaliated and demanded a formal investigation. The authorities were sent out to Los Olmos to serve him with a summons and investigate the premises. Before the authorities even arrived at Los Olmos, Don Pedrito sent for Teofilo and asked him to assist him on his trip to San Diego, where doctors and policemen awaited him. Pauline claims that Teofilo Barraza, Frank Rochel and the Mangeles from Santa Rosa Ranch also went with Don Pedrito to act as witnesses. They approached and entered a large stable where Don Pedrito sensed the men awaiting him. Pauline claims that the doctors were the Garcia doctors (the twin brothers) who were inside waiting for Don Pedrito.

Don Pedrito entered wearing his black cape and, removing his ten-gallon hat, said "Aquí está Pedro Jaramillo." (Here is Pedro Jaramillo.)

The doctors responded "Como es el modo de que usted trabaja?" (In what ways do you work?)

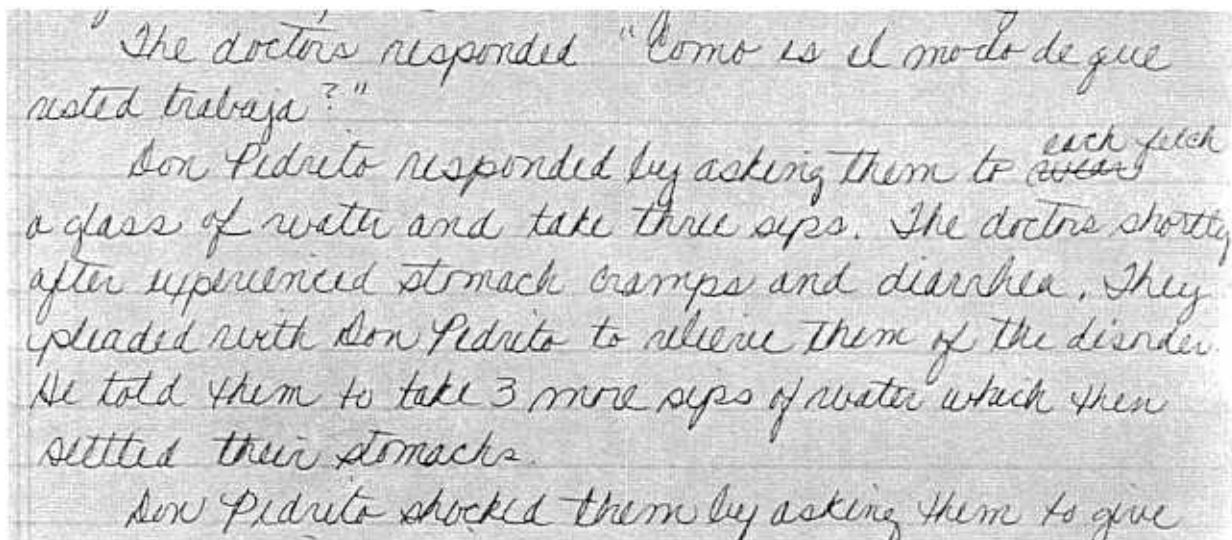
Don Pedrito responded by asking them to each fetch a glass of water and take three sips. The doctors shortly after experienced stomach cramps and diarrhea. They pleaded with Don Pedrito to relieve them of the disorder. He told them to take three more sips of water which then settled their stomachs.

Did the doctors leave him alone after that incident?

In what year did this incident occur?

When did you first hear the story?

Don Pedrito shocked them by asking them to give him the poisoned liquid, and the poison clung to the walls of the glass like a film. He said, "Este es un don de la Providencia." (This is a gift of Providence.)



"The doctors responded "Como es el modo de que usted trabaja?"

Don Pedrito responded by asking them to ~~each~~ each fetch a glass of water and take three sips. The doctors shortly after experienced stomach cramps and diarrhea. They pleaded with Don Pedrito to relieve them of the disorder. He told them to take 3 more sips of water which then settled their stomachs.

Don Pedrito shocked them by asking them to give

### Conducting an Interview

Local parish priests, newspaper editors and family members may be able to help students contact persons in their community who may be interviewed about folk and faith healing. Students who conduct oral history interviews with curanderos, persons who have knowledge of folk and faith healing or individuals who can talk about life in the community during the early 20th century should follow these guidelines.

1. Contact the person with whom the interview is being requested and explain the topics or questions to be asked and why the information is being sought.
2. Arrange for the interview at a time that is convenient for all persons involved, preferably a few days to a week after the initial telephone call. Resource persons should be interviewed in a place they select.

3. Obtain the approval of the person interviewed if the use of a tape recorder is desired.
4. Prepare for the interview by reading about the subject to be discussed and making a list of questions which can serve as guides during the interview session.
5. If possible, tell or give the informant the key questions which will be included.

Students can be prepared for an oral history interview by role-playing a mock interview with one another about a subject with which they have had firsthand experience. A checklist for interviewing\* is included in this guide for use by students. Since the list is lengthy, the teacher may wish to draw students' attention to a few items only. It is important that no one become frustrated in attempting to complete the task. The teacher's knowledge of students will help adapt this assignment to a particular class.

\*Adapted from William G. Tyrell, "Tape-Recording Local History," Nashville, Tenn.: AASLH, 1978.

Most students do not have the time or skill to transcribe entire tape recordings. Notes made from the tape recording are usually sufficient to reconstruct what has been said.

Students should be encouraged to record first the informant's answers to the major questions asked. If each question and its answer is recorded on a separate card or page, it will be easy to assemble the cards/pages so that they complement one another or constitute a chronological sequence of ideas and information. An outline can be developed from these records which summarizes the interview.

Students should share their compiled interview data with the informant to make sure that no inaccuracies or errors have crept into the summary. They will also benefit from sharing their interview summaries and experiences with their peers. In the process of such sharing, students can derive new information and insights into the topics under study. From such sharing new questions for research will emerge.



#### ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW CHECKLIST

1. Introduce yourself and talk about something familiar to the person being interviewed (the informant).
2. If you plan to use a tape recorder, demonstrate how it works. Allow the informant to try it out and listen to the recording.
3. Note the location, date and time of day.
4. Take a photograph of the informant if this is acceptable to the person.
5. You may conduct an autobiographical or topical interview, depending on what you wish to learn. In either case, start with a question that asks the informant to tell who, what, when, where, how or why about something or someone.
6. Probe the information the informant is giving by asking questions that can get answers to fill gaps in your understanding. Don't be afraid to admit that you didn't understand something. Rephrase questions which do not elicit clear answers.
7. Ask questions which will help to establish a specific date or time for an event that is being reported.
8. Keep your questions open. Avoid those that call for yes/no answers.
9. Avoid putting words into the mouth of the informant and thereby answering your own questions.
10. Ask the informant to repeat statements you do not understand or paraphrase what you heard to ask the informant if you heard correctly.

## Tombstone Transcribing

The inscriptions on tombstones can provide clues to the history and culture of people which may confirm or call into question information gathered from other sources. A collection of transcriptions from the same cemetery site is particularly valuable for uncovering the experiences and values of families who comprised a community. In some cases, individual gravesites can be rich in information about the person buried there. One such gravesite is that of Don Pedrito Jaramillo.

The photographs of Don Pedrito's grave and his tombstone which appear in the slide-tape presentation can be viewed as starting points in the use of cemeteries as primary sources for humanities research. Some ways of studying the photos are suggested here:

1. Examine the size and shape of the tombstone and the symbols it bears. What do the stone's characteristics suggest about Don Pedrito? Examine the photograph of the gravesite near Falfurrias, Texas (Frame #40). How is it different from gravesites of the students' families? How is it similar?
2. Read the epitaph. Spanish-speaking students may translate: "Here lie the remains of Pedro Jaramillo the Benefactor of Humanity. Born in Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. Died at Paisano, Starr County, Texas, July 3, 1907." What do the words "Benefactor of Humanity" mean? Why would those words be chosen to summarize the life of Don Pedrito? The epitaph should raise questions for researching details such as: Why is Don Pedrito buried near Falfurrias in what is now Brooks County when he died in Starr County? (Starr County was subdivided, and the northern part was renamed Brooks.)
3. Examine the photo of the tombstone, the visuals of the interior of the tomb which appear in the slide-tape presentation (frames #5, 50, 51, 52, 69). What do people leave at the site? (Students should note the flowers, votive candles, crutches, photographs and notes.)

What stories do each of these tell about the people who visit the gravesite? Who are they? Where do they come from? Why do they come? What do they believe?

Class discussion of Don Pedrito's grave may

generate students' interest in studying cemeteries in their own locale.

## Tombstone Transcribing Field Work

The following exercise will require a field trip to a local cemetery. It can develop students' researching skills and increase their exposure to the ethnicity, customs, religious traditions and history of their own community.

The purpose of the exercise is to research a person's history using his or her tombstone as a starting point and to compare the kinds of information which can be learned from the symbology and epitaphs of tombstones.

1. Locate local cemeteries by consulting family members, a parish priest or minister, or the yellow pages of the phone book. Try to select one that was in use before the turn of the century.

2. Assemble tools for tombstone rubbings: a small brush to remove accumulated dirt from old stones, a clipboard, pencils, crayons and sheets of newsprint or similar paper approximately 22" x 32" for the rubbings. A camera is helpful for making a photographic record of the entire tombstone.

3. Form groups of two or more. Scout the cemetery and choose one tombstone to research. Select a marker which contains a lot of written information and/or symbolism and which marks the grave of a person who lived during 1881-1907 when Don Pedrito lived in Texas, if possible.



4. Using the newsprint paper and a crayon, make a rubbing of the tombstone. (The principle of stone rubbing can be demonstrated in the classroom by placing a piece of paper over a coin and rubbing it with the side edge of a pencil lead.) Any color crayon may be used, and you may want to try several different colors and kinds of strokes.

5. Write down the approximate location of the particular grave, the written information on the marker, evidence of visits to the gravesite (flowers, wreaths, candles) and any other characteristics.

6. Using the written information and symbolism gathered at the site, consult the local library, newspaper archives, county or city archives, local historical societies and church records to fill in as many of the categories on the data sheet as possible.

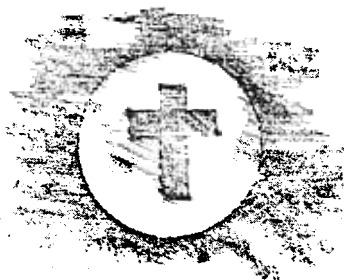
7. Complete a group data sheet for the tombstone you examined. Make an oral report to the class about your findings.

#### Data Sheet Categories:

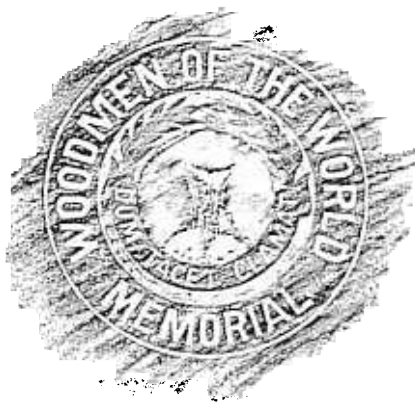
- a. Marker inscription
- b. Person's name
- c. Date of birth
- d. Date of death
- e. Age at death
- f. Cause of death
- g. Ethnic background
- h. Financial status
- i. Civic or community involvement or honors
- j. Membership in fraternal or service organizations
- k. Religious affiliation
- l. Places the person resided
- m. Occupation
- n. Names of other family members and their relationship to this person
- o. Evidence that the gravesite is still visited

8. Record the questions that now occur to you—the missing links in the stories about the community and the people who are buried in the cemetery that your tombstone transcribing highlighted. These questions can suggest new ways to find more clues.

9. Now fill out a data sheet for Don Pedrito's gravesite. What similarities and differences do you detect on and around his tombstone?



Army Cross  
signifies participation in the military.



Woodmen of the World Insurance Society,  
a nonprofit fraternal life insurance society  
that provides scholarships for students of  
American history, community service and  
conservation of natural resources.



Old Time Trail Drivers Association,  
an organization of cattlemen who traveled  
the Texas trails in the early days,  
established February 15, 1915,  
in San Antonio.

## Detecting Patterns and Drawing Inferences

Finding meanings in the data collected from research into primary sources is the most difficult and most important part of the study. It calls for careful organization and critical analysis of the data. Some students will not be able to do this; most will require guidance through sequenced questions.

To determine possible answers to the question "Why has Don Pedrito become a folk saint?" students must categorize the information they have collected. A worksheet is included for this purpose. Questions are posed to promote students' interpretation of their findings. Teachers will want to include questions which they consider useful in helping their students find meanings behind the facts. Spaces appear on the worksheet for additional questions.

Students must be helped to approach the organization of data with respect for detail and a commitment to inclusivity—nothing should be left out in the categorizing process. Those items which do not fit the given categories should be listed under an added category or a category of "other information."

During the interpretive phase of the study, students may need to be reminded that open-mindedness is a necessary attitude for good research. The most intriguing questions for study have no simple answers. When human behavior and beliefs are under study, the influencing variables are so numerous that it is not possible to identify one cause. In studying the question "Why has Don Pedrito become a folk saint?" students can come to realize the variety of contributing factors.

### Why Has Don Pedrito Become a Folk Saint?

Listed below are sample categories of clues for finding answers to the question which has been the focus of your research on Don Pedrito Jaramillo. Compile all the information you have gathered by categorizing it under the headings suggested here. If you have some information that does not fit a given category, make a new category heading or place the information under "other information." Do not discard any information that you have. Make a summary record of the information by noting key words and phrases under the category headings.

1. Don Pedrito's Origins
2. Don Pedrito's Personal Characteristics
3. The Place Where Don Pedrito Practiced
4. The People Don Pedrito Treated  
Their Backgrounds  
Their Means (Resources and Life-styles)

- Their Beliefs
- Their Needs
5. The Times (Era) of Don Pedrito's Work  
Characteristics of the Times  
The Length of Time Don Pedrito Practiced
6. Types of Cures Don Pedrito Made
7. The People Who Seek Help from  
Don Pedrito Today  
Their Backgrounds  
Their Means (Resources and Life-styles)  
Their Needs
8. The Various Types of Homage People Pay to  
Don Pedrito
9. Other Information/Additional Categories

Review the information you have recorded. With a highlighter, mark the information that you think offers the best clues to answering the question: "Why has Don Pedrito become a folk saint?" Using those clues, write your answers to the sequence of questions that follows. Remember that there are possibly many answers to any one question. The important point is that you should be able to cite supporting evidence for all answers you record.

1. What seem to be the characteristics of Don Pedrito which make him special?
2. What characteristics did Don Pedrito have in common with the people who sought his help when he was alive and those who still seek his help today?
3. Why might some of Don Pedrito's cures be considered miracles?
4. What do Don Pedrito's actions suggest about his beliefs?
5. How might the beliefs of the people Don Pedrito cured influence their view of his healing powers?

Examine your answers to the questions listed above and think about them. Challenge them. Share them with fellow students. Question one another's ideas, then write your answer to the question "Why has Don Pedrito become a folk saint?"

How many different factors have you included in your answer?

What questions do you have now that didn't occur to you before you started this study? List them. Then, think of the people and places which might give clues to their answers.

## Developing Skills for Humanities Detective Work

Asking questions is at the heart of detective work. Clues are not usually found without the guidance of questions because questions are what shape perceptions.

The exercises in this guide pose questions for students and direct the course of their search for answers. They offer starting places for humanities detective work. The last direction on the final worksheet of this guide attempts to set students on the path of self-initiated detecting. That direction asks for questions.

Inquiry is exciting when it engages the inquirers with questions that *they* want to answer. There are

no motivational substitutes for one's own questions. Students can learn how to find answers by gathering clues for questions asked by others, but they cannot become self-directive inquirers until they have asked and answered their own.

It is hoped that the users of this guide will extend their students' humanities detective work by helping them realize that questions are the basis for inquiry and that *their* questions are as important as any others in the quest to know and understand. Perhaps the best humanities puzzles are those the student perceives. And they start with questions that have special interest to the individual detective.

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## Vocabulary

**Ailment**—a bodily sickness or disorder.

**Cultural**—relating to culture: the beliefs, practices and objects that make up the way of life of a particular group of people.

**Curandero** (coo-ran-day-ro)—Spanish for “healer”; a person who uses simple remedies and religious faith to relieve ailments.

**Don**—the Spanish title for a gentleman; similar to the formal meaning of the English word “Sir”; used only before Christian names.

**Doña** (do'-nyah)—a title/name of honor used before the Christian names of ladies.

**Drought**—a period of dry weather lasting for a long time and causing extensive damage to crops or preventing their successful growth.

**Espiritualista** (es-pe-re-too-ah-lees'-tah)—a person who believes his/her spirit leaves his/her body while another spirit enters it; this spirit communicates through the person's body.

**Healer**—a person who engages in healing without formal medical training or licensing.

**Impact**—the effect of an experience, thing or person upon another.

**Jacal** (hah-cahl')—a simple hut constructed of mud, sticks and/or other natural materials.

**Medicinal**—relating to medicines, used to cure disease or relieve pain.

**Medicine show**—a traveling show using entertainers to attract a crowd in order to sell questionable remedies.

**Metropolitan**—referring to a region which includes a city and the densely populated surrounding areas that are socially and economically united with it.

**Pharmacy**—a place where medicines are made or sold. Often other health aids (bandages, gauze, thermometers) and general merchandise are also sold.

**Quack**—an ignorant or dishonest practitioner of medicine; a charlatan.

**Remedy**—a medicine, or treatment to relieve or cure sickness.

**Rural**—referring to land that is mainly used for farming and ranching; less densely populated than metropolitan areas or cities.

**Sage**—a shrubby mint (*Salvia Officinalis*) with grayish-green, strong, sweet-smelling leaves used in cooking and as a tonic and astringent.

## Audio Typescript

The following script is a transcription of the audio portion of the slide show. The numbers refer to frame numbers in the visual portion of the program. Slashes indicate frame changes.

1. Music/
2. Candles like these can be found/
3. in herb shops, grocery stores/
4. and even in some pharmacies in south Texas./
5. The candles are lit and prayers are offered by people seeking help with family and health problems./
6. The man pictured on the candle is Pedro Jaramillo . . . or Don Pedrito./
7. He was a healer who still holds an important place in the history and cultural traditions of Mexican-Americans in south Texas./
8. Don Pedrito settled at Los Olmos Creek Ranch in 1881. There, he began his practice as a healer . . . or curandero./
9. He had lived most of his life near the city of Guadalajara, Mexico./
10. He became familiar with the Los Olmos area when he helped a friend deliver supplies to the ranch of Don Andrés Canales./
11. In Mexico he was a farm worker, earning very little money./
12. One day, while riding through the brush on horseback, he was struck in the face by a tree branch./
13. The resulting injury to his nose was so painful that he went down to a pond and put cool, soothing mud on his wound./
14. This brought such relief that he stayed there, treating his injury until, on the third day, it healed./
15. That night a voice woke him from his sleep. The voice told Don Pedrito God had given him the gift of healing. For the rest of his life Don Pedrito always said his healing power came from God./
16. In 1881, the year Don Pedrito settled at Los Olmos, there were doctors living in cities and towns of south Texas, but there were few physicians in the rural areas./
17. To get to a doctor's office, a sick or injured person had to travel by horseback,/
18. cart or wagon. A trip of a hundred miles would take several days./
19. People treated many minor diseases and symptoms with home remedies, often using medicinal plants./
20. These treatments were simple to make, inexpensive to use and often quite effective./
21. And if a home remedy like these didn't work, the healing powers of a nearby curandero were sought./
22. Upon his arrival in Texas, Don Pedrito built a jacal similar to these. He probably used mud, sticks, grasses or cane./
23. This type of home worked well in south Texas, because it kept off the hot sun but let the breeze blow through./
24. Don Pedrito's remedies were simple, quick . . . and often unusual. He told some people with foot ailments to pour a can of tomatoes into their boots and wear them a full day./
25. For some illnesses people were told to bathe at a certain spot in a nearby creek./
26. At weddings or fiestas where people gathered Don Pedrito would take the opportunity to let people know of his gift./
27. After a few years he began to travel to towns in the area. During his absence on these trips,/
28. people often camped out at his jacal waiting for him to return. In the towns and at his home he never charged for his services, though grateful followers would give what they could./
29. It is said that, during the drought of 1893, he fed half of the northern part of Starr County with donations he had received./
30. There are hundreds of stories of his successful cures. One story is that he cured a man named Dionisio Rodriguez of severe headaches by making him drink a glass of water with his left hand./
31. Then he told Dionisio to gather some sage on the way home. Dionisio was to boil the herb and bathe in it./
32. He was then to wrap himself in a blanket until he perspired, and take three pills which Don Pedrito had given him. Dionisio followed the advice . . . the headaches disappeared./
33. Another time the wealthy rancher, Don Andrés Canales, called for Don Pedrito's help./
34. His wife, Doña Tomasita, had developed a very high fever. Two doctors had been unable to cure her, and Don Andrés sent for a remedy from the now famous healer.
35. Don Pedrito ordered that Doña Tomasita be bathed in unheated water three times at two-hour intervals. This treatment was carried out against the doctor's advice. But Doña Tomasita recovered./
36. Don Andrés was grateful. From then on he and the family were great believers in Don Pedrito's gift./
37. Not everyone admired or believed in Don Pedrito. Some doctors thought he was no better than the traveling medicine show quacks who practiced medicine without formal education/
38. and sold fake medicines. But unlike the traveling medicine showmen, Don Pedrito didn't charge for his remedies or advice./
39. Don Pedrito was not able to cure everyone who came to him. Some he firmly but gently turned away; like the man he told to return home, for God would take care of him. The man was found dead on the road to his house./
40. After a full life Don Pedrito Jaramillo died on July 3, 1907, at the age of 77./
41. The day of his funeral people came from all over the Los Olmos area and from miles away./
42. For most healers death ends their story. But Don Pedrito's impact continues in four ways:/
43. The herbs and candles bearing his likeness,/
44. The gravesite itself,/
45. modern-day curanderos who learned Don Pedrito's methods,/
46. and those who feel Don Pedrito's spirit heals through them./

47. To this day candles, herbs, powders and charms are produced with his image or name printed on them./
48. Many people purchase them and believe they help cure certain ailments./
49. At the gravesite believers erected a building to shelter the grave, and they built a small shrine in his honor./
50. Visitors to the shrine bring flowers and candles./
51. Some send photographs and letters to ask his help./
52. Others post letters of thanks to Don Pedrito because they feel he helped them during an illness or family problem./
53. In metropolitan areas, far from the gravesite itself,/
54. modern-day curanderos, like Len Ponath of Dallas, practice the art of healing./
55. Len's grandparents actually learned the art from Don Pedrito himself. (Voice of Ponath) "My grandmother and grandfather met down in Los Olmos."/
56. "They got in touch with Don Pedrito in the last years of his life, and they started working with him."/
57. "They stayed with him until his death, and when I was seven years old, my grandmother took me under her arms and started teaching me his old methods plus her methods."/
58. Don Pedrito's influence won't end with Len Ponath. He is passing on that knowledge to his students./
59. Like other modern curanderos Len and his students also enlist the aid of mental health associations and welfare services to help their patients./
60. Doña Cita Martinez is a member of a special group of Mexican-American healers called espiritualistas./
61. These healers believe that they can go into a trance and send their own souls or spirits out of their bodies./
62. Then, they say they can attract the souls or spirits of people who have died./
63. Doña Cita Martinez believes the spirit of Don Pedrito Jaramillo uses her body in this way to heal the sick./
64. Whether or not these healers are actually possessed by the spirit of Don Pedrito,/
65. there are many people who come to them for help and feel they receive it./
66. It has been over a hundred years since Don Pedrito first came to Texas./
67. Stories of his generosity and of his power to heal the sick have made him a legend./
68. Don Pedrito Jaramillo touched the lives of many people during his lifetime,/
69. and thousands believe he still continues to help them, almost a century after his death./
70. Music/
71. Music/
72. Music/

## Photographic Credits

Pictures not noted were produced by the staff of  
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8. Close-up of Don Pedrito—detail from #15.
9. Guadalajara—Julio Michaud y Thomas, engraving. "Vista del panorama del Mexico." Julio Michaud y Thomas, *Album Pintoresco de la Republica Mexicana*. Mexico, 1848.
11. Plowing—photograph. Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, Grandjean Collection, San Antonio.
12. Man on horseback—engraving. "Mexican Cavalry Soldier." Thomas W. Knox, *Knox's Boy Travellers—Mexico*. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1902. Page 120.
13. Applying mud—detail from #14.
14. Don Pedrito by pond—Santa Barraza, painting, 1982. The Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio.
15. Don Pedro Jaramillo—photograph. Brooks County Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Falfurrias.
17. Going to doctor—J. Tinker, drawing. Edward King, *The Great South; a record of journeys . . .* Hartford, Conn.: American Publishing Company, 1875. Page 167.
18. Family in carreta—watercolor. Hendrick-Long Publishing Company, James W. Long Collection, Dallas.
22. Jacales—photograph. "Las Chozas." Mrs. Clara Zepeda, San Benito.
23. Jacal—detail from #22.
26. Wedding party—photograph. Ida Trevino, San Antonio.
27. Plaza scene—drawing. "Military Plaza, San Antonio, Texas." Library of the Daughters of the Republic of Texas at the Alamo, San Antonio.
28. Children outside jacal—photograph. Mrs. Clara Zepeda, San Benito.
29. Cracked dirt—photograph. Greg Bryant, Texas Department of Agriculture, Austin.
30. Man drinking glass of water—engraving. "A Glass of Aguardiente." Thomas W. Knox, *Knox's Boy Travellers—Mexico*. New York: Harper & Brothers Publishers, 1902. Page 223.
32. Dionisio Rodriguez wrapped in blanket—Santa Barraza, painting, 1982. The Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio.
33. Don Andrés Canales—detail from #36.
34. Doña Tomasita Canales—detail from #36.
35. Doña Tomasita bathing—Santa Barraza, painting, 1982. The Institute of Texan Cultures, San Antonio.
36. Don Andrés and Doña Tomasita Canales—photograph. Mrs. Bebe Inkley, San Antonio.
37. Don Pedro Jaramillo—photograph. Brooks County Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Falfurrias.
39. Crucifix—photograph. San Antonio Conservation Society, San Antonio.
40. Grave of Don Pedrito—photograph. Brooks County Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Falfurrias.
41. Don Pedrito's funeral—photograph. Brooks County Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Falfurrias.
42. Casket—detail from #41.
68. Don Pedrito Jaramillo—photograph. Brooks County Historical Society, Heritage Museum, Falfurrias.

# Suggested Readings

## Folk Healing

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Creigh, Dorothy Weyer. "Ethnic Groups: Part One, Research for the Local Society," AASLH Tech. Leaflet 109.

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