

BALLÍ FAMILY ORGANIZATION

*"We lead the family worldwide to information vital to our heritage.
Fact finding is our mission and
Unity is our bond."
www.balli.org*

May 7, 2023

NOTICE: To the Heirs of Spanish & Mexican Land Grants

RE: Article from El Manana Newspaper Reynosa, Tamaulipas
The Lands of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí (Late 18th century)

The article below is the English translation.

EL MANANA

Reynosa, Tamaulipas
February 26, 2023

Re: The Lands of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí (Late 18th century)

By: Anthropologist Martín Salinas Rivera / Municipal Chronicler of Reynosa

Don Juan Antonio was the only one who remained in town in the years following the foundation, acquiring him and his descendants an important political, economic and social position during development of the town of Reynosa.

A year and more than two months had passed in 1750, when inhabitants of the town of Camargo were first registered by Joseph Ladrón de Guevara. In May of that same year, under the orders of Colonel Don José de Escandón; it was the first settlement established in the vicinity of the Río Bravo on the bank of the San Juan River, in what was known as the Llano de las Flores.

This town was founded during the colonization of the Province of Nuevo Santander on March 5, 1749, while the town of Reynosa would be established downstream a few days later, on March 14, 1749. Reynosa was founded in one of the *meanders* or curves of the Rio Grande, about 22 km upstream of the modern city.



Although the Cerro del Fraile was already there, the San Juan Bautista temple did not exist in Pesquería Grande (García, Nuevo León), when the Balli brothers moved from there to found the old town of Reynosa in the mid-eighteenth century.

The town of Camargo was populated with 456 New Spanish people who made up a total of 78 families while Reynosa was established with 223 individuals who made up 54 families. The cattle herds of the inhabitants in Camargo were higher in number. The goats and sheep in Reynosa did not reach 4,000 heads while in Camargo they had more than 26,000 animals. The territory of the jurisdiction of Reynosa was much more extensive, so some inhabitants of Camargo preferred to move downstream years later.

The Hinojosa

One of the founding families of Camargo was that of Juan José Hinojosa (de la Garza) and his wife Antonia (Báez de) Benavides who came from Cerralvo and were registered as Spaniards [sic, por criollos]. In that year of 1750 they had two girls: 5-year-old Hermenegilda born in Nuevo León and María Ignacia newborn in Camargo. The marriage would have six other children (Rosa María, Juana, María Ignacia, Vicente, Cipriano and Manuel), who would be born in Camargo and Reynosa. In the latter place Juan José achieved the position of Captain and Chief Justice.

Juan José was amid the wealthy group of Camargo. Among his assets were registered a thousand heads of cattle, goats, sheep and more than 100 mares that were grouped in three herds with 15 horses and in addition 39 heads of cattle.



Old towers of the 17th century building which served as a prison, convent and for melting metals in Cerralvo.

The Ballí

In the Reynosa census of June 1750, Joseph Ladrón de Guevara noted five brothers with the surname Ballí (written as Vallín), who had participated in the foundation of the town of Reynosa during the previous year: Nicolás, Juan Antonio, Bartolomé, Nicolás José and José Manuel. These were natives of Salinas Victoria and Pesquería Grande (García, NL). Only the first two arrived married and with a family to this village. Juan Antonio Ballí (Guerra) had 17 mares and a horse as goods while the others had only one or two horses or mares.

Don Juan Antonio was the only one who remained in the town in the years following the foundation, acquiring him and his descendants an important political, economic and social position during the development of the town of Reynosa. During the 1753 census, the other Ballí are no longer present in Reynosa, they were registered as absent settlers in the town of Burgos during the Inspection carried out by the Captain of Dragons Don José Tienda de Cuervo in the Colonia del Nuevo Santander (today Tamaulipas) in 1757. **José Manuel Ballí was a priest in Sabinas Hidalgo, Nuevo León.**

First distribution

Since the beginning of the colonization, Don José de Escandón had promised to distribute land to the settlers of Nuevo Santander. But, this happened until Governor Juan Fernando Palacio, accompanied by the lawyer José Osorio y Llamas, went on to protocol, attest and legality to the first distribution of land.

The protocol of this action, which began in the summer of 1767 and ended in March 1768 in the old town of Reynosa (present-day Reynosa Díaz), is historically known as the "Autos de la General Visita."

By 1765, Captain Juan José Hinojosa had transferred his family to the old town of Reynosa, where he would repeatedly occupy the position of Justice Major, the highest authority in the town before the Spanish Crown. His daughter Rosa María would be about 15 years old when the first portions of land were distributed; she would become the most prominent owner of the lands north of the Rio Grande, in what was the jurisdiction of Reynosa at the end of the 18th century.

By 1767, 80 portions of land were distributed in Reynosa according to different criteria related to the age of each inn. These were rectangles of different sizes that started from the bank of the river extending outwards in a north or southerly direction. In 1767, thirty-seven portions of land were distributed on the south side and forty-three on the north side of the river, in what is now Tamaulipas and Texas.

The mission of Indians, San Joaquín del Monte, was assigned a rectangle that measured 3.25 *leagues* along the Rio Grande and two leagues of bottom on the southern part of this river; almost 8,000 *hectares* were assigned to the west of the old *ejido* (common land) of the town, in what are now the farmlands of the municipality of Gustavo Díaz Ordaz.

The lands stipulated to the inhabitants of Reynosa departed from the current eastern limits of the municipality of Camargo to the vicinity of the current Reynosa-Pharr International Bridge. This included a total of 152 smaller livestock sites and 608 cavalry, which is the equivalent of approximately 1,446 km². By March 1768, only seventy-one of the eighty inhabitants had accepted the commitment of the distributed portions.

In reality, the jurisdiction of the old Reynosa went beyond the distributed portions, it extended on both sides of the Rio Grande to the coastal coast in what is now the counties Hidalgo, Cameron, Willacy in Texas and the municipalities of Matamoros, Valle Hermoso, Río Bravo, Reynosa and Díaz Ordaz in Tamaulipas. A few years after the "Autos de la General Visita," the neighbors drew up petitions in the Municipality of San Luis Potosí asking for Mercedes a land to the east of the town.

Rosa María and José María

José María Ballí (Guerra) appears as one of the four surveyors chosen to measure the land during the protocols of the first land distribution in Reynosa in 1767. This character was one of the brothers of Juan Antonio Ballí, who along with José Matías Tijerina were the representatives of the neighborhood of the town of Reynosa during the distribution.

Juan Antonio's children are the key piece to understanding the transfer of the town in 1802, to the Loma de San Antonio, where the city of Reynosa is currently located. Rosa María Hinojosa's marriage to José María Ballí was celebrated in 1772, uniting the Ballí-Hinojosa families. Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí along with her niece Gregoria Ballí would acquire most of the agostaderos north of the Rio Grande within the old jurisdiction of Reynosa.

The Historical Archive of Reynosa has an excellent documentary legacy related to house and land sales, mortgages, land denunciations, bonds, powers of attorney and wills. These documents show us the appropriation of the properties acquired by Rosa María and her relatives. In the historiography of Texas, Rosa María bears the nickname of the "Cattle queen," although life during the last decade of the eighteenth century was quite hard and austere.

This and other facts about the family of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí will be told in a future article.

Click the link below to see the original article in Spanish:

<https://www.elmanana.com/local/reynosa/historia-de-reynosa-las-tierras-de-rosa-maria-hinojosa/5673524>

It seems in the article there are two important pieces to consider in our genealogy searches.

The first being the surname Ballí, which was recorded as Vallín in the Reynosa census of June 1750 and it is important to note the variation in spelling of the surname and to include all possible variations in genealogy searches.

The second fact is the discovery of José Manuel Ballí as a priest in Sabinas Hidalgo in the 1750s highlights the potential for further research to uncover unknown aspects of Balli history. It may be worth exploring his background and connections to the Balli family.

Overall, this information provides valuable insights into the Balli family's history and invites further investigation. That's truly inspiring! It's great that the article has shed some light on our family's history and that other facts about the family of Rosa María Hinojosa de Ballí will be told in future articles.

Thanks to El Manana's news article on our family history by Martin Salinas Rivera and also to Nicolas Balli for bringing this important piece of history to our attention.

We are not affiliated with any of the DNA companies. However, it is important to note that the choice of a DNA Company depends on individual preferences and needs. FamilyTreeDNA is known for its extensive database and offers various types of DNA tests. It's highly recommend that if you do a DNA test please use FamilyTreeDNA. We need to use, *as a family group*, the same DNA Company because it will increase your matches. There are other reputable DNA companies as well, such as AncestryDNA and 23& Me. It is recommended to do research and compare different companies before making a decision.

“We cannot always expect justice to prevail but we must never cease to seek it.”

It is a powerful reminder that we must never give up on our pursuit of fairness and equality, even when the odds seem stacked against us.

Respectfully,
Federico Blanco Balli Sr.