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**THE HISTORY OF JALISCO**  
By Donna S. Morales and John P. Schmal  
  
For more than a century, Mexican nationals have been crossing the southern border to begin new lives in the United States. A large percentage of those immigrants have come from the state of Jalisco. Jalisco, located in the west central part of the Mexican Republic, is the sixth largest of Mexico's thirty-one states. Within its 124 municipios, the state boasts a population that is approaching seven million.

Bordered by the Pacific Ocean on its west, the 31,210 square miles of Jalisco make up 4.1% of the total area of Mexico and touches seven other Mexican states. While Colima and Michoacán lay to her south and east, Zacatecas, Aguascalientes and Nayarit lay to the north. In addition, Jalisco has a common border with Guanajuato and a small sliver of San Luis Potosí on her northeastern frontier.  
  
Today, Jalisco is a land of peace. But from the early Sixteenth Century until the Cristero Rebellion of the 1920s, Jalisco's beautiful landscape was ravaged by warfare time and again. Over a period of four centuries, many battles were fought on the soil of Jalisco. When one learns of the trials and tribulations endured by the people of Jalisco, he or she can begin to appreciate and understand the pride that Jaliscans feel for their native soil.  
  
The name "Jalisco" is believed to be derived from the Nahuatl words "xalli" (sand, gravel) and "ixtli," which means "face," or by extension, plane. Thus, the word Jalisco would literally mean "sandy place." The first inhabitants of Jalisco were nomadic tribes traveling through the area en route to the south. At one point, the Toltecs ruled over the Kingdom of Xalisco. But, in 1112, the Indian subjects of this kingdom rose in rebellion, leading to the disintegration of Xalisco. Among the indigenous tribes inhabiting Jalisco at the time of the Spanish encounter were the Cazcanes (who inhabited the northern regions near Teocaltiche and Lagos de Moreno) and the Huicholes (who also inhabited the northwestern region near present-day Huejúcar and Colotlán).  
  
The Guachichile Indians, who inhabited a large part of Zacatecas, also had some representation in the Los Altos area near Tepatitlán and Arandas. The Cuyuteco Indians, who spoke the Nahua language of the Aztecs, lived in the western sector near the present-day towns of Cuyutlán and Mixtlán. Living close to what is now Guadalajara were the Tecuexes and Cocas. However, the Tecuexes also extended to the northeast through Los Altos all the way to Lagos de Moreno. The Guamares lived in the far east, along what is now the border of Jalisco and Guanajuato. The Otomíes, who inhabited the southern area near Zapotitlán and border area with Colima, were transplanted Christian Indians brought to the region as allies of the Spaniards.  
  
In 1522, shortly after the fall of Tenochtitlán (Mexico City), Hernán Cortés commissioned Cristóbal de Olid to journey into the unexplored territories of the northwest to explore that area we now call Jalisco. Then, in December 1529, the President of the First Audiencia in Nueva España (Mexico), Nuño Beltrán de Guzmán, left Mexico City with a force of 300 Spaniards and 6,000 Indian allies. Guzmán, a lawyer by profession, had already gained a reputation as a ruthless and cruel administrator when he served as Governor of Panuco on the Gulf Coast. With little regard for Spanish laws forbidding the enslavement of Indians, Guzmán had enslaved and shipped tens of thousands of Indians off to the Caribbean Islands to live out their lives as slaves.  
  
Traveling through Michoacán, Guanajuato, Jalisco, and Sinaloa, Guzmán left a trail of devastation and terror wherever he went. In 1531, Guzmán ordered his chief lieutenant, Juan de Oñate, to found La Villa de Guadalajara - named after the city of his birth in Spain - on the plateau near Nochistlán in the present-day state of Zacatecas. The construction of Guadalajara began on January 5, 1532. However, the small settlement came under repeated attacks almost immediately from the local Cazcanes Indians and, on August 5, 1533, had to be abandoned. The town of Guadalajara would be moved four times before finding its final home on February 14, 1542 at its present site.  
  
While Guzmán ravaged through the western and central parts of Mexico, reports of his brutal treatment of the Indians reached the authorities in Mexico City. One man who took special notice of Guzmán's genocidal transgressions was Antonio de Mendoza, who in 1535 was appointed as the first of sixty-one viceroys who would rule Nueva España. Egged on by both Bishop Bartolome de las Casas and Archbishop Juan de Zumarraga, strong advocates for the Indians, Mendoza arrested Guzmán in 1536 and imprisoned him. He was returned to Spain where he died in obscurity and disgrace.  
  
The long-range implications of Guzmán's reign of terror were realized in 1541 when the Mixtón Rebellion pitted the indigenous people of Jalisco against Spanish rule. Under the leadership of Tenamaxtli, the Indians fortified their positions near Mixtón, Nochistlán, and other towns, while laying siege to Guadalajara. Unable to cope with the intensity of this uprising, Cristóbal de Oñate, the Acting Governor of the region, pleaded for aid from Viceroy Mendoza. The famous conquistador, Pedro de Alvarado, coming to the aid of Oñate, led an attack on Nochistlán. However, the indigenous defenders counterattacked with such ferocity that Alvarado's forces were routed. In this hasty retreat, a horse fell upon Pedro de Alvarado. Mortally wounded by the crushing weight of the horse, Alvarado, the conqueror of Guatemala, died in Guadalajara a week later on June 24, 1541.  
  
However, eventually Viceroy Mendoza, with a force of 300 horsemen, 300 infantry, eight pieces of artillery and 20,000 Tlaxcalan and Aztec Indian allies, succeeded in recapturing one town after another, against great resistance. By December 8, 1541, most of the indigenous resistance had been ended. In 1548, King Carlos V of Spain decreed the creation of the Audiencia of Nueva Galicia, which included all of present-day Jalisco, Zacatecas, and Aguascalientes.  
  
In 1550, the Chichimeca War started. The definitive source of information relating to the Chichimeca Indians and the Chichimeca War is Philip Wayne Powell's Soldiers, Indians, and Silver: North America's First Frontier War. Although Zacatecas, Aguascalientes, and Guanajuato were the primary battlegrounds in this fierce frontier war, some parts of Jalisco also came under attack. In 1554, the worst disaster of all took place when Chichimeca Indians attacked a Spanish caravan of sixty wagons with an armed escort in the Ojuelos Pass. In addition to inflicting great loss of life, the Chichimecas carried off more than 30,000 pesos worth of clothing, silver, and other valuables.  
  
By the last decade of the century, the efforts of Viceroy Alonso Manrique de Zuñiga to make peace with the Chichimecas met with success. Mr. Powell has described in detail the efforts of Viceroy Mendoza to achieve peace. The end of hostilities brought a period of extended prosperity for the economy of Jalisco. During the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Century, the commercial importance of Jalisco became a crucial ingredient to the success of Spain's prized colony.  
  
Guadalajara, because of its strategic location within the Spanish colony, became prosperous as it funneled imported goods to other parts of the colony. This period was also a period of consolidation in which certain Indian groups were formally brought under Spanish control. In 1721, the leader of the Coras, an indigenous group living in present-day Nayarit and western Jalisco, negotiated a peace with the Spanish authorities.  
  
On September 16, 1810, Father Miguel Hidalgo set into motion the Mexican struggle for independence when he issued "El Grito de Dolores" (The Cry of Dolores) from his parish in Guanajuato. What started as a small rebellion quickly snowballed into a full-scale revolution. Moving from one town to another, Hidalgo's insurgents were able to take control of some cities without firing a shot.  
  
On November 4, 1810, the rebel forces defeated a Creole militia at Zacoalca, killing over 250 Loyalists. This victory left the city of Guadalajara vulnerable to rebel attack. On November 26, 1810, the forces of Hidalgo entered Guadalajara. Once in the city, the rebels arrested many Spaniards and announced the abolition of slavery. In the meantime, the recruitment efforts of Hidalgo brought the rebel strength up to about 80,000 in January. However, on January 13, 1811, Hidalgo learned that the Royalist forces of General Félix María Calleja del Rey were approaching Guadalajara. Upon receiving this news, Hidalgo assembled his forces and led them to the outskirts of the city. Here the rebel forces took up positions on several hills and awaited the arrival of the enemy.  
  
On January 17, 1811, at Calderón Bridge on the Lerma River east of Guadalajara, Hidalgo's forces joined battle with the Royalist forces of Gen. Calleja del Rey. Hidalgo's men were on the verge of victory when - suddenly - Royalist artillery fire struck one of the insurgents' ammunition wagons. A stupendous explosion resulted, igniting the grass of the plains and panicking Hidalgo's men. Within minutes, Hidalgo's forces were in a massive retreat. It was this battle that broke the back of Hidalgo's revolt. Eventually, Hidalgo was captured and executed (July, 1811).  
  
As the revolution continued, Jalisco remained the site of confrontations between royalist forces and insurgents. In 1812, insurgent activity became particularly strong in the vicinity of Lake Chapala. However, after the capture and execution of key leaders, the rebel movement lost momentum and some insurgent leaders accepted amnesty in 1816. The uncertainty of the rebellion against Spain was further magnified on the morning of May 31, 1817 when a massive earthquake caused great damage to Guadalajara and the surrounding areas. Jalisco remained, for the duration of the war, a stronghold of periodic insurgent activity. Finally, in 1822, the Spanish authorities relinquished their claim on Mexico, and Royalist forces embarked for Spain, leaving behind an independent Mexican Republic.  
  
On June 2, 1823, the Free State of Jalisco was established in confederation with the other Mexican states. But independence did not bring stability to Jalisco. The historian Dawn Fogle Deaton writes that in the sixty-year period from 1825 to 1885, Jalisco witnessed twenty-seven peasant (primarily indigenous) rebellions. Seventeen of these uprisings occurred within one decade, 1855-64, and the year 1857 witnessed ten separate revolts.  
  
According to Ms. Deaton, the cause of these "waves of unrest, popular protest, and open rebellion" arose "out of the political and social struggles among classes and between classes." She further explained that the "commercialization of the economy," especially in agriculture, had led to fundamental changes in the lifestyles of the peasants and thus brought about "the seeds of discontent."  
  
The peasant rebellions were accompanied by revolts on the state level against the federal government. On April 12, 1834, the Jalisco Legislature invited the states of Querétaro, Guanajuato, San Luis Potosí, Michoacán, Nuevo León, Tamaulipas, Tampico and Durango to form a coalition to defend themselves against the Federal rule of General Antonio López de Santa Anna. During that summer, a mob of about sixty to eighty men, through intimidation and threats, persuaded the leaders of Guadalajara to resign. Through such manipulation, the Federal Government kept Jalisco under heel.  
  
During the 1850s, the ongoing and passionate battle between the Liberals and Conservatives spilled into Jalisco. From 1855 to 1864, Ms. Deaton writes, Jalisco's government witnessed eighteen transfers of power. One of the key issues was the role of the Catholic Church and the separation of church and state. The Liberals viewed the Church as their staunch opponent and as the conservatives' political and economic supporter. In effect, Liberal advocates sought to reduce influence of the Church.  
  
Then, with the adoption of a Liberal-based constitution in January 1857, the Conservative/Liberal conflict evolved into a full-scale civil war, referred to as the War of the Reform. With the resignation of President Comonfort, Liberal leader Benito Juárez had become Acting President of the Mexican Republic. However, Conservative forces moved quickly to attack Juárez in Mexico City. As a result, Juárez was forced to flee to Guadalajara.  
  
Then, on March 20, 1858, faced with the imminent arrival of Conservative forces, Benito Juárez and his Liberal forces were forced to flee Guadalajara. Soon he would arrive in Veracruz, where he set up his government. Reaching its peak in June and July of 1859, the War of the Reform paralyzed the economy of Jalisco. A large segment of southern Jalisco, including Guadalajara, were devastated, leading to a mass migration of middle class persons. Of the thirty most important battles of the War of the Reform, twelve took place on Jalisco's territory.  
  
With the end of the War of the Reform and the return of Juárez to Mexico City in 1861, Mexico faced a French invasion. The French, invited to Mexico by the Conservatives, moved - against great resistance - to occupy most of the country. During the French occupation, multiple confrontations between French and Republican troops took place within the territory of Jalisco. On December 18, 1866, Mexican forces under General Eulogio Parra won a decisive battle against the French forces near Acatlán. Within months, the French would completely evacuate their forces from Mexico.  
  
A state of Jalisco's prominence was unable to avoid becoming a battleground during the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920). In Manuel M. Diéguez, an ally of President Venustiano Carranza and the Governor of Jalisco, enacted a reign of terror. During his occupation of Guadalajara, Diéguez's forces persecuted the clergy, confiscated holdings of the rich, and imprisoned or executed followers of Victoriano Huerta. As the rebel forces of Pancho Villa approached Guadalajara, many people from the Jalisco countryside joined forces with the Villistas. Finally, on December 17, 1914, Villa entered Guadalajara, forcing Diéguez to flee. Soon after, Villa called together the richest men of both Jalisco and Guadalajara and announced a forced loan of one million pesos. Passing out money to the poor, Villa became enormously popular, but his victory was short-lived and soon he had to leave the city. By April, the Constitutionalist forces of Diéguez once again controlled Guadalajara.  
  
One of the major consequences of the Mexican Revolution was the Constitution of 1917. The articles of this constitution deprived the Catholic Church of its traditional privileged position in Mexican society by secularizing all primary education and requiring the registration of all clergymen with the government (to regulate their "professional conduct"). Article 24, which forbade public worship outside the confines of the church, had antagonized many Mexican citizens.  
  
In 1926, President Plutarco Elías Calles, in implementing the articles of the Constitution, signed the so-called "Intolerable Acts." The implementation of these strongly anti-clerical laws antagonized many Catholics and laid the foundation of the so-called "Cristero Religious War." Los Altos and the "Three-Fingers" border region of northern Jalisco, long regarded as a vanguard of Catholicism in Mexico, would become battlefields in this next war, which started in 1926.  
  
During the period from 1926 to 1932, the government of Jalisco changed hands ten times. At one point, some 25,000 rebels had been mobilized to resist the articles of the Constitution. The bloody conflict was formally ended in June 1929. However, outbreaks of violence continued into the 1930s. Over time, the uneasy relationship between the Church and state relaxed considerably and, while the oppressive laws originally signed into law by Calles remained on the books, little effort was made to enforce them.  
  
Today, Jalisco remains one of the most important states in Mexico, both culturally and economically. With the third-largest economy in the Mexican Republic, Jalisco exports more than $5 billion annually to 81 countries and ranks first among the states in agribusiness, computers and the manufacturing of jewelry. Some people say that Jalisco is both the heart and soul of Mexico. Many of the things that are considered as typically Mexican, such as mariachi music, charreadas (rodeos), the Mexican Hat Dance, tequila, and the broad-rimmed sombrero hat, are in fact derived from Jalisco's rich cultural heritage. For the last five centuries, Jalisco has been the site of many civil wars and many battles. But, in spite of these ongoing conflicts, the spirit of the people of Jalisco has endured and, in fact, flourished.  
  
  
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