

BALLÍ FAMILY ORGANIZATION

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June 20, 2015

NOTICE: To the Heirs of Spanish & Mexican Land Grants
RE: Texas Rising (The Mexican-American Response)

On Saturday June 13, 2015 at the Mexican-American Cultural Center in Austin the following scholars met to discuss the mini-series “Texas Rising,” It is my own opinion that the series reeked of Anglo Superiority, and American exceptionalism and that’s after forcing myself to view the episodes, but truthfully I refuse to see the remainder, I have had enough. When you have people like Ann Coulter demonizing an entire nation you have to wonder what she and the History Channels motives are or is all this nothing but Tea Party politics; didn’t our governor just allocate 800 million for border security? Also the History Channel is no more about history than Fox News is about the news.

Dr. Maggie Rivas Rodriguez Journalist Professor from UT brought up the issue we had with Ken Burns Documentary on WW II and his refusal to admit that he had purposely left out Mexican-Americans because he failed to locate any. How could that be when we were the most decorated minority? We were able to make a difference because Ken Burns was using public funds for the documentary so Maggie created Defend the Honor and raised hell over the exclusion and Burns relented and added two Mexican Americans in his 14 hour long series. Unfortunately since Texas Rising was funded by private donors there is almost nothing we can do, except have further panel discussions and using our ever growing financial clout and refuse to purchase from corporations that contribute to the History Channel. You can go to their website to see who they are.

Dr. Carolina Castillo Crimm History Professor from the University of Houston shared with us wonderful history lessons of our Tejano ancestors and encouraged us to continue to fight the good fight. She shared with us the story of Patricia De Leon and her struggle to regain what had been stolen by the ever increasing encroachment of Anglos on their land which were grants issued by Spanish authorities.

Chief Rufus Davis discussed the recent walk out from the set of the Adam Sandler movie by Native American actors. The actors refused to participate realizing their ancestors were being portrayed as ignorant savages. We discussed how proud we all were at the heroic gesture from these actors. He also reminded us that Mexicans are also indigenous and he encouraged us to be proud of our roots. We also discussed our own Tejano re-enactors and how they continue to participate not realizing they are helping to perpetuate a myth, especially the myth of the Alamo.

Alicia Perez from LULAC brought up the issue of how the Texas Rangers were being portrayed as super heroes that could do no wrong when in fact they were Bandits with Badges and ruthlessly murdered 8 to 10 thousand Mexicano -Tejanos between 1836 and 1920. This of course was a painful issue but it is one that needs to be discussed and admitted to.

Jim Estrada, Author and Historian talked about the ever growing economic and political power of our Latino community and the changes that need to be made from within the system. If any changes are to be made we must use the power of the vote and encouraged us all to exercise that right. He reminded us how our ancestors had to fight for their constitutional right to participate in the Democratic process. He also volunteered to create a group that will coordinate our efforts by joining existing civil right organizations and see what we can do in preserving our Tejano history.

Lance Aaron from San Antonio did an excellent job of discussing the events around the Alamo and the preservation efforts being presented in order to preserve historical sights to be recognized by World Heritage. He discussed efforts to save sites that are known to have the remains of the local indigenous and how politicians have shown an attitude of indifference when it comes to the preservation of such sites.

Frank Ortega representing LULAC discussed the effect the John Wayne movie had on his life when he was growing up. I also mentioned the fact that as a 13 year old kid I new absolutely nothing about Davy Crockett. So I was horrified when we learned that our ancestors had killed Davy Crockett. But how could that be, was he not a hero bigger than life? When we saw it here at the local theater, us Mexicans crouched down in our seats after the movie not daring to leave until all the Anglos left for fear of retaliation from the Anglo kids.

On the positive side we discussed having more panel talks and in fact I have been invited to Corpus in September. Another positive is that it brought a large group together with a desire to protect, preserve and promote Tejano History and as I often say, if we don't do it, no one else will do it for us.

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