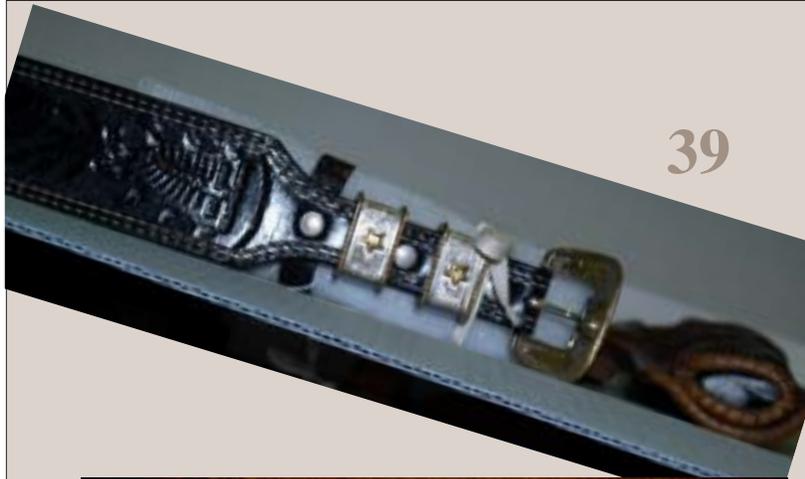




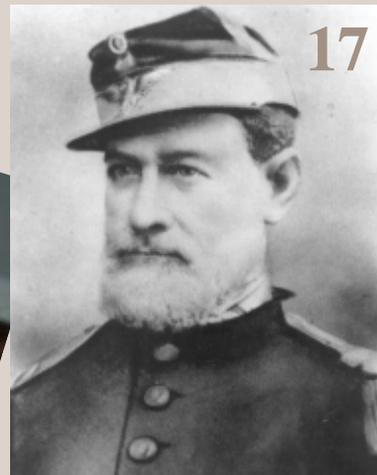
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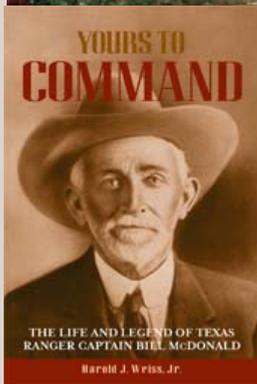
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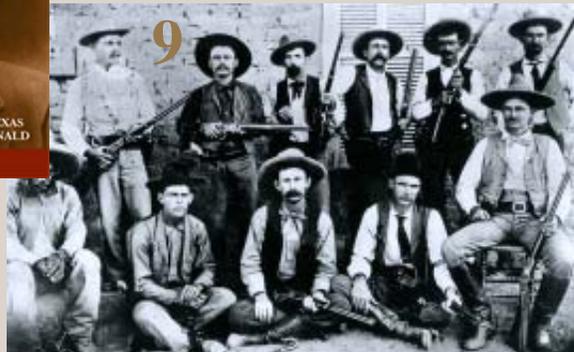
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**Texas Ranger
Dispatch**
*Production
Team*

Byron A. Johnson - Managing Editor; Director, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame
Pam S. Baird – Technical Editor, Layout, and Design

Sharon P. Johnson, Volunteer Web Designer, Baylor University
Christina Stopka, Archivist, Armstrong Texas Ranger Research Center
Shelly Crittendon, Collections Manager, Texas Ranger Hall of Fame
Christina Smith, Research Librarian, Armstrong Texas Ranger Research Center

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Jesus Sandoval

McNelly's Enforcer

Chuck Parsons



Ranger Leander McNelly

Following the Civil War, conflict over territory and resources in the West was a daily fact of life. Texas soil was awash with the blood of men of many heritages: Anglo, Indian, and Hispanic. In the 1860s, Texans sent their men to fight on eastern battlefields and repelled Comanches emboldened by war. In the '70s they defended their settlements from border marauders raiding ranches and towns. Ranchers such as Richard King and Mifflin Kenedy had to protect their holdings from warlords like Juan Cortina, who carved out empires and claimed that southern Texas was rightfully part of Mexico. Before the American Civil War, Robert E. Lee had fought the raiders of Cortina, who reigned for decades as a virtual monarch among his followers. By 1875, the situation was out of control, and a diminutive, tough Texas Ranger named Leander H. McNelly was sent into the Nueces Strip to fend off raids from Mexico. Although there were numerous rustler gangs, any raider was considered a *Cortinista*, a Cortina ally. Little quarter was given on either side.

In the history of the Mexico-United States border conflicts, Juan Nepomuceno Cortina's name stands bold as a freedom fighter to some, a brutal outlaw to others. A veteran of the Mexican War, he fought

U.S. soldiers at Palo Alto and Resaca de la Palma battles. Cortina then became a noted rustler along the border, increasing his standing by extracting Mexican prisoners from Texas jails.

Raiding upon the people of Texas by bands of armed Mexicans commenced in the year 1859, when Juan N. Cortina entered Brownsville at the head of an armed party of Mexicans and



committed murders and other outrages. This occurred on the morning of September 28. Since that date raids of a similar character have been made upon the people of Texas by armed Mexicans on various occasions, and they have been continued up to date.

During the American Civil War, Cortina sometimes favored the Confederate cause, sometimes the Union side. A powerful force along the border, he was the governor of the state of Tamaulipas and seemingly able to raid American ranches at will, including that of Richard King. After the conclusion of the war, Jesus Sandoval, who later became one of McNelly's Rangers, related:

Bands of raiders were organized in Mexico to invade the territory of the United States. They murdered many citizens of Texas, robbed the people of that State at will, and carried the stolen property into Mexico and sold it.¹

The Texas Ranger who fought Cortina most effectively was a thin, weak-voiced native of Virginia who suffered from tuberculosis and would eventually die from it—Leander Harvey McNelly. Born in 1844, by the late 1850s he was ranching in Washington County, east of Austin. In 1861, he joined the Confederate Army, learning many of the hardships of military life during the failed western campaign of General Sibley. He served throughout the war, and in 1865 resumed operating his plantation. Then in 1870, Governor E.J. Davis called on him to be one of the first four captains of his Texas State Police. Following the demise of this force, Richard Coke filled the governor's chair, and McNelly was selected to captain the Washington County Volunteer Militia. This unit was unofficially another company of the Frontier Battalion, but it was later renamed the Special Force, although in essence it was a Texas Ranger company. McNelly's first assignment was to end the feud between the Sutton and Taylor forces, who were fighting in DeWitt County and surrounding areas.

In 1875, he was sent to the Nueces Strip following a raid by Cortina raiders almost in the heart of Corpus Christi. In 1875 and early 1876, McNelly continually challenged the "Rustler King," Juan Cortina. He had his thirty Rangers to fight the *Cortinistas*, and he also had his Mexico-born spy Jesus "Old Casuse" Sandoval (This was how some Rangers pronounced his name).

Jesus Sandoval certainly lived a full life filled with danger and excitement, and part of it was served in the McNelly Rangers. The exact year of his birth is unknown, but he claimed to be a native Texan living in Cameron County on the Rio Grande his entire life. He also claimed to be in the employ of the Quartermaster Department of the United States "when the battle of Palo Alto was fought, and served until the end of that war; and since the conclusion of peace I have lived in Cameron County, and nowhere else."² As that battle was fought on May 8, 1846, this would suggest a birth year somewhere between 1825 and 1830, possibly earlier. Efforts to find him on the federal census have not proved definitive.

What formal education Sandoval may have received is unknown. He did learn to write his own name at a minimum, as he signed his pay voucher clearly. He was aware of his surroundings and what history was being made. Fortunately, he was asked to provide information about the troubles on the Rio Grande Frontier, and that record is preserved in the important House of Representatives document entitled *Texas Frontier Troubles*. Since his statement was probably given verbally rather than his own written report, one must conclude his education was limited.

The name Jesus Sandoval is not uncommon, but presumably the name appearing on the 1850 Cameron County Federal Census is the man who became the avenger. He is listed as head of household at dwelling number 888, showing him as thirty years of age, born in Mexico. Others in the

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household include his wife Maria Antonia, twenty-five, also born in Mexico, and four sons: Romaldo, Juan, Jesus, and Santiago, ages six, four, two, and one respectively. The boys were all born in Texas.³ The family has not been located on later census records, and the information on Jesus Sandoval is disappointingly meager. Of the family, by the mid-1870s they all could have been elsewhere; a daughter born after the census could have grown up and become the victim of the raiders, her name forever lost.

One of McNelly's men, Napoleon A. Jennings, recorded his memoir of riding with McNelly's Rangers some years after the unforgettable experience, and he included this portrayal of Sandoval:

A tall, angular vaquero, aged past the half-century mark, spurred his horse up to the burning ruins of what was once his home. Before him was a scene which every man living on the Rio Grande border consciously feared during the 1870s: the results of a raid by Cortina's bandidos, those expert thieves and murderers who plundered Texas ranches seemingly at will. This time they had struck his home—he, a former countryman, a native of Mexico,—and had stolen his horses and cattle, had burned his house and barn. And they had left his wife and teenage daughter ravaged. Their deaths alone would have made the destruction of the dreams and happiness of Jesus Sandoval total and complete. As it was—in the minds of many—their fate had been “worse than death.”



Juan Nepomuceno Cortina

Apparently Sandoval was a victim of such a raid, although today it is impossible to verify it by contemporary records. Several who served with Sandoval later wrote their reminiscences and mentioned him. Three of his fellow Rangers, George P. Durham, William Callicott, and N.A. Jennings wrote of him. How they learned of his family tragedy can only be speculated upon, as it is doubtful if he spoke of the loss with many. The raid transformed Sandoval from a peaceful rancher into a man obsessed with the idea of revenge. Estimates vary as to the number of men he killed, whether by gun or by a noose around the neck of a suspected raider, but accounts by contemporaries place the figure at several dozen. For a period of time he exacted revenge against raiders or friends of raiders alone, a solitary assassin being his own judge, jury and, enforcer.

In early 1875, Sandoval joined the command of Leander Harvey McNelly, captain of the Washington County Volunteer Militia Company A. He carried the rank of private and acted essentially as a scout or guide, and probably as translator as well. He participated in two significant actions in 1875 which brought statewide recognition to McNelly's Rangers: the Palo Alto Prairie battle in June and the invasion raid into Mexico in November. In addition to being scout and guide, he earned the reputation of being McNelly's enforcer.

The official records dealing with this man are sparse. The Ranger records, themselves incomplete, provide merely his terms of service. No descriptive list tells us of his physical characteristics such as age, height, place of birth, previous occupation, and so on. His first duty was from May 1 to August 31, 1875. During this time he served as a private, acting as a guide. For this he earned \$128, just a trifle over one dollar a day. Another document dated February 1, 1877, shows that he served from July 26, 1876, to January 20, 1877, with pay due from November 1876. Here he had earned \$106.00 for his services. The carbine he carried was valued at \$20.00; the pistol, \$13.00. These weapons were turned in at the time of his honorable discharge. It is believed that he served continually from the first date of enlistment, although there are no records to verify this.



William Callicott

Several of McNelly's Rangers recorded their memoirs in their later years, thus providing history with excellent reports of the activities on the border. These were Napoleon A. Jennings, William Callicott, and George P. Durham. Jennings, who joined the company in May 1876 and served until 1877, wrote of various events in which he did not participate because they had occurred prior to his enlistment. However, he had certainly learned of them from Rangers who did. His work was published in 1899 under the title, *A Texas Ranger*. Callicott wrote his memoirs in 1921, written out in longhand for Dr. Walter Prescott Webb for his study of the Texas Rangers. In conjunction with Clyde Wantland, Durham related his accounts in *Taming the Nueces Strip*. All remembered Jesus Sandoval, a man twice the age of most of the Rangers, but an impressive and unforgettable figure.

Jennings knew Sandoval and perhaps learned of the man's background personally. According to him, Sandoval lost everything to the raiders of Juan Cortina in 1874. The ravaged wife and daughter were placed in a convent in Matamoras to be cared for by the Sisters of Mercy. He then went on a one-man rampage against anyone known or suspected of being a raider or who sympathized with them. He killed men by ambush, burned their homes, drove off their livestock, and poisoned their water holes. His identity was unknown for months, but large rewards were offered for his capture. According to Jennings, Sandoval's private war lasted for eight months in which scores of ranches were burned, forty or fifty men were assassinated, and hundreds of horses and cattle destroyed. Sandoval remained an elusive man, keeping in the wild, going to Brownsville only for provisions and cartridges, and only occasionally visiting Matamoras. When somehow his identity was learned, Sandoval the avenger joined McNelly's troop. According to Jennings, Sandoval was taller than the majority of Mexicans, remarkably thin and angular. His eyes were "black as jet and singularly piercing." He reminded Jennings of one vastly superior in tastes than his neighbors, holding himself aloof, having a superior education, a haughty bearing, and an air of condescension



towards others. Jennings compared him to an old-time Spanish *caballero*.⁴

In 1921, William Callicott wrote his recollections of the Ranger days for Dr. Webb to assist him in this study of the Rangers. He recalled that Sandoval's tragedy had happened several years before joining the company, perhaps in 1870 or 1871, when he and another man had caught four Mexican cattle thieves on the Texas side of the Rio Grande. The quartet was hanged to the same limb of a convenient tree. After that, Callicott wrote, the raiders swore vengeance on Sandoval, intending to kill him.

He hadn't slept in his house in over 10 years on account of being afraid he would be killed by the Mexican bandits. He came to Captain McNelly and wanted to join our company so as he would have a chance to kill a few of the Mexican bandits. He knew the country well on this side of the River and all the Mexicans that lived on this side for miles away so the Captain let him join us, paying him the same he did us.

It was Sandoval and his friend who retaliated against their cattle being stolen. Then Cortina's raiders swore vengeance on Sandoval for his action against his men. Sandoval became a loner, sleeping in the brush. When McNelly needed a guide, Sandoval was available and happy to be of help. He was issued a needle gun and was paid the same as the other Rangers. He was proud to be a McNelly.⁵

George Durham's remembrance of Sandoval is basically the same. The first time he saw him, the man proved to be unforgettable:

I barely got a look at the man's face, but what I saw made me want to look again. He wore a scraggly red beard flecked with white, and red hair dropping almost to his shoulders. His skin was dry and parched, and his light-blue eyes seemed to throw off sparks. He was what you would call spooky. . . . [He] became our jailor, and he never lost a single one that was turned over to him for keeping.⁶

Of course Durham was speaking euphemistically, as the only "jail" for McNelly's prisoners was a tree limb from which to dangle at the end of a rope.

While Jennings, Callicott, and Durham related their accounts years after the events, one Ranger wrote of Jesus Sandoval within days of whatever action they experienced. His name was T.C. Robinson. He was a young man originally from Virginia who came to Texas to avoid continuing difficulties with a neighbor. It was a matter of *cherchez la femme*, and Robinson left Virginia and soon became a newspaper correspondent for Austin's *Daily Democratic Statesman*, one of the leading newspapers of Texas. Robinson, who contributed many letters and poems to the columns of the *Statesman*, joined up with McNelly in mid-1874 and remained with him until early 1876. He had ample opportunity to become acquainted with Sandoval. In fact, prior to the company being sent to the Rio Grande frontier, he certainly read this item which appeared in the *Statesman* on December 31, 1874. It was written from Brownsville and signed only by a pen name, "Old Texan":

A crisis will soon be inevitable. The Mexicans are killing and robbing us, and our people, irrespective of nationality, are taking and hanging raiders. Yesterday [December 17, the bodies] of two raiders were brought into town. They had been hung for cattle stealing; the animals were in their possession. It created intense excitement among the Mexicans, one of them made oath as to the parties who did the hanging. Last night, warrants were issued for Bill Burke, Deputy Sheriff,⁷ Lino Saldana and Jesus Sandoval; the first two are in jail. I understand they belong to a large band of

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*rancheros, organized to defend themselves and property. The friends of the thieves are using their influence to have them punished for the hanging. It is doubtful where the matter may end.*⁸

McNelly experienced two major actions against the cattle thieves, those raiders who robbed from small ranchers on the Texas side of the river as well the stronghold of cattle baron Richard King. McNelly had been successful in keeping the Sutton and Taylor feudists at bay while he was stationed in DeWitt County in 1874, but in early 1875 he received orders to report to what was then the Nueces Strip, that no-man's land between the Nueces River and the Rio Grande. The two events were the battle on the old Mexican War battlefield of Palo Alto, fought close to Brownsville, and the three-day battle and invasion of Mexico in November, near Las Cuevas, Mexico, across the river from Rio Grande City, Starr County. This has become known as the Las Cuevas fight.

In the Palo Alto battle, which was fought over many miles on June 12, 1875, McNelly lost only one man, L.B. "Sonny" Smith, the youngest in the company. McNelly accounted for the deaths of some sixteen raiders. In the Las Cuevas affair, conducted in Mexico on November 19-21, he lost no one, killed a number of suspected raiders, and recovered cattle stolen from the ranch of Richard King. Sandoval played an active role in both these memorable engagements.⁹

The Palo Alto Prairie battle was an action which is reminiscent of the days when knighthood was in flower, with the forces of virtue attacking the forces of evil on the open plain. This is only partly true, of course, but McNelly, thanks to the scouting abilities of Sandoval, was able to overtake a band of cattle thieves and effectively destroy them. His methods may not have been legal, but McNelly was above all a pragmatist, utilizing methods which brought results. He achieved a most noteworthy victory that day on the battlefield.

A short time before that memorable day, a pair of suspicious characters was brought into McNelly's camp. How McNelly obtained information from them was later explained by Brigadier General E.O.C. Ord of the U.S. Army before a Congressional Committee. He reported that Captain McNelly had, "by the use of the only effectual means known in such cases, but not legitimate enough for regulars to apply, were compelled to betray the position and strength of their band."¹⁰

T.C. Robinson did not ignore Sandoval's methodology of interrogating prisoners, but he wrote of Sandoval with a macabre sense of humor:

Jesus Sandoval is a trump – a perfect Chesterfield in politeness; he puts us to shame in the elegance of his manners; as to the number of robbers he has put "up a tree," their name is legion: scrupulously polite in every day intercourse, his urbanity on these extraordinary occasions is boundless. Beau Brummel would have blushed with shame . . . could he have witnessed Sandoval officiating at a "tucking up;" the comfort and convenience of his amigos, as he calls them, is his sole thought; not a word which could jar their feelings, not the slightest reproach, not a single allusion as to their method of raising the wind, is allowed when he is acting as master of ceremonies; their own mothers could not be more tender; their own children no more respectful; his countenance is illustrated with a heavenly peace as he "works them off," and he is so kind and so considerate that it is almost a pleasure to be hanged by such a nice gentleman. Cortina, before his arrest, would have given his right arm to have caught Sandoval on the Mexican side of the Rio Brave [sic], and even now it is as much as his life is worth if he should be seen in Matamoras; he is very popular on the American side of the river.¹¹

The question of prisoner interrigation did not begin with the twentieth century. Of interest is that

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both Callicott and Durham both witnessed Sandoval's method of dealing with a prisoner after wanted information had been forced from him. Their accounts are essentially the same in content: Sandoval forced the prisoner to stand on the back of a horse, a noose around his neck with the other end of the rope around a tree. When the horse was slapped away the neck was instantly broken. Callicott added dryly, "Captain didn't like this kind of killing, but Old Casuse did."¹²

Early in the morning of June 12, McNelly sighted the band of eighteen raiders with over two hundred head of stolen cattle headed for Mexico. McNelly pursued them with his band of twenty-two volunteers. It was action which the young men under McNelly wanted above all. If Sandoval remained in character, then he must have been ecstatic at the prospect of destroying such a group of Cortina raiders. Unfortunately, no list was composed of the volunteers, but we know we know the names of some from the various memoirs: Jesus Sandoval, L.B. "Sonny" Smith, Lieutenant T.C. Robinson, William Callicott, Spencer J. Adams, Herman S. Rock, William L. Rudd, George P. Durham, brothers Linton L. and Lawrence B. Wright, John B. Armstrong, Roe P. Orrell, George Boyd, H.G. Rector, and Horace Mabin.

To emphasize the differences of the men McNelly commanded, one can contrast Sandoval—fifty years-plus of age and old enough to be the father of almost any of the Rangers, killer of many by gun and rope, and living for revenge—to George Durham, nineteen years old and going into his first fight. And then there was L.B. "Sunny" Smith, younger than Durham!

Other Rangers were there for adventure and action; Sandoval was there for revenge. Because McNelly's men would follow him into Hell if he led them, Sandoval may have been second in the lead. Sandoval's individual action is unknown, but the battle was a complete annihilation of the gang.

According to Herman S. Rock's affidavit made on June 17, five days later, the following raiders were killed: "Captain" George Kimenes, "Lieutenant" Pancho Lopes, Camilo Lenna, Manuel Garcia, Juan El Guarachi, Guadalupe Espinosa, Jacinto Ximemas, Cecilio Benevides, Tibutio Fuentes, Casimiro Garcia, Guadalupe Escuval, Dorates de la Garza, Jack Ellis (the sole American), Telesforo Diaz, Rafael Salinas, Encarnacion Garcia, and Guillermo Cano Cortado. One raider escaped—Jose Maria Olguin, *alias* El Aguja (the needle).¹³

On Sunday, June 13, Brownsville City Marshal Joseph P. O'Shaughnessy went out to the prairie to gather up the dead. He brought the bodies into the main plaza of Brownsville and stacked them up like cordwood. Sandoval must have been jubilant. A total of two hundred sixteen head of beef cattle were recovered from the raiding party and turned over to the Deputy Inspector of Hides and Animals, John Jay Smith. They were from a total of thirty-four different Texas ranches.¹⁴

McNelly, in his official report, said of the raiders:

I have never seen men fight with such desperation. Many of them, after being shot from their horses and severely wounded three or four times, would rise on their elbows and empty their pistols at us with their dying breath. After they broke cover it was a succession of fights, man to man, for five or six miles across the prairie.

McNelly, having served four years in the Civil War, had seen plenty of men fight and die. One Ranger in this battle would never fight again: L.B. Smith fell in this his first conflict against outlawry. He was given full military honors and buried in the Brownsville City Cemetery.¹⁵

It was not until November 1875 that another action of any import took place. Raiding may have

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been reduced for a while with the stunning victory on the Palo Alto Prairie, but McNelly's objective was far from accomplished as raids continued. Word was brought to McNelly that raiders had been sighted with a herd of seventy-five to a hundred head moving towards the Rio Grande near the Las Cuevas crossing. McNelly was with the U.S. troops stationed near the spot when he heard the news, but his men were sixty miles away in camp. Nevertheless, he sent for volunteers, and twenty-four Rangers besides Sandoval made the forced march in less than five hours. However, it was too late, as the raiders had crossed the river with the stolen cattle.

This time, it was going to be a much larger operation involving more Rangers and U.S. troops. It was a three-day action resulting in the invasion of Mexico and breaking international law. When the news was spread that McNelly had crossed into Mexico intending to recover stolen cattle, many feared the result would be another Alamo.

McNelly's attempts to convince officials at Fort Brown to allow soldiers to volunteer to cross the river with him were refused, as it was contrary to international law. But McNelly would not give up this opportunity. If the U.S. soldiers would not cross with him, he would go ahead and cross without them. Again, no list was preserved as to which Rangers did cross over, but from the memoirs of those who did, the names of some are preserved: Sandoval, Tom Sullivan, William Callicott, Lt. T.C. Robinson, John B. Armstrong, George A. Hall, Roe P. Orrell, William L. Rudd, R.H. "Ed" Pitts, George Durham, H.G. Rector, S.M. Nichols, Matt Fleming, Thomas J. McGovern, W.O. Reidel, George Boyd, Horace Mabin and James R. Wofford.

Characteristically, McNelly led his men into combat; he did not send them. He, interpreter Sullivan, and Sandoval were the first to cross the river in an old dugout. Five Rangers were to cross over on horseback, with the remainder following and then proceeding on foot. There would be twenty-six Rangers invading Mexico to recover stolen cattle, which would number fewer than one hundred head.

Because of the darkness or changes in the terrain due to the meanderings of the river, Sandoval led the invading force to the wrong ranch. Instead of Las Cuevas, the presumed headquarters of the cattle thieves, the invading group attacked another ranch. The error was discovered too late, as the Rangers' firing alerted the raiders at Las Cuevas less than a mile away, and McNelly's advantage of surprise was now gone. But McNelly pushed on.

Las Cuevas belonged to "General" Juan Flores Salinas, and he quickly gathered up a large force of raiders to resist the invaders. The only advantage McNelly now had was that General Salinas did not know the strength of the invading force. Because of this, McNelly and his men were able to safely retreat to the riverbanks which provided a degree of protection, while Salinas hesitatingly proceeded. If McNelly and his men tried to re-cross the river, that would be the opportunity for Salinas to attack since the Rangers would be in the water with no cover. But now McNelly implemented a ruse: instead of trying to cross the river, he had his men dig into the sand and make breastworks, which would provide excellent protection if Salinas attacked.

The ruse worked, and the attackers discovered they were facing an effective force. General Salinas was killed, as were numerous others, and McNelly and all his men emerged unscathed. During the course of the next day and the following, McNelly was able to meet with the *alcalde* of Las Cuevas and force terms: the stolen cattle had to be brought to the crossing on November 21 before he and his men would return to Texas. Callicott recalled that only seventy-five head were



finally brought. At first, the Mexican officials would not allow them to cross without being properly inspected, which of course would take a great deal of time. McNelly had an easy resolution to this problem: he ordered the cattle to be crossed immediately or else he would order his men to shoot the inspectors. They were crossed over.

Of the cattle recovered, thirty-five head belonged to Richard King, and four of the Rangers drove King's cattle back to his ranch. Because of the risks McNelly had taken to recover them, King ordered the right horn of each cow to be sawed off, and they were to be allowed to roam his range at will. It was an appropriate gesture on King's part, a special thank you, and at the same time a symbolic warning to potential thieves that cattle with the *Running W* brand were not to be molested.

Little documentation as to Sandoval's activities remains after the invasion of Mexico. The service record shows he was honorably discharged on January 20, 1877. By this time, McNelly had tuberculosis, and he died later that year. Did Sandoval retire from Ranger service because of the new commander, Lieutenant Jesse Lee Hall? We do not know, just as we do not know how Sandoval spent the remaining years of his adventurous life. Many of the Rangers felt that John B. Armstrong should have been named to replace McNelly, but he was not. Some did resign at that point.

What did become of Jesus "Old Casuse" Sandoval? Death records in Texas were not officially kept until 1903, so there is no official documentation. In his book published in 1899, Jennings indicated that Sandoval had died, but he provided no particulars. After leaving Texas, Jennings had returned east, and it is unknown how he knew this fact, if Sandoval's death was indeed prior to 1899. Jennings may have merely guessed that the old man had passed away.

The only official document from Sandoval himself which has survived is a long affidavit which was printed in the House of Representatives report, *Texas Frontier Troubles*. This was made in 1875 and described in some detail the difficulty of life on the Rio Grande frontier. Sandoval wrote of his own experience:

I have many enemies in Mexico. They say I am Americanized and consequently criminal—a traitor in Mexico. They have persecuted me, threatened my life, and attempted to assassinate me. For seven months I have not slept in my house. I have slept in the chaparral, and have been a solitary sentinel over my own person. On the 21st day of April of the present year, three armed Mexicans, from beyond the Rio Grande, went to my house and asked for me. They told my wife if she did not tell where I was they would kill her. I was luckily not at home. I am positive that General Juan N. Cortina is implicated in the robberies upon the people of Texas.¹⁶

Sandoval did not mention a private war against the raiders or a ravaged wife and daughter. Does that mean those Rangers who later recorded their memoirs were mistaken, or did they add incidents in their narrative to provide additional excitement? Not necessarily. Sandoval may have indeed lost a wife and daughter to the raiders and purposely did not mention this in his affidavit. No doubt Sandoval intentionally left a great deal unsaid. Possibly, his personal tragedy was not to be displayed to others. Unfortunately, we do not know when Jesus Sandoval did pass away. If there was a death notice in an area newspaper, it may have mentioned that he had served with McNelly at one time, but it is doubtful that his obituary would have stressed that he was McNelly's enforcer.

And what of Sandoval's friend, Lino Saldana? His name appears in the account of the two of them, along with William Burke, being arrested for the lynching of the raiders, but it does not appear on McNelly's muster rolls. Ranger Durham, who spent the balance of his life on the King Ranch after



Lino Saldana (left), friend of Jesus Sandoval. On the right is Saldana's wife Jesusa and an unidentified child. Photos courtesy of Yolanda Gonzales.



leaving McNelly, referred to Sandoval as a deputy sheriff, which may very well have been accurate.¹⁷ We do have some information about Saldona. In 1880, he was counted in the Cameron County census as a sixty-three-year-old farmer living with his wife Jesusa, age fifty-four, and their son Manuel, age fifteen and listed simply as a laborer.¹⁸ He has not been found on other census records or other documents. Fortunately, we do have his likeness, and one may suppose he did not differ that much in appearance from Jesus Sandoval the avenger. They both had lived exciting lives in dangerous times.

As for Juan Nepomuceno Cortina, freedom fighter/outlaw, he died in 1894 and was buried with full military honors in Mexico City.

Notes

1. Much information concerning Sandoval's life and his experiences under McNelly is from the affidavit prepared on May 3, 1875, and printed in *Texas Frontier Troubles*, House of Representatives Document Report No. 343, 44th Congress, 1st Session, 83.
2. *Ibid.*, 83-84.
3. Cameron County, Texas, 1850 census, household # 888.
4. *N.A. Jennings, A Texas Ranger*. First published in 1899 by Charles Scribner's Sons of New York; a facsimile reproduction by Ed Bartholomew in 1960. Page references are to the Bartholomew reprint. 148-49.
5. Walter Prescott Webb, *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965. Dr. Webb utilized portions of Callicott's memoirs, but the entire handwritten manuscripts are reprinted in the *Texas Ranger Dispatch*, issues 3-6, Spring 2001 through Spring 2002.



6. George Durham as told to Clyde Wantland, *Taming the Nueces Strip: The Story of McNelly's Rangers*, 43-44. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1962, 1975.
7. William Burke was a Pennsylvania native who, according to the 1870 census, worked as an iron welder, age forty. In the same household was a twenty-three-year-old seniorita named Louisa Torres, keeping house, and Inspector of Customs H.S. Rock, a native of New Mexico, 85A. He also rode with McNelly during this period, as did Sandoval. Cameron County census, enumerated September 21, 1870 by Henry Haupt.
8. *Austin Daily Democratic Statesman*, December 31, 1874.
9. In addition to Callicott's version of the Palo Alto Prairie fight, see this author's biography, *Captain L.H. McNelly Texas Ranger: The Life and Times of a Fighting Man*. Austin: State House Press, 2001, especially chapter 14, "A Challenge to Cortina."
10. *Texas Frontier Troubles*, see note 2 supra, 42.
11. The complete writings of T.C. Robinson, using the pseudonym of "Pidge" are found in "*Pidge*," *A Texas Ranger from Virginia*, by this author. Wolfe City, Texas: Henington Publishing Company, 1985. This particular quotation is from the "Pidge" letter of September 20 and printed in¹⁴ John Jay Smith affidavit sworn to June 17, 1875 at Brownsville and printed in *Texas Frontier Troubles*, see note 2 supra, 85-86.
12. William Callicott manuscript.
13. The names of the raiders appear in *Texas Frontier Troubles*, 85. The correct spelling of the names is problematic.
14. John Jay Smith affidavit sworn to June 17, 1875 at Brownsville and printed in *Texas Frontier Troubles*, see note 2 supra, 85-86.
15. Chuck Parsons, *Captain L.H. McNelly*, see note 9, supra, 201-02.
16. Affidavit of Jesus Sandoval in *Texas Frontier Troubles*, see note 2, supra, 83-84.
17. George Durham, *Taming the Nueces Strip*, see note 6, supra, 63.
18. Lino Saldana is enumerated as a farmer, living with his wife Jesusa, age 54, and son Manuel, age fifteen, working as a day laborer. This census shows them all natives of Mexico. Cameron County census, enumerated by Joseph P. O'Shaughnessy, 453.

For Further Reading

Durham, George. *Taming the Nueces Strip: The Story of McNelly's Rangers*.

Jennings, N.A. *A Texas Ranger*.

Parsons, Chuck. "*Pidge*" *A Texas Ranger from Virginia*.

Parsons, Chuck. *Captain L.H. McNelly Texas Ranger: The Life and Times of a Fighting Man*.

Thompson, Jerry. *Cortina: Defending the Mexican Name in Texas*.

Utley, Robert M. *Lone Star Justice: The First Century of the Texas Rangers*.

Webb, Walter Prescott. *The Texas Rangers: A Century of Frontier Defense*.

Wilkins, Frederick. *The Law Comes to Texas: The Texas Rangers 1870-1901*.