

Chapter 7

The Year of the Cholera Epidemic

The year 1833 got off to a bad start and then deteriorated rapidly. I suppose there must have been some good things to have occurred during that year, but none that immediately comes to mind. A rainy, dreary day in January found me attending the funeral of Rafael Manchola, brother-in-law to Agustina, the husband of her sister María de Jesús. Rafael had not been a close friend of mine, but the grief that afflicted this family that treated me as one of their own was as oppressive to me as if a close relative of mine had died. The price you pay for loving with your whole heart is to suffer all the more bitterly, and yet, no one could argue sensibly that the rewards of loving are not worth the pain.

Until five or six years earlier, Rafael had been the commandant of the Presidio Nuestra Señora de Loreto de la Bahía at Goliad, usually just called *Presidio la Bahía*. He had not trusted the Texians and had warned the government in Ciudad México with these words:

No faith can be placed in the Anglo-American colonists, because they are continually demonstrating that they absolutely refuse to be subordinate, unless they find it convenient to what they want anyway, all of which I believe will be very detrimental to us for them to be our neighbors if we do not in time, clip the wings of their audacity by stationing a strong detachment in each new settlement which will enforce the laws and jurisdiction of a Mexican magistrate which should be placed in each of them, since under their own colonists as judges, they do nothing more than practice their own laws which they have practiced since they were born,

forgetting the ones they have sworn to obey, these being the laws of our Supreme Government.

Upon his retirement from the Mexican army, however, Rafael had found common cause with the **T**exians in opposing the *centralistas*. He had, at the time of his passing, been the *alcalde* of Goliad, which town he himself, had been responsible for naming in honor of Father Hidalgo, the great hero of the Mexican War for Independence, *Goliad* being an anagram of *Hidalgo* (leaving out the *H*, of course, which is completely silent anyway).

Like the Seguíns and the De Leóns, Rafael had ranched on a large scale. He had been one of only a few **T**ejanos to have participated in the **T**exians' Convention of 1832 and was to have shared in the presentation of that Convention's petition to the Mexican government that **T**exas be separated from Coahuila in order to have its own state government within the Mexican confederation.

In December of 1832, just two months after the close of the Convention, Rafael had come down with cholera and had succumbed shortly after the first of the year. His loss would be felt acutely by all those whose cause was the Constitution of 1824.