Emily West de Zavala and Emily D. West: Two Women or One?

BY JEFF DUNN

In an essay published in the Spring 2005 edition of The Compass Rose, I narrated the story of Emily D. West, a woman of mixed white and black ancestry who came to Texas from New York in 1835 and sought a passport to return in 1837. Her life in Texas would be little noticed today but for one diary reference suggesting she played a pivotal role in the battle of San Jacinto on April 21, 1836. Quoting directly from a letter attributed to Sam Houston, Englishman William Bollaert in 1842 wrote:

The battle of San Jacinto was probably lost to the Mexicans, owing to the influence of a Mulatta girl (Emily) belonging to Col. Morgan who was closeted in the tent with g’l Santana, at the time the cry was made “the Enemy! They come! They come! & detained Santana so long, that order could not be restored readily again.”

My article focused on the significance of the 1835 household employment contract between Emily D. West and James Morgan, acquired in 2004 by Special Collections at the University of Texas at Arlington, and briefly told the story of how Emily became popularly associated with the song “Yellow Rose of Texas” commencing in the 1960s.

In late 2005, Denise McVea introduced a provocative twist to the Emily D. West saga by publishing Making Myth of Emily: Emily West de Zavala and the Yellow Rose of Texas. McVea focuses on the life of Emily West de Zavala, who was married to Lorenzo de Zavala in 1831. Lorenzo was a Mexican liberal reformer, statesman, diplomat, and scholar who came to Texas in 1835, supported the Texas Revolution, signed the Texas Declaration of Independence in March 1836, and became the first vice president of the Republic of Texas. McVea’s thesis is that Mrs. Zavala and Emily D. West were one and the same and that Mrs. Zavala could have been the “Emily” in Santa Anna’s tent as mentioned by Bollaert. One consequence of this thesis, strongly advocated by McVea, is that Mrs. Zavala was of African ancestry and that “racial sensibilities” of historians “created a woman who did not exist and changed the race of one who did.”

There are several remarkable coincidences between Emily West de Zavala and Emily D. West, in addition to the similarity of their names, that justify an examination of the “one Emily” thesis. Both women left New York for Texas in late 1835 and arrived in December 1835 on James Morgan’s schooner, the Flash. Lorenzo de Zavala was an investor in the New Washington Association, while West’s employer, Morgan, was the Association’s Texas agent. Both women lived within ten miles of each other near what became the San Jacinto battleground, and both were in Santa Anna’s path in April 1836. The late historian Margaret Henson concluded that both possibly returned to New York together in 1837. Records on Mrs. Zavala exist before 1835 and after 1837, but the elusive “Emily D. West” is mentioned only in two documents (her 1835 employment contract with Morgan and her 1837 passport application seeking to leave Texas) and referenced as “Emily” in only one document (Bollaert’s 1842 diary).

Problems with the “One Emily” Thesis

McVea deserves credit for raising the issue of whether Mrs. Zavala might have been Emily D. West, but the “one Emily” thesis, though intriguing, ultimately breaks down when the evidence is examined closely. The 1835 employment contract between Emily D. West and Morgan shows that West, of New Haven, Connecticut, was hired in New York to work for Morgan over a one-year period in Texas for $100. In contrast, Mrs. Zavala, of New York, came to Texas with her three children to live with her husband, not to work for Morgan or anyone else. Morgan obligated himself in his contract with West to take her to Texas in his vessel free of expense. In contrast, Lorenzo de Zavala paid Morgan for Mrs. Zavala’s fare. Bollaert’s diary and the passport application place Emily D. West at the battle of San Jacinto, but several accounts, including the journal of Lewis Birdsall Harris, provide evidence that Mrs.
am delighted to say that after a nationwide search we hired a local expert to fill the vacancy left by Kit Goodwin’s retirement. Ben Huseman’s knowledge of maps of the region, his experience with the subject areas in our collections, and his local connections enabled him to begin to contribute immediately upon his arrival in late January. Many of you will know Ben from the Texas Map Society, to whose board he was recently elected. We are very pleased to welcome him to the Special Collections staff.

Preparations are underway for the October 6, 2005, Virginia Garrett Lectures in the History of Cartography. The theme is “Mapping the Sacred: Belief and Religion in the History of Cartography.” Ben is researching and planning the associated exhibit, and Carolyn Kadri has assumed responsibility for the conference logistics. The Lectures will be held in conjunction with the fall meeting of the Texas Map Society, which will take place on October 7. Conference information is forthcoming. For more information about the meetings contact Carolyn at 817-272-7153 or kadri@uta.edu.

Carolyn collaborated with Christian Clark, our Exhibits and Outreach Assistant, to arrange for the display of the facsimile of Martin Waldseemüller’s 1507 world map in the Virginia Garrett Cartographic History Library. Their article in this issue provides more information about the reproduction and how it came to us. It has made a striking addition to our public spaces. We invite you to come see it and also to view our spring/summer exhibit, “From Horseback to Horsepower: Arlington, Texas, 1880 to 1959.” The exhibit was curated by a consultant well known to us—Kit Goodwin. She has written about it in this issue.

A number of Special Collections staff members received awards from the UTA Library in December 2005. Brooke Silkey Kapur was named Outstanding Student Assistant for the Library. We were thrilled to have Brooke recognized in this way, having long known what an asset she is to our operations. Brenda McClurkin received an Applause Award for her superb work in creating and maintaining “Time Frames,” the weekly Arlington Star-Telegram feature highlighting Special Collections’ holdings. Blanca Smith and Cathy Spitzenberger received Hidden Heroes awards for the support they give “Time Frames” by assisting with research and scanning. Maritza Arrigunaga, Blanca Smith, and Cathy Spitzenberger received Applause Awards for their work in preparing a Library exhibit on Hispanic Heritage month.

Maritza Arrigunaga undertook a trip to Honduras in March, during which she delivered copies of the microfilm of Honduran records she filmed years ago on behalf of the UTA Library. Delivery of the microfilm fulfilled our obligation to the entities that allowed their records to be filmed. Maritza received an award from the Honduran government for her service.

Brenda McClurkin, Ben Huseman, and I attended the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association in Arlington Star-Telegram feature highlighting Special Collections’ holdings. Blanca Smith and Cathy Spitzenberger received Hidden Heroes awards for the support they give “Time Frames” by assisting with research and scanning. Maritza Arrigunaga, Blanca Smith, and Cathy Spitzenberger received Applause Awards for their work in preparing a Library exhibit on Hispanic Heritage month.

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Brenda McClurkin, Ben Huseman, and I attended the annual meeting of the Texas State Historical Association in March and went shopping while there. We acquired a group of five Civil War era letters written by Edmund Underhill, a Quaker from Clinton Corners, New York, who settled in Helena, Texas (Karnes County) to raise sheep. His letters, written to his family in New York, discuss the political conditions in the county leading up to and during the Civil War and his attempts to remain neutral during the conflict. We also purchased W. and D. Richardson’s Galveston Directory for 1859-60: with a Brief History of the Island, Prior to the Foundation of the City, and Richardson’s Map of the City of Galveston in 1859. As usual, we garnered a few interesting items in the silent auction. We also received a gift from Michael Heaston of Map of Mexico, Texas, Old and New California, and Yucatan: Showing the Principal Cities and Towns, Traveling Routes, &c., published in Hartford in 1847 by House & Brown.

If you are thinking of visiting us, please take note that we will be closed to the public from May 11 through May 21 while asbestos abatement is performed in the Central Library sixth floor atrium. We will open again after the abatement but before the renovation work is finished. We have the good fortune to be getting new furniture for the staff in Special Collections, so things will be in rather an uproar during most of May. We’ll do our best to maintain our standards of service but expect it to be challenging at times, so we’ll appreciate your patience!
Arlington Independent School District offers a unique learning opportunity to over fifty junior and senior marketing education students through its Class in the Parks. The program takes its name from its host, The Parks at Arlington, a shopping mall located at Interstate 20 and Cooper Street. Students, drawn from six district high schools, choose from course offerings in general marketing, retailing and fashion merchandising, entertainment and sports event marketing, entrepreneurship, and technology in marketing. Their classroom is adjacent to the student-run school spirit shop, Spirit Threads, where students have an opportunity to put their newly acquired skills into practice. A Distributive Education Clubs of America (DECA) chapter is affiliated with the Class in the Parks. Each year the DECA chapter undertakes a Learn and Earn project to give students experience in product development and outside sales, while turning a profit for their organization. A recent Learn and Earn project, Arlingtonopoly, demonstrated the success of a locally focused product.

For the 2005-2006 school year, chapter members decided to produce Arlington Past and Present Double Deck Playing Cards for release in time for the 2005 holiday season. The product was to consist of two decks of playing cards: a Past Deck featuring different facets of Arlington’s history and a Present Deck featuring present-day Arlington businesses. The project began with students touring local Arlington historical sites. Class advisors then worked closely with UTA Library Special Collections staff to identify historic photographs from the J. W. Dunlop Photograph Collection, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram Collection, the Fielder Museum Photograph Collection, and various Arlington historical manuscript collections that would be suitable for inclusion. A photograph of Arlington’s first

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Arlington high school marketing students have featured local history in their popular new product, Arlington Past and Present Double Deck Playing Cards.
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Zavala found refuge on Galveston Island prior to and during the battle. An exhaustive review of McVea's book is beyond the scope of this article, but McVea approaches her thesis by challenging the validity of the evidence that contradicts her conclusion (e.g., the West employment contract and accounts placing Mrs. Zavala at Galveston during the battle) while suggesting that evidence corroborating her conclusion may have been "altered, destroyed or falsified" by Mrs. Zavala's granddaughter, Adina De Zavala, possibly to hide Mrs. Zavala's African ancestry. My own independent research on this subject reveals that a debate over an interpretation of existing documents and speculation over missing documents is moot because new evidence reveals that the "one Emily" thesis is a physical impossibility. The new evidence shows that Mrs. Zavala and Emily D. West did not return to New York together in 1837 as Henson asserted.

Rather, Mrs. Zavala left Texas before Emily D. West submitted her passport application to leave Texas.

The Emily D. West Passport Application

The decisive document that is alleged to link Mrs. Zavala with Emily D. West, according to McVea, is the Emily D. West passport application. This application was written by Isaac N. Moreland in the form of a letter:

Capitol, Thursday Morning
To the Hon. Dr. Irion

The bearer of this - Emily D. West has been since my first acquaintance with her, in April of -36 a free woman – she Emigrated to this Country with Col. Jas Morgan from the state of N. Y ork in September of 35 and is now anxious to return and wishes a passport – I believe myself, that she is entitled to one and has requested me to give her this note to you.

Your Obd’t Serv’t
I.N. Moreland

Her free papers were Lost at San Jacinto as I am Informed and believe in April of -36

Moreland

McVea argues that the bearer of this application was Mrs. Zavala. She claims that, after Lorenzo’s death in November 1836, Mrs. Zavala decided to apply for a passport to return to New York "in her maiden name." McVea gives us no independent evidence to support this conclusion but supplies a motive that is dependent on Mrs. Zavala being a noticeably black woman. She states that Mrs. Zavala needed to pass through New Orleans on her return to New York and that this presented a problem because racially mixed marriages in Louisiana were illegal in the 1830s. McVea contends that Mrs. Zavala wanted to avoid advertising that she had broken Louisiana law by having been married to a white man. Consequently, McVea argues that Mrs. Zavala applied for the passport in her maiden name to avoid calling attention to herself as the widow of Lorenzo de Zavala, as he was no longer around to protect her. In McVea’s words: "the passport application does not show that a servant named Emily West coexisted with Emily West de Zavala. Instead, it shows that Emily West de Zavala, who had reason to revert to her maiden name, did so." To determine the validity of this argument, we must first examine when the application was submitted to the Department of State, the government office responsible for issuing Republic of Texas passports. Emily D. West’s application is undated, but the reverse side indicates it was recorded in "July 1837." A separate Department of State letter book corroborates the July 1837 filing.

Another clue from the document gives us evidence of the earliest possible submission date. This clue is the name of the addressee: "the Hon. Dr. Irion," whose full name was Robert Anderson Irion. Irion practiced medicine and was a senator in the First Congress representing Nacogdoches. After the First Session of Congress adjourned at Columbia in December 1836, Irion returned to Nacogdoches. He came back to south Texas in April, arriving in the new town of Houston after April 28, but in time for the opening of the Second Session of Congress on May 1, 1837. This session convened in an unfinished building called the "Capitol," which is referenced in West’s passport application as the place where the document was written. Irion served as a senator until June 13 when Congress adjourned. Later the same day, President Houston appointed Irion acting Secretary of State, the duties of which included the approval of passports as the presiding officer of the Department of State. Irion did not have the authority to receive, approve, or reject passport applications prior to his appointment. Thus, the combination of Irion as the addressee and the recording date on the reverse side establishes a precise range of possible submission dates: June 13 through July 31, 1837.

Isaac Moreland, who wrote the passport application from the Capitol, was a private attorney living in Houston between June 13 and July 31, 1837. Moreland was an officer in the Texas Army during the battle of San Jacinto and continued to serve in the army on Galveston Island after the battle, but he did not sign the passport application in his military capacity. He left the army on April 27, 1837, and opened a private law office in Houston on May 29 with former president David G. Burnet as his partner.

Mrs. Zavala’s Departure from Texas

McVea does not tell us precisely when Mrs. Zavala left Texas in 1837, but New Orleans passenger arrival records maintained by the United States government show that “Madam L De Zavalla [sic], Servt & three children” left Galveston Bay on the schooner Flash in early March 1837 and arrived in New Orleans on March 20.

The next day, March 21, the New Orleans correspondent for the Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer, one of the leading papers in the United States, wrote of the arrival of the Flash. His letter, published in the April 1st edition of this New York paper, states that among the passengers “is the unfortunate widow of the late Senor Zavala, with her three children.” The same correspondent, writing from New Orleans on April 10, gave readers details of her departure from New Orleans to New York: “The schooner el Dorado arrived this morning from Velasco bringing various passengers, among them Mr. Zavala, the

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Special Collections Receives Reproduction of Waldseemüller’s 1507 World Map

In late November, 2005, the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division and the Bob Bullock Texas State History Museum donated to Special Collections a reproduction of Martin Waldseemüller’s 1507 world map, *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptolomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes*.

The spectacular original map was purchased in 2003 for $10,000,000 by the Library of Congress from the Prince Waldburg-Wolfgang library in Württemberg, Germany. The reproduction was displayed at the Bullock Museum in 2005 as part of the exhibit, “Drawn from Experience: Landmark Maps of Texas.” Like the original, it was produced in 12 segments to form a large wall map.

The cartography of Waldseemüller’s 1507 world map was based on information compiled from Amerigo Vespucci’s voyage of 1501-1502 to the New World. It was the first map to show the New World as a separate land mass and to show a new ocean that was to become known as the Pacific Ocean. This map is also the first map of the Western Hemisphere on which the name “America” appears. A more detailed description of the map’s history and significance has been written by John R. Hébert, Chief of LC’s Map and Geography Division, and can be found online at: [http://www.sunysb.edu/libmap/coordinates/seriesb/no4/b4.htm](http://www.sunysb.edu/libmap/coordinates/seriesb/no4/b4.htm)

The twelve panels of the map are mounted for permanent display on the south wall of the Cartographic History Library in Special Collections. Through the efforts of Special Collections Exhibits and Outreach Assistant Christian Clark and the UTA Library’s Digital Library Services program area, a digital composite map has been produced to accompany this important historical document and is available for research purposes. Special Collections is proud to have these two fine documents and encourages students, faculty, and the public to view and study them.

It’s in the Cards continued from page 3

The automobile license plate was selected for use on the backs of the historical playing cards. Images to be used on the face of the cards were arranged chronologically by suit, beginning with spades and ending with hearts. Photographs from Special Collections were scanned by staff and provided to the project at no charge.

The City of Arlington’s “Fun Central” logo was picked for use on the backs of the Present Deck. Students offered Arlington businesses and clubs a chance to become part of the city’s history by advertising on the face of a card. Each class participated by introducing the project and making a sales presentation about the “present day” cards to area businesspeople. DECA members also designed and assembled sales manuals filled with sales tips, product information, sales agreements, and graphic layout requirements in order to maximize sales. Once students completed a sale, they worked with the business owners to finalize the details of the graphic layout of the card, negotiated payment options, and collected advertising fees. The Entrepreneurship class faxed more than 50 packets of information to businesses that had participated in previous Learn and Earn projects. The Technology in Marketing class designed most of the cards using Adobe Photoshop, although a few clients opted to submit their own designs.

The Arlington Past and Present playing cards were manufactured by an Arlington vendor. Once the cards were produced, the cards were distributed to retail sales outlets throughout the city. Of 2,500 decks produced, over half were sold by the end of December, 2005. Advertising covered the cost of the playing card production. At the end of 2005, the Learn and Earn project had already yielded a profit of over $6,500.

The Class in the Parks has succeeded in creating and marketing a unique product with wide consumer appeal. Experiences garnered by the students from this challenging project have yielded new skills in time management, teamwork, computer graphics, sales, and organization. Special Collections is pleased to have had a role in creating this collector’s item that will long be cherished as a part of Arlington’s history.

Limited quantities of *Arlington Past and Present Double Deck Playing Cards* are still available for purchase. Contact Spirit Threads at 817-375-0738 for further information.

Facsimile of Martin Waldseemüller’s 1507 world map, *Universalis cosmographia secundum Ptolomaei traditionem et Americi Vespucii aliorumque lustrationes*.
The University of Texas at Arlington Special Collections is fortunate to have been selected as the repository for the administrative, historical, and visual records of the League of Women Voters of Arlington. Acquired in October 2005, this collection contains scrapbooks, Board of Director’s work papers and meeting minutes, financial records, newsletters, videos, and reference materials documenting the many issues identified by the League as important to the growth and development of the city of Arlington. These materials date from the early 1970s through 2001, though the bulk of the collection dates from the 1981 charter of the Arlington League. They tell a detailed story of civic involvement and dedication to the public good.

The League of Women Voters of Arlington boasts a long history of non-partisan civic involvement, voter education, and advocacy. The Arlington League officially separated from its parent, the League of Women Voters of Tarrant County, in May 1981. Beginning with 35 charter members, the Arlington League has grown steadily and now numbers more than 100 members. In keeping with the mission of the League of Women Voters organization, this group of like-minded citizens (the membership is not restricted to women) seeks to focus on the betterment of the city government, public schools, and public parks located in one of the fastest growing urban areas in Texas.

The Arlington League continually sponsors voter registration initiatives, candidate forums, and debates. Through its voter’s guide, the League also provides to the public timely and thoroughly researched profiles on both candidates and legislative initiatives during each major election season. The League’s mission, to promote a commitment to political education and public advocacy, leads to an informed citizenry that always makes a difference. In 2004-2005 alone, the League conducted ten voter registration initiatives, candidate forums, and debates.
voter registration drives. Public education meetings were held on issues as varied as the impact of the U.S. Patriot Act on civil liberties, regional public transportation, City of Arlington tree ordinance studies, and the locally controversial Dallas Cowboys stadium proposal. Through the airing of these programs on local access cable television, coverage by the news media, and the monthly VOTER newsletter, the voters of Arlington continually receive timely and accurate information about issues that impact their community. Members routinely observe city government and other public meetings and then report their observations to the general membership. The League thoroughly studies individual issues before arriving through consensus at their local positions.

An examination of the League of Women Voters of Arlington records will be especially meaningful to individuals interested in the social history and political development of the city of Arlington, as well as the evolution of those issues and projects that proved important to local community activists during the last three decades of the 20th century. This collection, though unprocessed, is open to researchers. A box inventory is available. For assistance with the League of Women Voters of Arlington records, contact Brenda McClurkin at mcclurkin@uta.edu or call 817-272-3393.

Mary Hayes was a graduate research assistant in Special Collections during the Fall 2005 semester. In December 2005, she graduated with a Master of Arts in history. Mary is now the Processing Archivist at The Pearce Collections at Navarro College in Corsicana, Texas.
By Kit Goodwin

By 1895, when Arlington College was established on the present site of The University of Texas at Arlington, the incorporated township of Arlington boasted a population of about 1000 citizens in a community of wide streets and alleys and large lots. The town had a public water well that provided 175,000 gallons of water a day and a railroad and electric trolley service and was famed as a cotton growing and ginning center that was described in an earlier Arlington Journal newspaper article as a “would be metropolis.”

The spring exhibition at Special Collections, “From Horseback to Horsepower,” examines the town of Arlington in the formative years of the late nineteenth century through the first half of the twentieth century. This is the period that fostered the phenomenal growth of the town that is now touted as the “Heart of the Metroplex.” It was a time when Arlington developed a school system for its children and moved from a cotton growing and ginning center to a thriving business community with strong leadership and a community identity.

The exhibition focuses on the town in the early years as it struggled to provide good schools for its children, on the businesses that were attracted to the area, and on the leadership that formed the goals and expectations of the city. This was a period that set Arlington apart from other suburban areas in the region and provided the foundation for Arlington to become one of the fastest growing cities in the United States during the boom years.

“From Horseback to Horsepower” draws on materials housed in Special Collections — including extensive family papers, photograph collections, and university archives — to portray the
people and events that made Arlington unique in the North Central Texas region. More than sixty-five collections were reviewed with materials selected from twenty-one separate collections. The exhibition showcases over 150 items, including a large number of photographs. A free gallery guide is available.

This exhibition opens in April and continues through the summer. It may be viewed in Special Collections on the sixth floor of the Central Library on the UT Arlington campus. Special Collections is open Monday from through Saturday.

For further information, contact Special Collections at 817-272-3393 or spcoref@uta.edu.
son of the late Don Lorenzo Zavala, whose widow embarked the day before [April 9], with her three children, in the Nashville, for New York.25

This evidence not only shows precisely when Mrs. Zavala left Texas for New Orleans and the timing of her departure from New Orleans to New York but also refutes the notion that she was traveling clandestinely in her maiden name. Judging from the number of days separating the correspondent’s letters from the respective dates of their publication in the Courier (eleven days), it can be deduced that Mrs. Zavala and her children arrived in New York City toward the latter part of April 1837. Mrs. Zavala’s stepson, Lorenzo de Zavala, Jr., followed her to New York and verifies her presence in the city in a letter he wrote to Mirabeau Lamar on July 3, 1837.26

The significance of this evidence is that it shows Mrs. Zavala leaving Texas three months prior to Irion’s appointment on June 13, 1837, and arriving in New York nearly two months prior to that date. In other words, it is a physical impossibility for Mrs. Zavala to have been the same woman as Emily D. West because this evidence indicates Mrs. Zavala was already in New York when Emily D. West submitted her passport application to Dr. Irion. Mrs. Zavala could not have been in New York and Texas at the same time.

Further evidence for this conclusion comes from a passport issued to Mrs. Zavala by the Republic of Texas in her married name before she departed Texas. A reference to this document, which is not mentioned in McVea’s book, can be found in the same archival box in the Texas State Library where the Emily D. West passport application is preserved. In that box is a folder containing a multi-page document listing the names of 289 people who received passports from the Department of State in November and December of 1836, when the seat of government was still in Columbia. According to this list, “Mrs. Emily Zavala” was issued passport number 136 on December 10, 1836.27

There was no reason for Mrs. Zavala to seek a passport from Dr. Irion because one had already been issued to her over six months before his appointment. Moreover, there is no evidence that Mrs. Zavala ever visited the town of Houston before leaving Texas in early March. Indeed, construction of the Capitol, where Emily D. West’s passport application was drafted, did not commence until April 16, 1837, over a month after Mrs. Zavala left Texas.28

Mrs. Zavala’s Race

Is it possible that Mrs. Zavala was of African descent? McVea asserts that “[n]o surviving documents specifically refer to the racial identity of Emily West de Zavala,” and “there is no irrefutable documented evidence that Emily West de Zavala was white.”29 McVea states, as “pure conjecture,” that Mrs. Zavala may have come from a New Orleans “quadroon background.”30 While a person’s race is not always easily ascertained, McVea neglects to cite or discuss one of the most reliable sources for determining a person’s race: the decennial United States Census.

To follow Mrs. Zavala in the census records, it is important to understand her changing marital status after Lorenzo’s death in 1836. Upon reaching New York in 1837, Mrs. Zavala married Henry Folk (also called Fock) later that year. Both came to Texas in 1839 to the old Zavala home-stead. Henry Folk died in September 1849. Emily Zavala Folk remarried in 1851 to a man named E. D. Hand, who passed away by 1860.31 She then remained a widow until her death in Houston in 1882 at age 70.32 Therefore, she appears in the 1850 census under the surname “Folk” and in the 1860, 1870, and 1880 census under the surname “Hand.” Each of these returns describes her as a “white” female whose birth state was New York.33 In addition, a photo of “Mrs. Lorenzo de Zavala,” published in 1898 in an authoritative history of Texas, when her surviving children and friends were still alive, clearly depicts her as a woman with Anglo-American features.34 Certainly, this evidence should be given some consideration in ascertaining Mrs. Zavala’s racial identity.

The only credible conclusion that can be drawn, based on this evidence, is that Emily D. West and Emily West de Zavala were not one and the same. Nonetheless, we cannot read too much into this analytical exercise. Although the “one Emily” thesis can be discarded, we still do not have answers to several perplexing questions: Who was Emily D. West? Was she really in Santa Anna’s tent at the battle of San Jacinto? What happened to her after she filed her passport application? As of today, the historical record of the woman we now call the “Yellow Rose of Texas” remains mysteriously silent.

Footnotes

1 Jeff Dunn is Chairman of the San Jacinto Historical Advisory Board and an attorney with Munsch Hardt Kopf & Harr, PC in Dallas.
4 Denise McVea, Making Myth of Emily: Emily West de Zavala and the Yellow Rose of Texas (Author’s Special Limited Edition, 2005). Background information on McVea can be found at www.aursiproject.org/pages/aboutauthor.htm
5 Making Myth of Emily, pp. 1-10. Mrs. Zavala was not born with the first name “Emily.” According to Lorenzo’s journal, he changed her name from Miranda to Emily at the time of their marriage. See Margaret Swett Henson, Lorenzo de Zavala: The Pragmatic Idealist (1996), p. 53. Lorenzo and Emily’s marriage certificate, dated June 27, 1832, spells her name “Emilia.” Lorenzo de Zavala Papers, CAH, UT-Austin. Henson states that before their marriage, Emily was a widow previously married to a man named Cresswell. A local Albany, New York, historian stated in 1856 that her maiden name was “Miss Amanda West.” J. Munsell, “Crosby’s Hotel,” The Annals of Albany, Vol. VII (1856). No evidence can be found to indicate that Mrs. Zavala used the middle initial “D” in her name.
6 Making Myth of Emily, pp. 9-10.
7 “ZAVALA, LORENZO DE,” Handbook of Texas Online; “ZAVALA, EMILY WEST DE,” Handbook of Texas Online; and “WEST, EMILY D,” Handbook of Texas Online.
West-Morgan Contract, October 28, 1835, William A. Philpott, Jr. Collection, UT Arlington Special Collections: James Morgan Papers, Rosenberg Library, Galveston (#31-0134); and note 33, infra.

Lewis Birdsall Harris, “Journal of Lewis Birdsall Harris, 1836-1842,” The Southwestern Historical Quarterly (October 1921), p. 136. Other sources placing her on Galveston Island include notes taken by Mirabeau Lamar during an interview with Mrs. Zavala and an article by Ben C. Stuart in the Galveston Daily News, October 8, 1899 (quoting from Captain Falve of the Flash).

Mrs. Zavala’s obituary also mentions her presence on Galveston Island at the time of the battle. See “Death of an Old Texas Lady: The Death of the Widow of Lorenzo de Zavala, One of the Pioneers of Texas – An Interesting Sketch of Her Life,” Houston Post, June 16, 1882.

Making Myth of Emily, p. 128. Among other things, McVea questions the validity of the Emily D. West employment contract with Morgan, claiming that “oddities” remain unanswered about its provenance. Her concerns about the collection in which the contract was found are addressed in a provenance available from UT Arlington’s Special Collections. See Jeffrey D. Dunn, “Known Provenance and Description of the William A. Philpott, Jr. Collection of Texana Documents” (June 30, 2003). Evidence from this collection suggests that the West contract and other Morgan business records found in this collection were once held by the executor of Morgan’s estate, Henry Gillette.

Id., p. 87, and pp. 101-103.

Irving to Dr. R. A. Irion, Papers of the Secretary of State, RG 307, Passports issued by the Department of State, Republic of Texas, 1836-1845 (West, Emily D.), Texas State Library, Archives Division, Austin. The passport application mistakenly states that her emigration occurred in September rather than December 1835. There is no record indicating whether a passport was actually issued to Emily D. West.


Making Myth of Emily, pp. 102-104.

Id., p. 104.

See West passport application, supra note 12 (reverse).

Department of State Letter Book: Letters Received, Nov. 28, 1836 - Mar. 24, 1841, pp. 47-48 (microfilm reel #23, Secretary of State, Executive Record Books, Texas State Library, Archives Division, Austin).

Making Myth of Emily, pp. 102-104.

Id., p. 104.

Id., p. 87, and pp. 101-103.

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Making Myth of Emily, pp. 102-104.

Id., p. 104.

Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer, April 1, 1837, p. 2, c. 2 (emphasis added).

Id., April 20, 1837, p. 2, c. 3 (emphasis added).

Lorenzo de Zavala, Jr. to M.B. Lamar, July 3, 1837, in Charles Adams Gulick, Jr., ed., The Papers of Mirabeau Buonaparte Lamar, Vol. 1, p. 358. Lorenzo, Jr., wrote in part: “I duly received your esteemed favor of 15 ulto. and delivered to Madam Zavala the one you directed to her forthwith…. " Id.

Papers of the Secretary of State, RG 307, Passports issued by the Department of State, Republic of Texas, 1836-1845 (Passports issued to “John D. Sutherland & others”), Texas State Library, Archives Division, Austin. Coincidentally, Lorenzo de Zavala, Jr., received passport number 335 the same day. Id.

Francis R. Lubbock, Six Decades in Texas (1900), p. 49.


Id., p. 48.

“ZAVALA, EMILY WEST DE,” Handbook of Texas Online.

Houston Post, June 16, 1882.

1850 US Census, Texas, Harris County, Series M432, Roll 911, Page 27 (“Emily Folk”); 1860 US Census, Texas, Harris County, Town of San Jacinto, Series M653, Roll 1296, Page 358 (“E. Hand”); 1870 US Census, Texas, Galveston County, 3rd Ward, City of Galveston, Series M593, Roll 1586, Page 262 (“Emily Hand”); 1880 US Census, Texas, Harris County, 5th Ward, City of Houston, National Archives Film No. T-9-1308, Page 43D (“Emily Hand”). According to Munsell, Mrs. Zavala was born in Westerlo, near Albany, New York, and she met Lorenzo on his visit to Albany while she was working at Crosby’s Hotel. He also states that before they met, Miss West’s mother “married a second husband, a German named Laupauge, in Westerlo.” See Munsell, supra note 5. See also Wallace Woolsey (tr.), Journey to the United States of North America by Lorenzo de Zavala (1980), p. 171. Recalling his visit to Albany in 1830, Lorenzo writes: “My wife’s birthplace is in the vicinity of this town.” Id.

Mapping the Sacred
Belief and Religion in the History of Cartography

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