

South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project

The following are handwritten memories submitted to the South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project by Rebecca Carens, a descendant of people who lived and worked at the Rancho Colorado farm near Petronila, TX. The farm includes an historic cemetery where many of the workers are buried. One component of the project has been to study and care for the cemetery.

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Mr and Mrs Robbins

I recently recieved a copy of The Corpus Christi Caller, where I see you are doing a research on the Old cementary of El Rancho Colorado.

First I would like to Thank You and express our gratitude from the Paez Family, for your efforts in giving the death a voice. Thank You!

I am Rebecca Paez Carens, 79 yrs. old. I am the 16th. child of Pedro Paez sr. out of 18. I am the third from the bottom. Some of my information might not be one hundred percent correct on dates and names, it might still be of interest to you.

The picture of the cross on the newspaper article caught my attention. I reconize it as being my grandmothers cross. Her name is Bernabe Carranco. She is my mothers, mother. She is buried there at The Rancho Colorado Cementary.

Pedro Paez Sr. (my dad), with his father and mother and other sibblings, migrated from Zapata Tx. in search of farm labor. They migrated through the woods on a route that was called (Via De Perros) - the dog trail. Supposedly men put Harnesses on dogs, to transport liquor illegally. They settle in Belton Tx. How long there trip was is unknown. They travel by horses and walking.

This trip took place around the early 1900 hundred. The Paez Family worked for the Fontaine Farms there in Belton Tx. My dad Pedro Paez sr. lost his mother

There in Belton Tx. She is buried in a pasture, because Mexicans were not allowed to be buried in the cementary. Needless to say her grave is unknown.

There in Belton my dad marries his first wife. Ramona Frusto Gonzalez. After a few years into the marriage The Paez family's were offered farming work in Driscoll Tx.

In 1906 or 1907 they came to clear the land of El Rancho Colorado, so there would be fields for planting crops. Before the fields, they cleared enough land to erect 14 homes. This homes formed a Horseshoe Shape. My Dad (Pedro Paez sr.) became the forman of the 13 other families ^{that came to work there.} His first wife dies there at El Rancho Colorado and is buried at the El Rancho Colorado Cementary.

My dad Pedro Paez sr. marries my mother Guadalupe and they had several children born there at El Rancho Colorado. And my mothers, mother dies there and is buried there. Her's is the cross on the Newspaper article.

My dad also worked at El Clavo Ranch. Then at the El Palo Blanco Ranch. All three ranches are very se to each other there in Driscoll Tx.

Some of the owners of the farms my dad worked for are as follow - The Fontaines farms. Belton Tx. Then Mr. Flynn, Mr. Glen, Mr. Brown, from Driscoll Tx.

My dad and his bros. were all musicians and they could sing. So they did jigs not only at the ^{El} Rancho Colorado but for other farmers. Sometimes there pay was ^{not in} money

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watermelons

But chickens or eggs, or whatever crop was available. My Dad also brought other entertainments and silent movies to the families there at El Rancho Colorado to enjoy on the week ends.

In Sept. 23 1983 was our last visitation to the cementary at El Rancho Colorado. One of my older Bros. asked the owner of the place if we could go visit the cementary. I do not remember if his name was Mr Flynn, Son of the man my father had worked for. He graciously gave us permission, we had to drive through a field. We parked the van and made our way into the wooded pasture, with machetes and hand saws, but we made a good path to the cementary. I heard that ^{word} got around and people started visiting the Cementary again. And more clearing had been done. I am so happy to hear about this research. Thank you!

This are our related ²⁻grandmothers buried at El Rancho Colorado Cementary -

Ramona Frausto Gonzalez (1st wife to my Dad)
Born 1893 died July 4, 1915

Bernabe Carranco (my Dads
second wife's mother)
Born 1869 died Feb. 12, 1917

These are part of the names of the families that were

there at The start of fields and 14 farm houses erected
at El Rancho Colorado in Driscoll Tx in 1906 or 1907

	First wife	Second wife	
Pedro Paez sr.	Ramona	Guadalupe	He was foreman to 13 other families
Thomas Paez	— ?		
Francisco Paez	— Mary Hillard		
Timoteo Phillips	— Agustina		
Pedro Martinez	— Guadalupe		
Senorio Garza	— Paula		
Ramon Sanchez	— Simona		
Simon Quesada	— Guadalupe		
Vidal Ibarra	— Ester		
Ismael Escobar	— ?		

I do not know if my Dad's (Pedro Paez sr.) first wife died at childbirth.

first wife

All I do know is her last baby (Francisco Paez) ^{died in 1945?} died a few months after ^{her} death. I've heard he was buried there at the El Rancho Colorado Cementary and also that he was buried in Laredo Tx. ?

second wife

My mother gave birth to a girl in ^{around} 1928 while they were still at Driscoll Tx. I do not know if they were still living at El Rancho Colorado or if they were at El Clavo Ranch there in Driscoll. So I have no idea if my sister is also buried there at El Rancho Colorado Cementary. My sister (Rebecca Paez) ^{died 1928?} died at 7 or 8 months after birth.

After Driscoll we migrated to work in Riveria Tx

For Mrs. Stockton. In 1939 we migrated to Alice Tx.
Father farmed for Mr. Phifer. In 1945 Dad retired from farming.

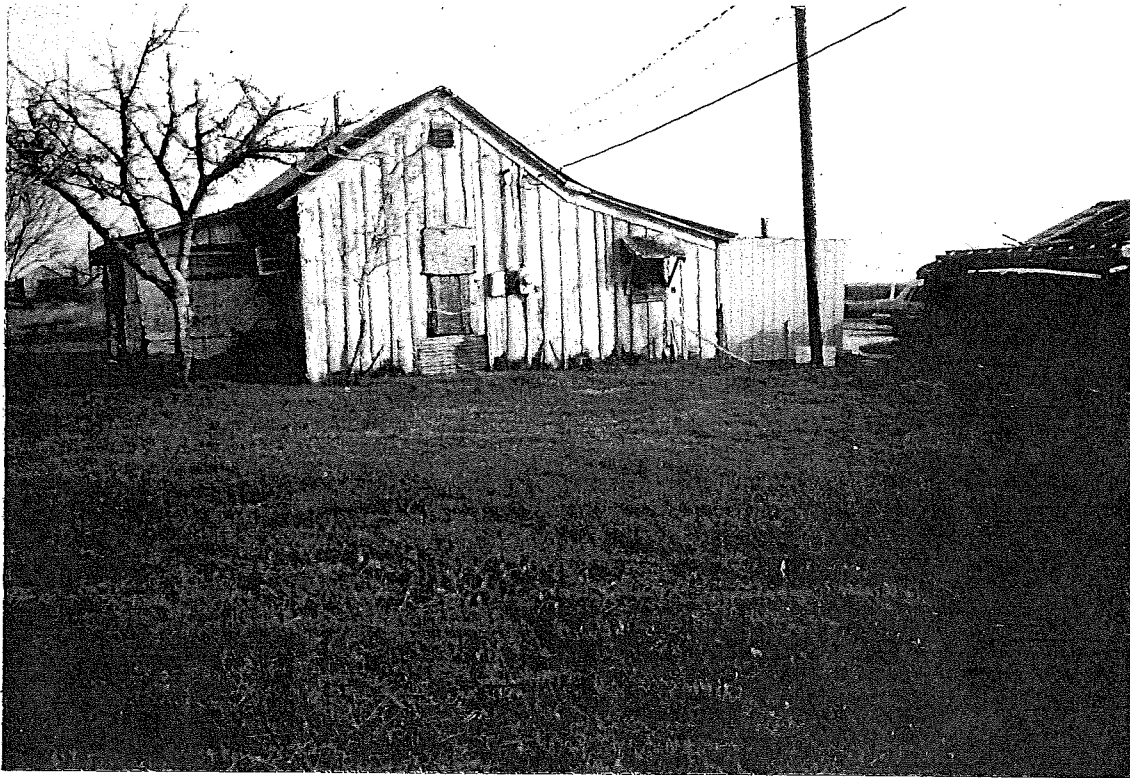
He had a house built in Alice Tx on Reynolds St.
Where my mom lived till she passed away.

Talking to my older brother in Ohio this morning he
remembered my dad telling him, that when he (Pedro Berz sr.)
worked for Mr. Flynn at El Rancho Colorado, that
Mr. Flynn ^{would} give him 10 acres so he could plant
a crop for his family. Dad would plant cotton and
after the cotton had been ginned, Dad would
sell Mr. Flynn back the seed.

I also know my mother in her old aged
was asked, out of all the farms you've lived at.
Where was your favorite, happiest time.
My mother answer "El Rancho Colorado" had been
the happiest favorite farm.

I conclude by saying Thank You again.
To all that has had a part in this endeavor.
May God bless you all.

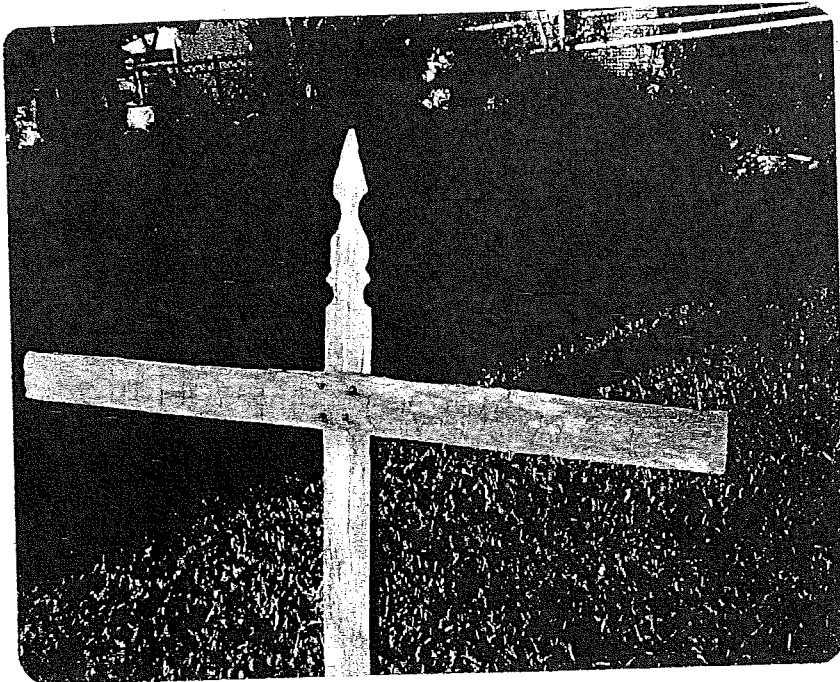
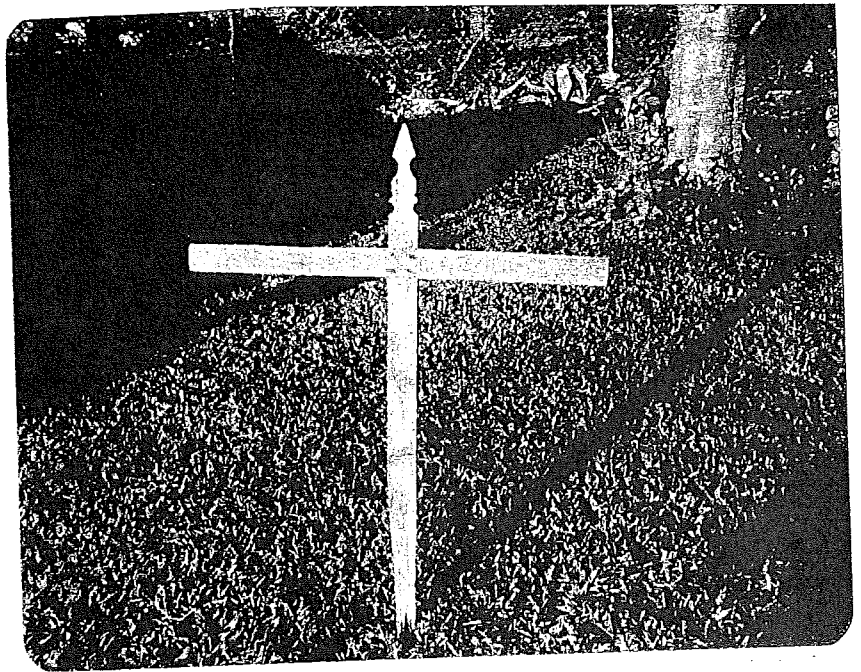
Sincerely
Rebecca P. Carens



Pedro Paez, helped build these houses on the Rancho Colorado in Driscoll, Texas This is where Grandma Paez said were her happiest times.



Original Cross at
Bernabe Caranco's
grave site
Guadalupe Paez
had this made



Lucas Romo had this
cross made, he's husband to
Tia Pilar Paez



!!! You asked how I knew the names of the following families I mention on my recollections.

Pedro Paez Sr. ^{first wife} Remona ^{second wife} Guadalupe my mother -

Thomas Paez ? my uncle

Francisco Paez + Mary Hilliard my uncle and aunt

Tiroteo Phillips + Agustina Paez my uncle and aunt

Friends Pedro Martinez + Guadalupe - use to visit our home in there old age

Sensvio Garza Paula - There son married one of my sisters in the 40's

Ramon Sanchez + Simona - Grandparents to my half siblings

Simon Quesada + Guadalupe - There son married my cousin - ^{daughter} Tomas Paez

Friends Vidal Ibarra + Ester - always came to see my Mom + Dad in Alice

Friends Ismael Escobar + ? - also visit our home in Alice