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Winter Texans: A Study of Community and Belonging in an Overlooked Border Identity in the
Lower Rio Grande Valley

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in Anthropology

by

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ABSTRACT

This study centers around a population of retired Anglos who migrate to South Texas border towns in the Lower Rio Grande Valley (locally known as The Valley) from October through March each year.¹ Many travel in recreational vehicles (RVs) and hail from the United States and Canada to set up home in one of The Valley's RV parks. They are called Winter Texans by themselves and locals. Scholarly research focused on Winter Texans explores how they are motivated to move because of lower costs of living (Murray 2020), how they travel for medical reasons, and their use of Mexican health care as an alternative to high costs in the United States (Dalstrom 2012). A performance analysis of RV parks has been conducted as part of a tourism management study (Sheng 2014) and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley periodically publishes surveys of Winter Texans as part of their Tourism and Business Management Research Center. However, little research has been done on the everyday experience of Winter Texans, their networks and relationships, or Winter Texans as a border identity, even though the population in The Valley swells by over 100,000 each October through March. The University of Texas Winter Texan Survey of 2018 reported that border towns in Mexico receive an annual economic boost of more than 32 million dollars from Winter Texans, while border towns in The Valley reap an economic impact of over 528 million dollars annually.

This thesis is the result of my research with Winter Texans, as I observed them in their daily activities and lived amongst them for three months, discovering who they are and how they find community and belonging on the U.S.-Mexico border. This paper examines an overlooked border identity, opening the door for further research on this topic.

¹ "Anglo" is a white person in the U.S. who does not identify as U.S. Latina/o/e or claim Latin American heritage. (Cambridge Dictionary).

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INTRODUCTION

My parents took me camping at a young age, from tent camping in the blueberry-abundant Algonquin Park in Canada in the '60s to living out of a small travel trailer (bumper pull) that two people could barely move around in. From there, it was a series of motorhomes, each one a little larger to accommodate their growing family. They finally settled on a fifth-wheel; a recreational vehicle attached to a round kingpin hitch in the bed of a truck with enough horsepower to pull it. My dad (now deceased) was a member of a camping club for 12 years, and after he passed in 2003, my mother learned to hitch and un-hitch the fifth-wheel and to drive the truck and park the RV. She is 90 years old and has been in the camping club for over 30 years, still pulling a fifth-wheel with the dually diesel truck she and my father purchased 21 years ago. Since his passing, my mother has traded in her fifth-wheels about four times, upgrading to the current one she now owns. Camping is in my blood, you might say.

I have been fortunate to live in Colorado, Arkansas, Virginia, and Texas (among other places), and everywhere I lived, I would eventually receive a phone call. Then, a few days – or hours – later, I would hear the roar of the diesel truck pulling up in front of my house. Often, I would unplug the clothes dryer so Dad could plug in their camper's electric cord so they could have electricity. They would stay a day or two parked in front of my house before traveling on to some distant destination to meet fellow campers. The camping club my folks joined, and eventually my wife and I joined, has a president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, chaplain (for prayers), and host (to find campsites and arrange activities). They would caravan: the head rig was the leader, and the last rig was the shotgun, the person who watched for troubles. The caravan reminded me of an earlier form of travel – a wagon train that traveled in a similar structure and became its own community.

Winter Texans are another group of travelers. They do not usually caravan to their destinations as they travel from all over the United States and Canada, but they do live in a tight-knit community once they reach their destination. Winter Texans are a population of retired Anglos who migrate to South Texas border towns in the Lower Rio Grande Valley from October through March each year.² They travel in recreational vehicles (RV's), they hail from the United States and Canada, and they set up in one of the Lower Rio Grande Valley's RV parks. They are called "Winter Texans" by themselves and locals. Thinking about travel, wagon trains and RV's made me wonder how Winter Texans form communities, being from disparate locations. How do they garner a sense of belonging in their home away from home? Who are these Winter Texans?

When I accepted a job in the civil service at Corpus Christi Army Depot in 2012, my mother stayed in Corpus Christi, TX, in an RV park ¼ mile from our house from December until March for almost 11 years. It was during this time I first heard the term "Winter Texan." Although this study is conducted on Winter Texans in the lower Rio Grande Valley, there are Winter Texans as far north as Corpus Christi as my mother camped with them, and we had get-togethers with the folks from the US and Canada. My mother had community through my wife Teri and myself – we helped her navigate Corpus Christi and find local activities she could participate in. She even brought several camping club members to join her for a few weeks in the winter. She described herself to them as a "Winter Texan."

Teri, Mom, and I often drove two hours south to Weslaco/Progreso, Texas, to cross the International Bridge into Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, for shopping excursions. Along the way, past the King Ranch and close to Brownsville in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, we would begin

² The Lower Rio Grande Valley is the river valley of the Rio Grande and includes Starr, Hidalgo, Willacy and Cameron counties with cities along the Rio valley which include Weslaco and Progreso. (See Figure 1).

to see, on the horizon and sometimes closer, many groupings of palm trees on either side of the highway. I just thought it was Texans being tropical, but I later found that these palms marked the locations of Winter Texan RV parks. Curious.

When we headed back to South Texas for this research project, I pulled our 27-foot travel trailer. Teri, our three dogs, and I would comfortably settle down each night after a day of traveling. Part of an experience as a Winter Texan begins with the trip from home. Actually, it begins many months before that, with mapping the route and ensuring there are no low underpasses, getting all the dogs' vaccines and paperwork up to date, making copies of all our insurance plans (roadside assistance, travel assistance, health, and truck/RV), making RV park reservations, hiring someone to look after our home in Hot Springs, holding our mail, and putting in a temporary change of address at our final destination: 1015 RV Park, Weslaco, Texas.

The first leg of the trip that began my fieldwork, January 15, 2023, started a little shaky. We have a travel trailer with sway bars connecting it to the trailer hitch on the truck. Little did we know that one of the bars had come loose, and we dragged the steel bar from Hot Springs to Texarkana, about 140 miles. By the time we got to Texarkana, it was so contorted that I could not remove it from the hitch, so I found some rope and tied it up using a reliable Girl Scout square knot. We pulled into Rusk, Texas, 110 miles later, exhausted but glad my Girl Scout knot held tight until we could buy a new sway bar system in Corpus Christi.

In Corpus Christi, we stayed for a few days to visit friends and schedule RV maintenance. We left Corpus, driving through the Chapman Ranch and onto Kingsville, where one of Texas's largest ranches exists, the 825,000-acre King Ranch (Davies 1998). It touches six counties, and the furthest south is Willacy County in The Valley. Not far from Kingsville is about a 60-mile stretch with no services, only ranch land on both sides of the highway: the Kenedy Ranch,

Thomas Ranch, and Yturria Ranch. We stopped for the U.S. Customs and Border Protection Inspection Center at Sarita. Guard dogs circled our truck and camper, and we got waved through to continue our travels. Then, as we approach Raymondville, fruit stands begin to appear, with Juan's Fruit Stand on Hwy 77 being one of the largest, but if you pass by it, there are many more. Onward to Weslaco and more ranches: Jones Family Ranches in Starr County, East Family Ranches in Starr and Willacy counties, Bass Family Ranches in Hidalgo County.

As we travel further south, we pass by the Tres Mesquites Ranch. As I write, I can feel the warm breezes hitting my face and see the endless blue Texas sky. A train follows us for a while, and then we pull ahead. One might encounter cattle, javelinas (wild boar), wild turkeys and deer at any time.

While most border research focuses on local communities and on Mexican (and, increasingly, Central American³) immigrants in the border area, there is another mobile subject in this space: the Winter Texan. Scholarly research focused on Winter Texans explores how they are motivated to move because of lower costs of living (Murray, 2020), how they travel for medical reasons, and the use of Mexican health care as an alternative to high costs in the United States (Dalstrom 2012). A performance analysis of RV parks has been conducted as part of a tourism management study (Sheng, 2014) and The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley periodically publishes surveys of Winter Texans as part of their Tourism and Business Management Research Center. However, little research has been done on the Winter Texan as a border identity, even though the population in the Valley swells by over 100,000 each October through March. The University of Texas Winter Texan Survey of 2018 reported that border

³ "Census data suggests that from 1980 to 2017, this (Central American) population grew tenfold, from 354,000 to 3,527,000 with about half of the foreign-born individuals belonging to this group arriving after the year 2000" (Padilla 2022:18).

towns in Mexico receive an annual economic boost of more than 32 million dollars from Winter Texans, while border towns in The Valley reap an economic impact of over 528 million dollars annually.

This thesis is an examination of Winter Texan identity and everyday life. I observed Winter Texans in their daily activities as I lived among them at the 1015 RV park in Weslaco, Texas, discovering who they are and how they find community and belonging on the U.S.-Mexico border. The 1015 RV park and the thirteen other RV parks in the city are part of a Winter Texan RV parks network. This paper examines an overlooked border identity, opening the door for further research on this topic.

Methods

This study was conducted in the 1015 RV Park in Weslaco Texas, approximately six miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. Interviews were conducted in the Recreation Center of the park, which provided areas with tables and chairs. This was a comfortable setting with which all interviewees were familiar, since many park activities are conducted there and residents can pick up their mail and packages. The thirty interviewees who participated in my research consisted of Winter Texan residents of the 1015 RV Park and local residents of Weslaco.

I used semi-structured research interviews for this study. Before each interview, I presented the interviewee with a previously designed and approved consent form and asked if they had any questions about the process. My study design consisted of a series of general, open ended interview questions that addressed: reasons for annual migration to south Texas, their participation in park events, daily routines, friendships, and connections with surrounding communities, their attraction to the U.S.-Mexico border, and more. I asked the questions from

my standardized questionnaire and took written notes as interviewees responded. I later transcribed my written notes into a Word document on my personal computer.

I also engaged in participant observation. I observed my interlocutors in their process of daily living at the park and took notes, and I actively participated in park events during the research period such as card game nights, potlucks, Mexican Bingo games, darts tournaments, poker tournaments, pool-side parties, garage sales and a boat trip on the Rio Grande. I conducted a textual analysis of the recreation center's bulletin boards and flyers. I also compared and contrasted my observations and survey question answers in the analysis of the data for this thesis. All participants were provided with a consent form, and all participants were given a pseudonym to protect their identity. Participant information and observation notes were kept under lock and key on my personal computer, which was stored in my locked RV.

Overview

In the first section of this thesis, I begin with a vignette, "Initiation Night." I then give a brief history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the city of Weslaco, the town of Progreso, and the International Bridge. Section II focuses on the 1015 RV Park, "Where Friends Become Family," where most of my research was conducted. The 1015 RV Park and the 13 other RV parks in the city are part of a Winter Texan RV parks network. I examine how RV parks become places where Winter Texans establish community and find belonging. In Section III, I introduce Winter Texans as a unique border identity worthy of study.

SECTION I: History of Lower Rio Grande Valley, the City of Weslaco, the Town of Progreso, and the 1015 International Bridge.

Initiation Night⁴

Chairs five wide in an intimidating square, English and Spanish floating in the air, mouthwatering smells of barbacoa, cheese, corn tortillas, pico and guac, oranges and mangos opened on a side table met me when I opened the door to the recreation center. Mexican Bingo had begun!⁵

The ceiling fan was working hard to help the air conditioner with cooling as I sat down second from the end at the back of the square. Wondering if I had taken someone else's seat, I asked if I could sit, and a nod signified I could. I placed my "I can't believe it's not butter" tub full of nickels and dimes in front of me and received a welcoming hello and a glance towards my container of coins.

Delicia, Maria, Marianna, Lucia, and Gabriella flanked the opposite side of the square, and others filtered in to fill all the chairs. Many carried embroidered coin purses found throughout the area in meat markets, grocery stores, and the shopping areas of Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, a few miles away—purses full of nickels and dimes. Someone passed a bottle of wine around to fill our empty cups.

On one table were hundreds of bingo cards, which cost 10 cents for one card for each game played. I chose one and went back and sat down. As Gabriella shuffled a worn-out deck of cards, we placed our money in a jar that passed around the table, and the first game began.

Gabriella cried out, "La Palma," and I realized I had no buttons, beans, pebbles, or other objects to place on my bingo card. I asked a lady two seats away if she would share her markers, and she passed me a handful. Before I could mark my card, I heard "El Apache" (Indian) followed by "El Sol" (sun) and "El Mundo" (world), and BINGO! Lucia had four corners and won that round. Laughing abounded, and I was still trying to figure out how quickly this happened. Gabriella cleared the markers from her ten bingo cards and readied for the next game. I put one dime in the pot and one for the game when the jars came around. I quickly realized I would most likely run out of dimes since I was told we play until 10:00 p.m.

I started to repeat the Spanish words after the dealer said them because I wanted to learn in case my turn to deal came around, and I needed practice as I do not speak Spanish. "La Bota" (boot), I yelled, which gained a smile from the dealer as she complimented me on my pronunciation. Later, I discovered the dealer or "El cantor" or crier was an assigned position. Next, I heard "La Chalupa." The card depicted a beautiful

⁴ Compiled from my field notes.

⁵ Lotería is called "Mexican Bingo" at the 1015 RV Park and refers to the same game, according to locals who play weekly with Winter Texans at the park. The word Lotería "has the Teutonic root *hleut*, which was adopted into the Romance languages: in French it evolved into *loterie*, in Italian into *lotto*, and in English it is the source of *lot*, a method used in ancient times to solve disputes by appealing to chance" (Villegas and Stavans 2004: xii). King Charles III of Spain started La Lotería Nacional in 1769 and the game of chance quickly became an institution in Mexico. French entrepreneur Don Clemente Jacques created a version in 1887 that is still sold today. He owned a canned-food and ammunition company during the time of the Mexican Revolution. He decided to attach a Lotería board to his products so the soldiers would have a pastime, and when the soldiers returned home, the demand for the Lotería boxes increased. Soon the brand and the game were inseparable. (Villegas and Stavans 2004).

woman in a canoe-like boat transporting flowers and fruits. The only chalupa I knew is ordered in a Mexican restaurant! Sometimes, Gabriella would speak a sentence in Spanish and not cry out the card's name. I had to ask my neighbor which card was called. At other times, Gabriella would call out the card's name but not show us the picture. Little did I know the job of the cantor was to distract players, and Gabriella was incredibly talented.

While I didn't win my first night of playing, I learned a little about Mexican culture and folk art, picked up a little Spanish, and was tentatively accepted into the group as I left with an invite to play again next week.⁶ BINGO!

The Lotería players accepted me into their group and explained some of the rules to me during the game. I begin with this story because it reveals one of my early social experiences in the 1015 park. I was new to the park and wanted to experience how the group treats newcomers, especially since I do not speak Spanish. It was the beginning of my field research and the beginning of experiencing the Mexican culture. Friends and family play Lotería and this acceptance of me to the group was a connection between Anglo and Hispanic, much like the International Bridge crossing the Rio Grande at Progreso, Texas connecting the two worlds of Mexico and the United States. Next, I will give a brief history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, and the area of my research (Weslaco and Progreso, Texas, and the International Bridge).

Lower Rio Grande Valley

The Lower Rio Grande Valley (*El Valle*, or The Valley) comprises the farthest southern and southwestern area of Texas and includes Star, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Cameron counties. The Valley is in the floodplain of the Rio Grande and is approximately 5,000 square miles.

⁶ The images on the Lotería cards, point to Mexican culture. For instance, El Bandalón (mandolin) is an instrument used in Mexican mariachi bands, La Bandera (the flag) depicts the Mexican flag, La Muerte (death) is displayed as a skeleton, shows a deep connection Mexicans feel for their deceased ancestors.

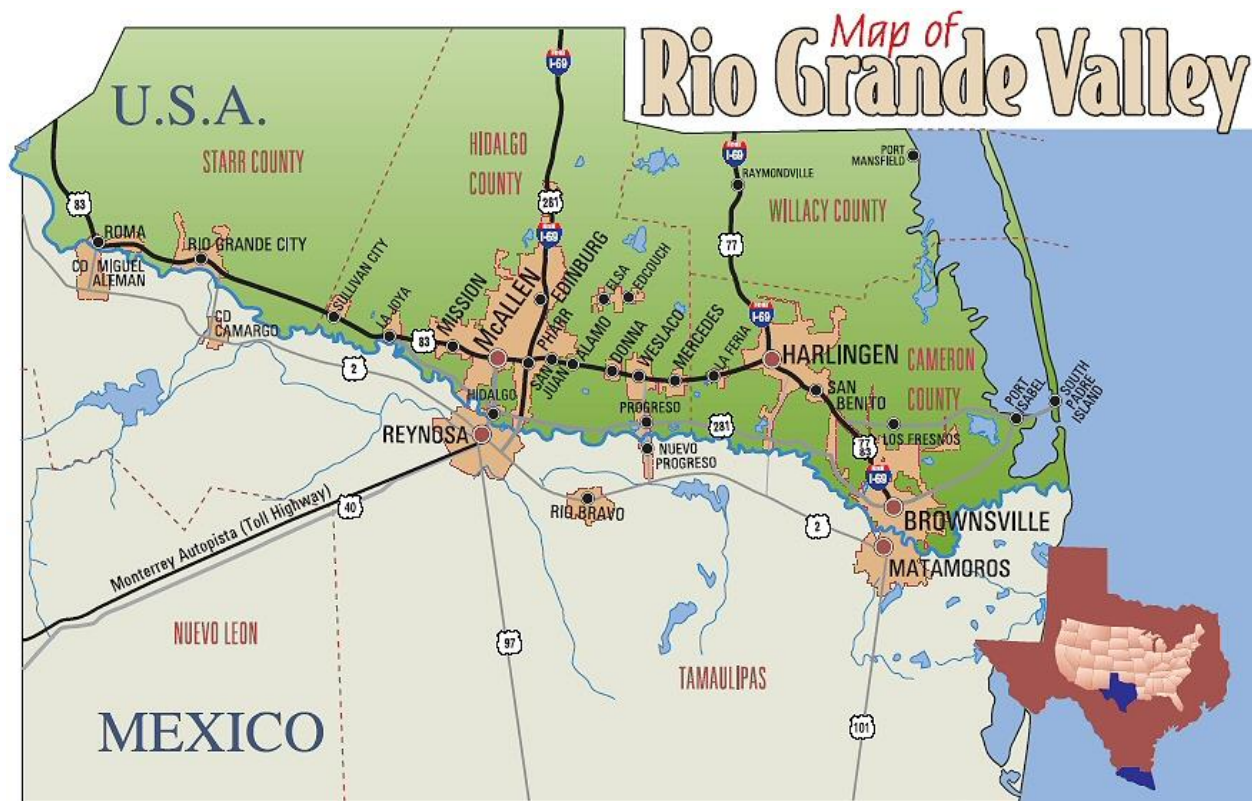


Figure 1: Google. Map of Rio Grande Valley. Retrieved April 3, 2024, from <https://webhost.bridgew.edu/jhayesboh/counties/tx.htm>.

Through its Viceroyalty in central Mexico, Spain colonized this region in the late 1700s and early 1800s, and the land witnessed many wars against its Indigenous inhabitants, including the Karankawa, Lipan Apache and Comanche, collectively known as Coahuiltecans.⁷ In 1805, the Spaniards called the area Nuevo Santander; however, in 1821, after Mexico achieved its independence from Spain, the state was renamed Tamaulipas. The Texas Revolution began in 1835 and lasted until 1836. In 1844, the United States annexed the Republic of Texas, which brought about the Mexican-American War. That war ended in 1848, and, upon the signing of the

⁷ Coahuiltecan tribes were bands of hunter-gatherers following the seasons and migrating animals over the eastern part of Coahuila, northern Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and southern Texas south and west of the San Antonio River and Cibolo Creek (Lovett, et.al. 2014).

Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, over 1/3 of Mexico's national territory was annexed and the Río Grande became the southern border of the United States.

In 1861, the U.S. engaged in the Civil War, and Confederate troops used the ports at Brownsville and Isabel along with "The Military Road," Highway 281, which spans across The Valley. The Valley became a cattle country. Droughts in the late 1800s and early 1900s forced local Tejanos (Texans of Mexican descent) to sell the family farms they had held for many generations to wealthy white settlers, and large ranches like the Kenedy and King were established. Meanwhile, across the border, the Mexican Revolution was in progress. Border raids caused the United States to send in Army troops from 1911 until 1916. Later, the Texas Rangers and the U.S. Border Patrol came to the land (Pierce 1917). Mexican families were driven from their homes and ranches – driven from their lands by Anglos and Europeans who began settling in San Antonio and surrounding areas. They came because of a transformation that began in the 1880s and affected Mexicans in various discriminating ways: racism was abounding during these times; small Mexican landholders were displaced; and poll taxes were put in place. Mexicans had less access to public institutions and political power; they were segregated; the public lynching of Tejanos occurred. The Anglo answer was to implement the strong arm of the law; the Texas Rangers were established to control the Tejano populations (Flores 2002:160).

Texas underwent a vast social change in the last part of the nineteenth century with the closing of the range, the introduction of the railroad, and the beginning of large-scale commercial farming and ranching. Anthropologist Richard Flores calls this transformation the Texas Modern.⁸ According to Flores, the series of changes associated with the Texas Modern is

⁸ Flores explains, "I refer to the emerging and newly established social forms and the numerous responses they engendered both for and against, as the Texas Modern" (Flores 2002:2). An influx of outsiders into Texas changed the social and cultural life of the population.

bolstered by a master symbol, the Alamo, which both rationalized and symbolically reinscribed this new order (Flores 2002:33).

The Texas Modern period began in 1880 with the arrival of railroads in the area, loss of small-scale agriculture, redistribution of wealth, the influx of Anglos and Europeans, closing of the open range, and a change from Tejano owned cattle farms to commercially owned. The Texas Modern period encompasses an age of modernity in which capitalism is the engine, causing new ideas, massive cultural transformations, and erasure of previous cultural ways, government-imposed laws instead of community-imposed and scientific through versus superstitions. Memory relies on symbols of the past and the Alamo becomes a reminder, a master symbol of modernity (Flores 2002).⁹

With the Farm Revolution¹⁰ came agricultural expansion in the Lower Rio Grande Valley. This expansion occurred between 1900 and 1910 (Montejano 2010). Cattle farms were sold off in smaller parcels for agriculture, and this shift also affected the population. "At the turn of the century, the deep South Texas region had a total population of 79,934" (Montejano 2010). By 1920, this had doubled to 159,842, and by 1930, it had doubled again to 322,845, of which the lion's share (216,822) was concentrated in Cameron, Hidalgo, Willacy, and Nueces counties" (Montejano 2010:110). People from the Midwest and Southern United States overran the

⁹ Master symbols are places that "connect local struggles with the movement to world culture" and "serve as a critical map for the exploitation and displacement of Mexicans" (Flores 2002:160).

¹⁰ With farm colonization, the number of farms increased dramatically, and the average farm size decreased, an indication of the division of ranches into farms as well as the reclamation of unused, semiarid land. In Cameron County in 1910, for example, there were 709 farms with an average size of 770.1 acres; by 1920, 1,507 farms averaged 198.6 acres, and by 1930, 2,936 farms averaged 45.6 acres. The economic face of Hidalgo County was changed similarly—from 677 farms averaging 969.5 acres in 1910 to 4,327 farms averaging 126.9 acres in 1930. Conversely, the number of cattle fell significantly. In the area bounded by Starr, Hidalgo, and Cameron counties in 1910, the number declined to almost half by 1920, from 174,513 head to 99,597.

land. The U.S. Census Bureau survey of 2020 shows the population of The Valley at 1,333,545.

County	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino	% Hispanic or Latino
Hidalgo	870,781	800,001	91.9
Cameron	421,017	376,680	89.5
Starr	65,920	64,393	97.7
Willacy	20,164	17,611	87.3

Table 1: United States Census Bureau 2020 Census Results, Demographic Profile. Accessed August 1, 2023.
https://data.census.gov/table/DECENNIALDP2020.DP1?g=040XX00US48_050XX00US48061,48215,484.

Weslaco, Texas

Weslaco is a city in the Lower Rio Grande Valley that sits in the south-central part of Hidalgo County on U.S. Highway 83. Its location was part of the Llano Grande Land Grant and was ranch land until the mid-early 1900s when the St. Louis, Brownsville, and Mexico Railway was built. The American Rio Grande Land and Irrigation Company bought a significant portion of the Llano Grande grant in 1913 and promoted farming rather than ranching. In 1917, the irrigation company sold 30,000 acres to the **W.E. Stewart Land Company**; thus, the city was named (Garza 1952). The naming of Weslaco is a great example of how the Texas Modern operated to not only displace Tejanos from the land but also, by virtue of re-naming, erase their presence.

City/Town	Total Population	Hispanic or Latino	% Hispanic or Latino
Weslaco	40,939	35,703	88.3
Progreso	4,941	4,939	99.9

Table 2: United States Census Bureau 2020 Census Results, Demographic Profile. Accessed February 12, 2023.
https://data.census.gov/table/ACSST5Y2020.S0501?g=040XX00US48_050XX00US484.160XX00US4859636,4877272&y=2020

As of 2020, the population over five years of age totaled 36,794. Of that figure, approximately 27.3% speak English at home, and 71.9% speak Spanish at home, with .7 % other languages (Census Bureau Data 2020).

Progreso, Texas

Five miles south of Weslaco is Progreso, Texas, located at the junction of U.S. Highway 281 (The Military Highway) and Farm Road 1015 and two miles north of the Rio Grande. The land once belonged to Mexico – part of the Llano Grande Spanish land grant of 1790, it mainly consisted of ranches that were turned into sugar cane farms and citrus orchards. The land was later sold to developers, and the U.S. stationed troops along the Rio Grande in 1916. A watchtower was built in Progreso, Texas (a few miles from Weslaco) to stop raids from Mexico during the Revolution (Isbell 1952). Progreso's population was 4,904 in 2021. Progreso census bureau data of 2021 show that approximately 90% of the population five years and older speak Spanish at home, while approximately 11% speak English (Census Bureau Data 2020).

Progreso, Texas, and Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, are connected via the International Bridge. Winter Texans use the bridge to cross into Mexico for many reasons. They shop for clothing, jewelry (especially silver), dog and cat medicines, leather goods, and groceries. They eat at local restaurants and food stands, and they purchase from street food vendors. They visit the many pharmacies located on the main street to get their prescriptions filled because the cost of prescribed drugs is more affordable in Mexico. They seek dental care as it is also more affordable in Mexico. Some visit a local chiropractor and acupuncturist, and others receive Botox treatments for cosmetic reasons. Many cross to receive manicures and pedicures at the many salons in Nuevo Progreso. When they cross the border, they can park and walk across the bridge

or drive and park in Nuevo Progreso. One restaurant, Arturo's, will allow them to park all day as long as they eat in the restaurant. There are also parking spots on the street, and if they arrive early enough, they can get choice parking near the shops and get a wash and wax for a small amount of money while they are shopping. At Christmas, the Winter Texans hold a parade, marching and riding down the main street of Nuevo Progreso and handing out Christmas gifts to the town's children. As a "thank you for your patronage," the town holds a "Goodbye Winter Texan" party with bands and restaurants moving out into the street and folk-dancing entertaining them as they eat and drink. Many restaurants and bars give the Winter Texans complimentary cocktails and food.

The 1015 International Bridge

The original Weslaco-Progreso International Bridge between Progreso and Nuevo Progreso was constructed in 1951 and has since been replaced in 2003 with a four-lane bridge, two lanes in each direction with pedestrian sidewalks, plus a separate two-lane truck bridge. The toll is \$3.00 per POV and \$1.00 for pedestrians to cross. The B&P Bridge Company of Weslaco and the government of Mexico's Caminos y Puentes Federales de Ingresos y Servicios Conexos (CAPUFE) owns this 24-hour POV bridge (Texas DOT 2015:10).

The Texas Department of Transportation records how many vehicles and pedestrians cross border bridges in Texas, to give some idea of the amount of vehicular and pedestrian traffic on the bridge. In 2015, the number of northbound pedestrians crossing the bridge was 693,993; the number of northbound POVs crossed was 474,453; and the number of northbound trucks was 36,940 (Texas DOT 2015:10).



Figure 2: International Bridge Border Crossing into Mexico (photo by author)



Figure 3: Pedestrian walkway over the Rio Grande. (photo by author)

The history of the Lower Rio Grande Valley, the towns of Weslaco and Progreso, and the International Bridge is essential to show the area where Winter Texans live and to which they travel each year. Why did they come to the Lower Rio Grande Valley when they could have

gone to other parts of the United States with temperate winter weather? What about the area attracts them? Why come to a borderland that has a history fraught with conflict between Anglos and Tejanos? The 1015 RV Park is an environment where people are forging connections, such as playing Mexican Bingo and crossing into Mexico via the International Bridge. It is a place “Where Friends Become Family.”

SECTION II: The 1015 RV Park, "Where Friends Become Family"

The 1015 RV Park, "Where Friends Become Family," is a gated senior community. It is part of an extensive Winter Texan network of community and belonging. The 1015 RV Park is an older park and has gone through several owners. It has a laundromat, heated swimming pool, dog park, shuffleboard courts, pool tables, pickleball courts, dart boards, fully equipped kitchen, wireless internet, game room, and offers mailbox delivery. It is situated approximately five miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. The park owner lives on the premises in one of the duplexes at the park. This small park has 133 sites: 89 RV sites and 44 park model sites.¹¹ The 1015 park is bounded in the back by an irrigation ditch, in the front by the 1015 International Blvd, and on one side by orange orchards. The fourth side faces an empty field and a BBQ restaurant.

First Impressions

Teri and I were exhilarated by the drive from Corpus Christi to Weslaco. It had been years since we traveled to 1015 International Blvd. We drove past a large RV park, which I mistakenly thought was the 1015 park. It was the Pine to Palm Winter Texan RV/mobile home park. As we drove past, I noticed that the main building had a Texas flag, a U.S. Flag, and a Canadian flag flying above it. I later found out that Canadians own Pine to Palm, and during my research, I saw many Canadian-tagged vehicles coming and going from that park. Ours was the next park. Two palm trees decorated the entrance to the security gate, and I got out to press the button to speak to the office. In front of the gate was a big marquee announcing the 1015 RV Park as the place "Where Friends become Family." It was a sweltering day in January, and our truck's air conditioner was on. The gate opened, and I drove in and pulled in front of the office/recreation center directly in front of a sign that asked that engines be turned off. It was too hot to comply, as Teri and our three dogs were in the truck.

The office/recreation center was painted a beautiful turquoise and had a U.S. flag flying on a pole in the front yard. There was a veteran's memorial below the flagpole and next to it was an orange tree. I walked up the sidewalk and went inside to pay for our stay. I was apprehensive and asked if someone could help me back the travel trailer onto our site. Yes, Connie said, "my husband will help you." She gave me a monthly activity sheet and pointed to the activity sign-up board. Very exciting! I looked through the window to a sparkling swimming pool surrounded by palm trees, a colossal smoker grill,

¹¹ A park model is an RV, 400 square feet or less, and is permanently situated but can be pulled, for instance, if the owners move to another park.

chairs, and umbrella tables. In the meantime, Teri needed the facilities, so she used her walker to go inside. It has been a difficult and slow process for her since she had a stroke three years ago. I went back outside to discover Connie's husband helping park a gigantic Class A.¹² Backing that motorhome into the small site was a trial and error on his part, and the site was right by the entrance and exit gate, blocking anyone from entering or leaving. A line of cars began to accumulate. A woman was waiting in a convertible car, and I walked over and spoke with her for about thirty minutes. She hails from Wisconsin and is an amiable woman; whenever I saw someone, they waved at us. Teri was leaving the building and headed back to the truck when a gentleman came by on a golf cart and waved. I waved, told him we were new here, and asked if he would take Teri for a ride while we were waiting to get set up. He smiled and said sure. I sat with the dogs until it was our turn to park.

It took Connie's husband several attempts to back us into the site, and I knew Teri could have backed it in more quickly, but as newcomers, we let him help us. Rob and Teri came by to check on me. I did not have the water, sewer, and electricity set up yet, so he took her on another ride. When they returned, Rob brought all the dogs a treat. Later that evening, while walking Camo, our part Boxer, part Aussie, I heard a Mariachi band in the background, the warm wind wafting the music from Nana's outdoor restaurant nearby. I smelled the BBQ from the nearby bar and grill mixed with the overpowering aroma of the orange trees in bloom. I heard many birds chirping along with the determined pecking of a woodpecker. Most likely, these birds were migrating through this area for the habitat offered at the Estero Llano Grande State Park, half a mile down the Boulevard. A baby rabbit jumped out from under our RV. The sunset was in plain sight, the land was flat, and the stars shone bright. Such was our first encounter with the folks at the 1015 Park, "Where Friends Become Family."

¹² Class A motorhomes are the largest and most extravagant coaches having all the conveniences of home, including full kitchen and washer and dryer. They range from 26 to 45 feet and have at least two axles.



Figure 4: The 1015 RV Park Recreation Center (photo by author)

The 1015 RV Park Recreation Center

The recreation center is a hub of activity and a meeting place used by park residents. It is a place where residents can receive their mail, jigsaw puzzles are worked, meals are cooked, and friends gather. Angela, Elizabeth, Sam, and Delicia are all residents of the 1015 RV Park. Angela has limited English and only speaks Spanish, while Elizabeth only speaks Canadian French, and Sam and Delicia speak English and Spanish. All congregate in the recreation center.

The recreation center is also where people flow in and out and exchange ideas. The 1015 Park and the recreation center are a landscape of people to which Arjun Appadurai's theory of ethnoscapas applies. He defines ethnoscapas as "the landscape of persons who constitute the shifting world in which we live: tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other

moving groups and individuals" (Appadurai 1996:33). Winter Texan RV parks are ethnoscapas, as they hold a seasonal flow of people and information in and out, along with those who have graduated from Winter Texan to permanent resident status.

Conversations with people in ethnoscapas can expand thinking between people and nations, allowing them to imagine life differently. People can still have their stable ideas and notions of community, but the imagination brought about by ethnoscapas has fractured that stability and opened up channels of conversation and change. The imagination is no longer only used by creative people but has now become part of everyday life – for instance, by those forced to live away from home, such as in refugee camps. It is their imagination that allows them to find a new way of living in these camps. Another example of expanded thinking is those who migrate to find a new job or opportunities not available to them in their previous location or, for others, their previous circumstances became intolerable (Appadurai 1996).

The park is a place where one can imagine living somewhere away from home. One couple visited the park for a few months and lived in their RV. After meeting them again this past winter at the park, they told me they bought an existing park model and, having done so, decided to return each year. They had spoken to many people who had made this choice, and the conversations helped them imagine life there and helped form their decision. Appadurai's theory of ethnoscapas and imagination is at work in daily life at the 1015 RV Park. Ethnoscapas and imagination are part of life at the 1015 Park, where people live permanently and temporarily and visit family and friends, park workers, caregivers, and workers from the United States and beyond. The park is an international meeting place where people network with other Weslaco and Valley RV parks mobile subjects and residents.

Winter Texans have a network between the many RV parks in The Valley and their homeplaces in the United States and Canada. Winter Texans maintain ties to their homes while they live in The Valley and vice versa. Many Winter Texans in the 1015 park visit friends they have met at other parks and use them as a resource when needed. Communication between these mobile subjects' homes in Texas and their homes in Canada or other parts of the United States continues, and information and merchandise flow between these places and the other parks in The Valley. Winter Texan publications, *The Winter Texan Times*, and *Welcome Home Winter Texans* are another resource for community and networking.

The *Winter Texan Times* has event calendars, reunion postings, park calendars of events, and the times and locations of Wintertainers'™ next performances.¹³ The publication also has a business guide and a classified section and is issued weekly from October through March each year. This publication is part of a network for the Winter Texans, along with the *Welcome Home Winter Texan* newspaper, which features a yearly award: "Winter Texans of the Year." "This award was created to recognize the impact our Winter Texans have in our community every year" (Wingert 2023). The award recognized acts of volunteerism, fundraising, and entertainment. The Table of Contents includes an activities section, a travel and business section, information about RV repairs and troubleshooting, a real estate section, and numerous advertisements. Church's Chicken advertised "Winter Texan Wednesdays," 8 pc for \$8.99! A calendar of events is available, showing the dances, shows, yard/park sales, and jam sessions that are open to the public throughout The Valley. I was watching TV one night, and the local TV station's weather forecaster gave a forecast specifically for Winter Texans. I have shopped at the

¹³ Wintertainers is a trademarked term for singers, bands, or entertainment acts that tour The Valley RV parks each winter. (Winter Texan Times 2023).

local H.E.B. grocery store and saw a sign advertising a *carnicería* inside.¹⁴ The grocery stores in the area cater to locals with many items imported from Mexico. I have purchased a soup kit or “Caldo Kit” from their store.¹⁵

Winter Texans have a network of parks throughout The Valley, totaling 267 parks as of 2022. (For further information see Appendix A.) Weslaco alone boasts 13 parks with 4,359 sites.

Park Name	# RV sites	# Park Model sites	# Total sites
1015 RV Park	89	44	133
Clearview Park	0	33	33
Country Sunshine	244	133	377
Magic Valley RV	72	320	392
Pine to Palm	20	369	389
Leisure World Village	96	208	304
Ranchero Village	112	401	513
Rio Valley Estates	99	237	336
Siesta Ret. Village	0	410	410
Snow to Sun RV Pk	311	178	489
Southern Comfort	187	216	403
Trails End RV Park	114	249	363
Weslaco Park	217	0	217

Table 3: Excerpt from Appendix A, Weslaco RV Parks

¹⁴ A *carnicería* is Spanish for a butcher shop; however, the sign used the Spanish word for the shop.

¹⁵ A “Caldo Kit” is ingredients for a soup that includes green cabbage, calabaza squash, carrots, chayote squash, red potatoes, lime, jalapeño pepper and cilantro.

Each month, the 1015 park publishes an activities schedule, which is put together by the elected activities director and his committee (see Appendix B). This schedule is put in everyone's mailbox slots and posted on the bulletin board inside and outside the recreation center (also called the clubhouse). For the activities open to the public, like performances by a singer or band, or a flea market, a sign is put outside the park by the front gate a few days before the event, inviting the public to join.

Initially, one may think this is a vacation for seniors, but then one realizes there is much more here than a vacation. It is a place of belonging, of living, of keeping minds alert and having someone to care for, where friends really do become family, and where an extended social network exists, reaching across the entire Valley and beyond.



Figure 5: View of 1015 RV Park (photo by author)

There are five parks near-by the 1015 RV Park: Magic Valley Resort, Pine to Palm, Encore Southern Comfort, Encore Country Sunshine, and Siesta Village. These parks are part of the Winter Texans' extensive network in Weslaco, which enables them to have a community and cultivate a sense of belonging. In The Valley Winter Texan parks, they find security, support, and acceptance of their identity, while living hundreds and sometimes thousands of miles from home. The Canadians cross two borders during their yearly trip – the U.S.-Mexico and U.S.-Canada borders when they visit Mexico.

The 1015 RV Park is a space where information flows not only inside the park but also beyond, to the network of parks in The Valley and to other locations in Canada and distant parts of the United States. The 1015 RV Park is a space where people can have conversations and expand their capacity to process and engage with new thoughts and ideas. It is a place where the imagination can work, and conversations and possibilities of change can occur. It is where Winter Texans make community and a place where they find belonging, security, and acceptance. The Winter Texan as a border identity is discussed in the next section.

SECTION III Winter Texans as a Border Identity

Anthropologist Robert Alvarez writes, "One difficult challenge to anthropologists in the borderlands genre is to define a border culture, a seemingly homogeneous construct based on political demarcation and shared elements of history, multiethnic identity (Indian, Spanish, Mexican, Anglo), and binational economics and politics" (Alvarez 1995:450). This borderland, with its history of push and pull, win and lose, stay or leave, and raging battles, is a land with a history of contention. Yet it is also a place sought after by the Winter Texans. The flags flying high at the Weslaco City Hall are from Spain, France, the Republic of Mexico, the Republic of Texas, the Confederate States of America, and the United States of America. Given the number of countries that have historically ruled this area, how can a concise border culture exist? Moreover, how can a distinct border identity be overlooked in anthropology? A review of academic theory of the borderlands and border identity will help demonstrate the lack of information about Winter Texans as a distinct border identity.

Gloria Anzaldúa writes about borderlands from her own experiences while growing up on the borderlands of the Rio Grande Valley. She saw *la frontera* (the border) as a third space, not of one side or the other but a hybrid space, which gives a unique perspective to the residents of that space. Her borderlands theory uncovers a mestiza consciousness of the border.¹⁶ She explains the work of mestiza consciousness as one that breaks down the subject-object duality that keeps her a prisoner. She shows this in the flesh and through the images in her work, how duality is transcended. She can go beyond the English/Spanish of border spaces to become someone

¹⁶ "Mestiza" refers to a woman of mixed blood, specifically a woman of mixed European and Indigenous American ancestry.

distinctly from the border, a new mestiza who can tolerate contradiction and ambiguity." She learns to be an Indian in Mexican culture, to be Mexican from an Anglo point of view. She learns to juggle cultures" (Anzaldúa 1987:102).

In contrast to Anzaldúa's memoir-focused theorizing, Mexican artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña takes a performance approach to race relations in the United States and immigrant borders. His book *Warrior for Gringostroika* was written in response to the 500th anniversary of the "discovery" of America. His intention was not to celebrate the anniversary but to highlight the New World's accomplishment: multiculturalism. Peña's performance art makes the invisible or hard-to-see conflicts on the border easy to see through his use of objects and clothing performers use and wear. Guillermo Gomez-Pena argues that a multiplicity of shifting identities is the essence of border culture making it challenging to define a border culture (Gómez-Peña 1993:98).

As opposed to Gloria Anzaldúa's use of memoir in her theory-building work and the performance-centered writing of Guillermo Gómez-Peña, anthropologist Robert Alvarez takes a different approach to borderlands in his article, "The Mexican-US Border: The Making of an Anthropology of Borderlands" (1995). Alvarez suggests anthropologists need to "redraw the orders of our cultural areas and look to the boundaries and connections of behavior and join the people we study by engaging the contemporary world," fearing that this engagement will be "the most difficult of borders for the anthropologist to cross" (Alvarez 1995:464). Alvarez has recognized shifts in the identity and social patterns of the borderlands.

To further illustrate the academic theory of the borderlands, Chad Richardson's book *Batos, Bolillos, Ponchos, and Pelados* lets the people of South Texas borderlands speak for

themselves by conducting surveys of Winter Texans.¹⁷ Richardson's book has sections on low-income Anglos, Anglo natives, and a small section on Winter Texans in Chapter Seven. "Every year, approximately a hundred thousand Winter Texans migrate to The Valley to escape cold winters up north. Approximately 85 percent of these Winter Texans congregate in recreational vehicle (RV) parks where daily life revolves around activities exclusively for park residents" (Richardson 2022:285). Richardson interviewed Anglos who had moved to the area and discovered some liked living in The Valley, and others learned to enjoy the area. He describes the adjustment process many go through and why their outcome is positive or negative. Richardson draws this information from a Winter Texan Survey he completed in 1995 of 326 seasonal residents and data from his Borderline Project from 1980 through 2010 (Richardson 2022:3).

While Richardson compiled stories from his survey, I gathered information from my questionnaire and lived with the Winter Texans for three months. I observed people in action living in the park, which is information that no survey could capture. Richardson found that "Winter Texans seldom interact with local Hispanics as neighbors, friends, or coworkers" (Richardson 1999:285). Twenty-five years after Richardson's study, I found, at the 1015 RV Park, this was not always the case. Several residents in the 1015 RV Park speak little English and are Hispanic neighbors within the park. Many park activities include public events and a group of Hispanic friends of the park owners engage with park residents and become friends. Cathy,

¹⁷ Richardson writes, "*Bato*, to young Mexican Americans, means "man", such as "Oye, bato" (Hey, man). It expresses in-group solidarity and epitomizes the sense of identity found among many young South Texas Mexican Americans. *Bolillo* (white bread roll) and *pocho* (faded, off-color), in contrast, are terms used to designate member of out-groups. The first indicates an Anglo (a non-Hispanic white), and the second a Mexican American who is regarded as overly Americanized in speech and in culture. In Mexico, a *pelado* is someone suspected of criminal activity, Along the border, however, it means someone disreputable, whether involved in criminal activity or not" (2022:83).

Barbara, and many more attend local churches and engage in church activities outside the park. Several Winter Texans spend Easter with a local family, cooking, hiding eggs, and smashing cascarones on each other's heads.¹⁸ Others work in local missions, while many volunteer at food banks and animal shelters. One resident, Charles, volunteers at the Llano Grande Birding Park as a tour guide, meeting travelers and locals daily. A local business owner told me they would not be in business if it were not for the Winter Texans. Shops and restaurants in and around Weslaco have signs outside their establishments or windows specifically welcoming Winter Texans.

On the other hand, during my research, I discovered that some townspeople do not pay that much attention to the influx of Winter Texans during the winter. Discussions with one townspeople revealed she did not notice any car tags from Canada despite the proximity to a Canadian-owned RV park; however, she was aware of the increased traffic. Another Hispanic person I spoke with said jokingly, "Winter Texans? Hell, I'm a Winter Texan." And one local told me that "it will get back to normal soon enough."¹⁹

Epstein speaks of identity as follows: "Identity....is essentially a concept of synthesis. It represents the process by which the person seeks to integrate his various statuses and roles, as well as his diverse experiences, into a coherent image of self" (Epstein 1978:101). Many people in the park and other parks have stickers on their trucks: "Proud Winter Texan from Wisconsin" or "Proud Winter Texan from Quebec." People with whom I have researched are proud of the state or country they call home for six months and proud of their Winter Texan status. They display flags and decals to announce to others that they identify as Winter Texans. The 1015 park has many U.S. flags flying outside their RVs and park models. One street alone boasts 10 U.S. flags flying in the ever-present breeze, and several Canadian flags. Looking around, one can tell

¹⁸ Cascarones are hollowed-out eggs filled with confetti.

¹⁹ "Normal" means the traffic will be less congested at local shops, banks, and restaurants.

something about the Winter Texan identity. State flags fly high along with professional sports leagues like the Kansas City Chiefs outside one RV.

Flags and bumper stickers reveal who people identify with. Golf carts the residents use for transportation in the park are decorated with decals and flags. There is an unspoken etiquette that these golf carts may park close to the main entrance of the recreation center. Many wear hats or t-shirts bearing their park's name so that, as Don explained, if a medical emergency occurs, the hospital can alert the park or their spouse. Ingenious really. Several times during my research, an ambulance would pull into the park, turning off its siren so as not to disturb area residents. One day, Sam came into the recreation center saying, "I need to buy a smaller pair of pants." I said why? He said, "Because I just got my butt chewed." Come to find out, he called an ambulance for his wife because he thought she needed medical assistance. She did not.

Newcomers to the park, Teri and I quickly discovered there is a set of unspoken rules or "park etiquette," I call it, much like how the people anthropologist Dorinne Kondo researched and with whom she lived in Japan taught her how to fit in, how to identify as Japanese instead of American (Kondo 1990:12). Friends and neighbors in the 1015 park were doing the same thing to Teri and me - they were teaching us the unspoken rules of etiquette at the park. For instance, I quickly learned that the game we played on cards night determined who could sit with whom. I innocently sat down at an empty seat on card bingo night. I was promptly told that Ellen was sitting here. I went from table to table before someone said yes, I could sit with them. In one of the first days of my research, I learned another lesson. It was biscuits and gravy Tuesday morning, as advertised in the park's weekly calendar. From belonging to a camping club, I knew campers always bring their plates and utensils, so I walked into the recreation center and the kitchen, standing next to the stove, and held my plate out. Rebecca yelled high-pitched, "What

are you doing in the kitchen?" I replied, "The calendar shows biscuits and gravy, and I'm here for biscuits and gravy." She told me that is not how it works and pointed to a lady sitting behind a small desk. I told Rebecca to excuse me and went to the woman with a list on the small desk. She said I did not sign up for breakfast, which was another rule I was unaware of. She looked at Rebecca, and Rebecca nodded to signify that it was ok. I then paid the woman for two orders of biscuits and gravy. Then I was told to get in the line formed by the kitchen. Finally, I received my breakfast. Later that day, Rebecca approached me and apologized for yelling at me. She told me she had looked at the calendar of events, and nowhere on the calendar did it say the biscuits and gravy breakfast was three dollars a plate. She said she understood my confusion. Like the family that Dorinne Kondo lived with in Tokyo, the park tried to "make me over in their image, to guide me, gently but insistently, into proper" not Japanese behavior, rather proper 1015 park behavior (Kondo 1990:12).

Here are more ethnographic vignettes from my fieldwork at the 1015 RV Park, where Winter Texans form a unique borderland identity. They do not just reside here; they have an affiliation with the park and belong to the social group of the park, finding a secure place to live and socialize with friends and family. The following ethnographic vignettes will show the identity characteristics of Winter Texans – retired seasonal mobile subjects with enough resources to travel and establish residences in south Texas as well as maintain homes in their homelands – who reside in gated "over 50" parks. The majority are Anglos and do not speak Spanish; many volunteer in the local community.

Eve

Eve and her husband have been RVing for more than 30 years. At one point, they belonged to a camping club in Illinois and camped with them for many years. Throughout their camping history, they started with a small rig and ended up with a large "Diesel

pusher."²⁰ One of their camping friends had camped as a Winter Texan and invited them to try. Eve and her husband drove their rig for the first few years and finally purchased a park model, and they would stay the winter. After 25 years of migrating to the valley, one year, Eve's husband fell ill and eventually passed away. She was faced with a dilemma: where would she live? Would she be able to afford to live in her current house? She still had a mortgage to pay and payments on her motorhome. She decided to sell her home to her son. Then she was faced with another decision: should she rent an apartment in her hometown or move into the park model already paid for in Weslaco?²¹ Eve moved permanently to Weslaco, where she had a community of friends and would no longer have to pay property taxes.²² Her decision to move to Weslaco was the right choice for her. She now has friends (many of whom are like family) and a social life, as she volunteers at the clubhouse, hosting events and helping the activities director with seasonal decoration and food. She also makes a scrumptious banana nut bread. She supplied us with this treat for the remainder of our stay. She can also participate with friends at park-sponsored events. She goes back to see her family once a year and has no regrets about her decision. While she was a Winter Texan, she now considers herself a full-fledged Texan.

Cindy and Ron

The day after I arrived at the park, an activity called Breakfast at Tiffany's was scheduled. All the ladies dress up and have "High Tea" with many fancy finger foods and small gifts. After asking, of course, I sat down between Barbara and Cindy. It was an enjoyable experience. I got to know the women better, and they offered me information left and right. Cindy let me interview her the next day. She said they had belonged to many RV camping clubs over the years. Finally, they bought a park model and became Winter Texans to escape the cold winters of Illinois. Their vehicle displays a "Proud Winter Texan from Illinois" decal on the back window. These last few years have been more challenging to come down south as she no longer drives, and Ron has to do all the driving. She is 88, and Ron is 90. Eventually, they sold their park model and are now renting one here. Cindy told me she was worried about a friend at the park. She checks on her daily and notifies her friend's daughter, who lives out of state, if anything is wrong.

Ron passed away a few days after the Breakfast at Tiffany's event. I saw Cindy outside her rental. I asked her what happened. She told me he was not feeling well but would not go to the doctor. Finally, they ended up at the hospital. He had pneumonia. Cindy told me the nurse was checking some cords behind the bed when Ron's eyes rolled up, and he died. I asked her if there was anything I could do to help her. I was told her children were coming from Chicago to help her gather her belongings, and she appreciated their help, but they would just put everything anywhere, and she would not

²⁰ A diesel pusher is a type of Class A motorhome having a diesel engine mounted in the rear of the motorhome.

²¹ A park model is a mobile home on wheels that is 400 square feet or less and, in Texas, is not taxed.

²² Eve said her decision was easy. She would be in Illinois alone if she bought a condominium or leased an apartment.

be able to find anything, especially her medicine, which she goes across the border for refills. I suggested she gather her medications and put them in her purse so she would know where to find them during the trip back to Illinois. She said she could not return to the park as Ron was the driver. She showed a blank look as she was talking to me. "This is not what we planned," she said. I hugged her and still miss her, even though I only briefly knew her.

At the Aces game the next night, all card players said a memorial prayer for her and the loss of Ron. It was very moving. The following week at Aces, Cindy called and said she missed everyone. I see her posts on the park's Facebook page about how she misses everyone there. She and her husband had been coming to the park every winter for 34 years.

Eve, Ron, and Cindy are Winter Texans, as they are seasonal Anglo mobile subjects to the borderland area, specifically, the 1015 RV Park in Weslaco. They have enough resources to migrate yearly, rent a park model or own their RV, and pay for the camping spot. They also pay for electricity at the park while maintaining their homes in the north. Ron and Cindy, having belonged to a camping club before becoming Winter Texans, share the camaraderie that many Winter Texans do, belonging to a group of people with similar values and feelings of kinship. Besides escaping the cold winter weather in the north, they also cross the border, like many Winter Texans, to purchase affordable prescription drugs and dental care. Eve has not crossed the border since her husband passed; however, she is active in the missions, volunteering at her local church. Cindy uses social media and her cell phone to keep relationships with her friends in the park. Cindy and Eve belong to the 1015 Facebook group. Cindy checks on her friend, who has health issues, another characteristic of Winter Texans. Friends do become family in this park. People help others navigate life as a Winter Texan with suggestions, help, ideas, social connections, love, and caring, as one would expect from a family member. As their vehicle decal states, Ron and Cindy are proud to be Winter Texans.

* * * * *

The population in the Valley swells by over 100,000 each October through March. The University of Texas Winter Texan Survey of 2018 reported that border towns in Mexico receive an annual economic boost of more than 32 million dollars from Winter Texans, while border towns in The Valley reap an economic impact of over 528 million dollars annually (University of Texas 2018). A Ph.D. dissertation by Maribel Alvarez, *Made in Mexico: Souvenirs, Artisans, Shoppers, and the Meanings of Other Border-Type Things*, explores the creators and vendors of folkloric curios as a Mexican borderland community. Alvarez states that these "allegedly low-grade and marginalized objects and people are nonetheless integral to the development of capitalism in Mexico" (Alvarez 2003:9). Winter Texans are contributing to capitalism in Mexico each time they cross the border and open their wallets and coin purses. Street vendors line the main street of Nuevo Progreso, Mexico. And Winter Texans purchase many curios from them. For example, the park held a Superbowl party, and Teri and I purchased hats displaying our team from street vendors in Nuevo Progreso to wear at the party. Another couple showed up in the recreation center wearing aprons with their Superbowl team on them purchased from street vendors in Nuevo Progreso. In her study of the creators and vendors of folkloric kitsch, Alvarez sheds light on how the curio industry flourishes and gives Mexicans in border towns a livelihood and, at the same time, provides tourists with brightly colored curios, food, and drink when they visit the region (Alvarez 2003:9).

The residents at the 1015 RV Park cross the International Bridge into Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, and contribute to the local economy. Most of them drive across the bridge because they are older and cannot walk long distances across the bridge. The people I interviewed have distinct reasons for crossing. Janet goes once a month to fill her prescriptions, as pharmaceuticals are much less costly in Mexico than in the United States. Rebecca, Cindy, and Deborah go once a

week to eat at El Super Disco, where they enjoy tasty food and a few margaritas while listening to their favorite band, which plays on Wednesdays. Deborah runs the weekly Karaoke night at the 1015 Park and has a good singing voice. The guys in the band at El Super Disco let her sing with them on occasion. She calls them "her boys." Robert and Darlene strictly go to purchase their medications. Robert believes a Mexican Cartel runs the town of Nuevo Progreso, and they do not linger. Ellen usually crosses the border twice a month and enjoys the low cost of manicures and pedicures. A leather shop is making her a jacket, which should be ready in a few months. She likes mango margaritas and eating at Jennifer's.

Anna, a Hispanic business owner in Weslaco, will not cross the border. She says "Mexican" (meaning Mexican American) business owners are at high risk if they cross. She jokes, "Good thing I know how to make tortillas, refried beans, and tamales!" Jody visits to see Doctor Hernandez, her acupuncturist, twice a month. He tells her he loves Winter Texans and that they are why he can operate his medical practice in the town, and local businesses can thrive in Nuevo Progreso. Cathy visits her dentist in Nuevo Progreso. One day, I was walking down the main street in Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, and Cathy was crossing the street. I was surprised to see a 95-year-old woman walking the streets alone. I asked her what she was doing, and she said she was going to her dentist. Unbelievable!

I have never had any trouble during the many times I have visited Nuevo Progreso over the last 15 years. However, other border crossings are not the same.²³ While I was conducting this research, an incident happened in Matamoros in the State of Tamaulipas, about 50 miles

²³ I recently returned to Weslaco and crossed the border into Nuevo Progreso. Tents lined the sidewalks of the bridge, and after talking with people there, I found the migrants were from Ukraine, Russia, and China, seeking asylum in the United States. Passersby dropped off food and water, which some migrants said they didn't need. Many spoke English and were not there to cause trouble but to wait their turn to be interviewed and move into the U.S. Given this situation, there was no trouble involving visitors to Mexico.

from the International Bridge, where people were shot. The U.S. Department of State recommends not traveling to Tamaulipas at all, but no incidents occur at the International Bridge at Nuevo Progreso. It is a place where older adults can walk alone. According to anthropologists Micaelson and Johnson, "Different borders and borderlands are different, and the differences proliferate as border subjects engage one another, relate" (Michaelson and Johnson 1997:32). The International Bridge border crossing exemplifies the differences between border crossings. Winter Texans and other visitors understand it is safe to visit, shop, and seek medical care.

* * * * *

Defining a border culture is difficult because the borderlands are of a "homogeneous construct," according to Robert Alvarez (Alvarez 1995:450). His fact-oriented interpretation of the border is based on history, economics, and politics, and he has noticed shifts in identities and social groups of the border, which opens the door for a Winter Texan border identity.

Conversely, Gloria Anzaldúa created a mystical awareness of the border with her mestiza consciousness of the border that transcends the physical boundaries of the border into a third space. Winter Texans live in this multi-bordered physical area and metaphysical realm. In addition to the border between U.S. and Mexico, there exists a border which Winter Texans navigate that surrounds their own park.

There are differing scholarly approaches to the borderlands as Alvarez points out. There are "literalists" who focus on "the actual problems of the border, including migration, policy, settlement, environment, identity, labor and health," and there are "a-literalists" who "focus on social boundaries on the geopolitical border and also on all behavior in general that involves contradiction, conflict, and the shifting of identity" (Alvarez 1995:459).

In terms of Alvarez's schema, I have adopted a "literalist" approach in classifying Winter Texans as a borderlands identity. My ethnographic examples support the characteristics of a Winter Texan identity as Ron, Eve, and Cindy have the resources to maintain dual households and migrate yearly to The Valley. They rent a park model or own an RV. They establish familial relationships with other mobile subjects and residents of the park, and they are proud to be Winter Texans.

CONCLUSION

According to the Weslaco Chamber of Commerce President, there have been Winter Texans living six months out of the year on the Texas-Mexico border for over 50 years. Many are mobile subjects from October through March; most are retired Anglo people. I discovered some come for the summer-like winters and all the activities in the RV parks, while others enjoy the camaraderie between parks and have made friends with others in the surrounding parks. Many enjoy trips to Mexico for food, medical care, pharmaceuticals, and the lower cost of living The Valley provides. Regardless of their reasons for migrating to the Lower Rio Grande Valley, Winter Texans have contributed to the local economy on both sides of the Rio Grande. The 1015 RV Park, a part of a larger network of parks, is a place for Winter Texans to form friendships that have blossomed into familial bonds, creating a sense of belonging and identity. As I immersed myself in this environment, my own identity transformed, and I found myself becoming a Winter Texan, living the lifestyle I had been researching (Kondo 1990:39).

The history of the area I provided in this paper allows the reader to understand the borderlands where Winter Texans live and the places they navigate daily. They choose to migrate each year to this borderland area, and many forge connections between themselves and locals with games at the recreation center, such as Mexican Bingo and their frequent excursions across the International Bridge into Mexico.

The thirteen parks in Weslaco provide a network of resources and information for the Winter Texans who settle at the 1015 RV Park each year. As I show in detail in Appendix A, there is a further extended network of close to 300 parks across the Lower Rio Grande Valley, with 40 Winter Texan parks located in Mission, Texas, 23 miles West of Weslaco, and 31 parks located in Harlingen, Texas, 20 miles east of the 1015 RV Park.

Information and ideas are communicated in the 1015 RV Park, in the network of parks in The Valley, and across borders into Canada and Mexico. Conversations held in the park may encourage the acceptance of new ideas. It is a space where Winter Texans find belonging, security, and acceptance.

Characteristics of a Winter Texan identity include the resources to afford the yearly trip to and from The Valley, maintain dual living areas, and pay RV park site rent and utilities. Winter Texans find community and a group of people to whom they belong, feel secure, and are accepted.

My ethnographic examples illustrate the economic contributions of Winter Texans. Individuals like Ron, Eve, and Cindy, with the financial resources to maintain dual households and migrate yearly to The Valley, play a significant role in the local economy. Whether they rent a park model or own an RV, their presence is felt in the community. They not only contribute economically but also as active members of the local community, proudly identifying themselves as Winter Texans.

Many questions remain to be answered. Why do Winter Texans come to a borderland where the media currently communicates anger, walls, displacement, and disparity? In this borderland fraught with violence and danger, Winter Texans live a secure, comforting, loving, and peaceful life in The Valley. How is this possible? How might this fact be interpreted and used in other borderland areas?

What would more research with the local residents and surrounding towns and communities reveal? I was not given approval to cross the border until the last week of my research, so I could not conduct much fieldwork there. Still, I wonder what a study of the twin towns, Progreso, Texas, and Nuevo Progreso, Mexico, would uncover. How can a peaceful

relationship between Winter Texans and local Tejanos exist? And finally, when will the academic community deem the Winter Texan a unique border identity?

One hundred thousand people who migrate to The Valley year after year must be recognized. They are a border identity that I hope my research spurs other scholars to investigate further: the Winter Texan.

*Karaoke Night*²⁴

Dianna, our neighbor at the 1015 RV Park, runs the Sunshine Karaoke event on Wednesday nights from 5 to 7 in the recreation room. Teri and I walked in the door on a Wednesday night and saw twelve people signing up to sing and ten others who came to watch, knit, or work a jigsaw puzzle or play games on their phones. Dianna lets everyone sing two songs if they want to. We arrived late, but Charles helped Teri fill out her song sheet and added her to the singing list. She chose "Crazy" and "I Fall to Pieces" by Patsy Cline. As with any karaoke event, many people think they can sing but cannot. However, I had to remember that it is about fun, and the singers share bits and pieces of themselves through the songs they pick out. Dianna announced that the lady whose husband passed away at the beginning of our trip called the park to say hello and that she missed everybody, and then the singing began.

One man sang a song with Civil War overtones. He said some people think it is not proper to speak about or applaud either side of the Civil War today, but he said he does not care; he thinks it is history, and it is okay to speak about it. He said that is why he chose the song. Rachel picked a religious gospel song to sing. She started weak but came in strong at the song's end. What I noticed about these older people singing in front of everyone is their unabashed demeanor – they are not shy. One man sang the song "I'll Stop Loving Her Today" by George Jones. After I left Karaoke, I felt well-being and optimism because these older people still get out and participate in activities. They pave the way for some of us slightly younger ones. Yes, putting a swimsuit on a not-so-attractive body is hard to do; however, they do, and they do not let the shape of their bodies stop them. Many walk with canes but still walk as best they can.

Another woman with red hair and lots of make-up, wearing fancy jeans and boots, sang "Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey" about three notes below where she should have been singing – yet she was having a good time entertaining us as she danced a little and kicked up her heels during the song. Several people could sing, and it was enjoyable to see them having fun. At the end of the two hours, Dianna ended Karaoke Night with "Let There Be Peace in the Valley." She said we are in The Valley, and everyone needs peace. It was a moving experience as we made way for the 7:00 Mexican Bingo players, who had grilled burgers outside and were busy chopping lettuce, tomato, and onion to garnish them.²⁵

²⁴ Compiled from my field notes.

²⁵ The bingo players were from the 1015 RV Park and from other Winter Texan parks nearby. Local friends of park members also joined the group.

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APPENDIX A: RV Park Directory

Lower Rio Grande Valley RV Park Directory, 2021-2022, Published by Winter Texan Times.

(Park Models (PM) are semi-permanent, 400 square feet or less

RV Park Name	Location	# Sites	
		RV	PM
Alamo Palms	Alamo	351	291
Alamo Paradise Acres	Alamo	43	64
Alamo Rec-Veh Park	Alamo	200	242
Alamo Rose RV Resort	Alamo	355	79
Bible Conference Grounds	Alamo	95	167
Casa Del Valle RV Resort	Alamo	163	225
D&L RV Park	Alamo	9	0
Gentle Breeze	Alamo	74	0
La Hacienda Estates	Alamo	2	66
Pleasant Valley RV Park	Alamo	43	0
Roadrunner RV Park	Alamo	43	60
Royal Palms	Alamo	0	131
Trophy Gardens RV Resort	Alamo	628	71
Winter Ranch RV Resort	Alamo	231	31
Total		2237	1427
Total Parks/Total Sites		14/3664	3664
Seaway Village	Arroyo City	70	0
Total		70	0
Total Parks/Total Sites		1/70	
Cactus Cart RV	Brownsville	40	10
Alamo Paradise Acres	Brownsville	43	64
Autumn Acres MH and RV Resort	Brownsville	30	96
Barnett Mobile Homes	Brownsville	0	40
Breeze Lake Campground	Brownsville	95	85
Brownsville Courts	Brownsville	50	10
Citrus Garden	Brownsville	20	50
Gulf Breeze Park	Brownsville	16	120
Honeydal MH & RV Park	Brownsville	85	100
Palm Resaca MH Park	Brownsville	14	203
Palo Blanco MH Park #1	Brownsville	0	40
Palo Blanco MH Park #2	Brownsville	0	28
Rio MH & RV Park	Brownsville	114	65

River Bend RV Resort	Brownsville	303	0
Rod n Reel RV Court	Brownsville	57	15
Royal Poinciana MH Park	Brownsville	6	115
Siesta MH Park	Brownsville	11	63
Sunset Palms	Brownsville	136	37
Trailer Village	Brownsville	17	78
Tropical Trails	Brownsville	240	0
Gulf Park	Brownsville	41	10
Winter Haven	Brownsville	197	289
Total		1515	1518
Total Parks/Total Sites		22/3033	
4-Z RV Park	Donna	0	30
Big Valley	Donna	85	135
Bit-O-Heaven RV Resort	Donna	570	165
Bob's Park	Donna	10	24
Casa Del Sol MH/RV Resort	Donna	200	155
Cedar Park	Donna	0	137
Countryside RV and MH Park	Donna	49	91
Dolphin Motel and RV Park	Donna	94	0
Don Wes Motel and RV Park	Donna	25	0
Green Acres MH & RV Park	Donna	65	37
Hideaway RV & MH Parks	Donna	28	25
Koenigs Winter Resort	Donna	87	14
Magnolia RV Park	Donna	122	126
Mesquite Haven RV & MH Park	Donna	22	8
Palm Shadows	Donna	400	150
Quiet Village	Donna	15	1
Remunda Park	Donna	21	5
Rollin Homes West	Donna	92	0
Shady Acres RV Park	Donna	35	114
Val Verde Grove	Donna	0	99
Val Verde RV Park	Donna	65	0
Victoria Palms Resort	Donna	797	350
Wagon Wheel Park	Donna	41	0
Total		2823	1666
Total Parks/Total Sites		23/4489	
Mar-Lew RV Park	Edcouch	30	0
Total		30	0
Total Parks/Total Sites		1/30	
Bessert's Do-Little Park	Edinburg	40	45
Boothe Gardens Country Camping	Edinburg	10	0

Citrus RV Park	Edinburg	165	235
Gate City Park	Edinburg	34	6
Green Haven RV/MH Park	Edinburg	9	17
Lazy Palms Ranch	Edinburg	293	5
Live Oak Park	Edinburg	10	174
Monte Cristo Gold and Country Club RV Park	Edinburg	88	0
Mone Cristo RVC POA	Edinburg	243	0
Orange Grove RV Park	Edinburg	470	58
Royal Palms RV Park	Edinburg	43	20
Valhalla MH & rV Park	Edinburg	0	139
Valley Gateway RV Park	Edinburg	48	48
	Total	1453	747
	Total Parks/Total Sites	13/2200	
Falcon Heights Motel and Park	Falcon Heights	15	0
	Total	15	0
	Total Parks/Total Sites	1/15	
Bass Lake	Harlingen	22	0
Big Sky MH AND RV Park	Harlingen	44	25
Carefree Valley Resort	Harlingen	119	90
Country Rose Park	Harlingen	0	27
Country Park	Harlingen	35	30
Dixieland MH Park	Harlingen	23	102
Eastgate MH & RV Park	Harlingen	170	141
El Ranchito Park	Harlingen	0	80
Emerald Grove RV Park	Harlingen	125	25
Fig Tree Resort	Harlingen	139	53
La Mirada MH & rV Park	Harlingen	65	50
Lake Vista RV Park	Harlingen	31	0
Lakewood RV Park	Harlingen	190	0
Lazy R Park	Harlingen	18	78
Oasis MH Park	Harlingen	0	161
Palm Gardens MH & RV Community	Harlingen	55	160
Paradise Park	Harlingen	290	259
Park Place Estates RV Resort	Harlingen	678	169
Posada Del Sol	Harlingen	79	80
Stuart Place H & rV Park	Harlingen	30	25
Sun Valley Acres	Harlingen	0	172
Sun Valley RV Park	Harlingen	52	0
Sun Valley Village	Harlingen	0	113
Sunchasers rv park	Harlingen	18	0
Sundance RV Village	Harlingen	80	0
Sunshine RV Resort	Harlingen	1027	450

Ted Mac's RV Park	Harlingen	50	0
The Pines	Harlingen	0	62
Tropics Winds Resort	Harlingen	447	52
Sunwest MH Park	Harlingen	0	136
Winter Garden Park	Harlingen	0	53
	Total	3787	2593
	Total Parks/Total Sites	31/6380	
Lake Texano Park	Hidalgo	169	37
	Total	169	37
	Total Parks /Total Sites	1/206	
Adams Gardens Mobile Estates	La Feria	0	300
Citrus Village	La Feria	0	110
Green Bay South	La Feria	0	88
Highland Park	La Feria	50	0
Kenwood RV & MH Resort	La Feria	232	48
La Casa Gardens	La Feria	0	54
La Feria Motel & RV Park	La Feria	14	0
Lazy C Park	La Feria	0	40
Mesquite RV Park	La Feria	50	0
Palmera Heights	La Feria	3	145
Pleasant Acres RV Park	La Feria	35	0
Pleasant Park	La Feria	12	0
Village West RV & MH Park	La Feria	0	70
VIP La Feria RV Park	La Feria	144	62
VIP La Feria RV Park West	La Feria	134	0
Yellow Rose MH & RV Park	La Feria	29	58
	Total	703	975
	Total Parks/Total Sites	16/1678	
Sea Garden Park	Laguna Heights	58	0
	Total	58	0
	Total Parks/Total Sites	58/58	
Holiday Out RV Park	Los Fresnos	94	0
Palmdale RV Resort	Los Fresnos	150	50
	Total	244	50
	Total Parks/Total Sites	2/294	
Angler's Nest	Los Indios	62	0
	Total	62	0
	Total Parks/Total Sites	1/60	

Adobe Welks Homeowners	McAllen	52	250
Citrus Valley RV Park	McAllen	188	29
Garden Inn ad RV Park	McAllen	10	0
La Vistal Park	McAllen	0	100
McAllen MH Park	McAllen	295	170
Oak Haven MH Village	McAllen	0	30
Paradise Park Inc.	McAllen	146	183
Sunlight Park	McAllen	200	0
Tangelo Courts	McAllen	42	0
Texan Guest Ranch	McAllen	25	14
Texan MH Park	McAllen	90	177
Trailer Town	McAllen	50	10
Triple B MH & RV Park	McAllen	125	140
Circle A	McAllen	0	35
Total		1223	1138
Total Parks/Total Spaces		14/2361	
La Florest RV Park	Mercedes	88	4
Llano Grande Lake P)ark Resort	Mercedes	650	511
Mercedes Escondido RV Park	Mercedes	39	25
Paradise South RV Park	Mercedes	300	50
Parkside Estates	Mercedes	0	140
Total		1077	730
Total Parks/Total Sites		5/1807	
Bentsen Palm RV Park	Mission	173	22
Bentsen Palm Village RV Resort	Mission	250	0
Bluebonnet RV Park	Mission	330	0
Canyon Lake RV Resort	Mission	419	100
Chimey Park RV Resort	Mission	240	0
Circle T RV Park	Mission	227	43
Cottonwood RV Park	Mission	129	0
Dream Valley Ranch	Mission	0	252
El Valle de la Luna	Mission	0	83
El Valle Del Sol	Mission	240	120
Eldorado Acres RV Park	Mission	127	0
Fiesta Village	Mission	427	0
Heritage Square	Mission	14	208
Humminbird Acres	Mission	0	25
J Five MH & RV Park	Mission	120	40
Leisure Valley Ranch	Mission	207	66
Lemon Tree Estates	Mission	12	0
Mission Bell Tradewinds RV Resort	Mission	216	273
Mission Garden Park	Mission	80	145

Oleander Acres	Mission	250	40
Paradise Country RV Park	Mission	75	0
Patriot Point	Mission	56	130
Pleasant Valley Ranch	Mission	317	44
Restful Valley Ranch	Mission	357	0
Retama Village	Mission	0	119
Rollin Homes NH & RV Park	Mission	31	45
Seven Oaks Resort	Mission	155	58
Sharyland Villa RV & MH Park	Mission	70	40
Sleepy Valley Resort	Mission	246	242
Split Rail RV Park	Mission	208	21
Tropical Valley Acres	Mission	0	138
Twin Lakes RV Park	Mission	196	0
Twin Oak RV Park	Misson	3	10
Val's Kountry Corral RV Park	Mission	116	0
Valley View Estates	Mission	201	220
W & I Resort	Mission	31	202
Wagon City North	Mission	20	248
Wagon City South	Mission	0	193
Winter Green Estates	Mission	36	276
Winter Springs	Misson	5	180
	Total	5584	3583
	Total Parks/Total Sites	40/9167	
77 MH Park	Olmito	8	30
	Total	8	30
	Total Parks/Total Sites	1/38	
American RV Resort	Palmview	135	19
Bentsen Grove Resort	Palmview	150	700
Golden Grove RV Park	Palmview	37	50
Green Gate Grove	Palmview	175	0
Lamplighter MH & RV Park	Palmview	48	87
Melody Lane Christian Center	Palmview	4`	0
Mission West Resort	Palmview	300	40
Rio Valley RV & MH Park	Palmview	18	0
	Total	318	896
	Total Parks/Total Sites	8/1214	
Penitas RV Park	Penitas	103	9
Tierra Blanca RV Park	Penitas	22	0
	Total	125	9
	Total Parks/Total Sites	2/134	

Albertsons Garden	Pharr	38	12
Buena Vista Estates	Pharr	0	310
Paradise Resort Estates	Pharr	36	364
Pharr South Park	Pharr	26	358
Plantation South	Pharr	0	200
Sugar Palms MH	Pharr	0	232
Texas Trail RV Resort	Pharr	443	175
Tip-O-Texas RV Resort	Pharr	785	61
Tropics Star RV & MH Resort	Pharr	744	209
Winter Haven MH Village	Pharr	60	170
	Total	2132	2091
	Total Parks/Total Sites	10/4223	
Del Mar Park	Port Isabel	31	3
Diving Dolphins RV Park	Port Isabel	19	5
Lazy Days Park	Port Isabel	16	6
Pelican Point	Port Isabel	19	0
Port Isabel Park Center	Port Isabel	300	100
Sandpiper Trailer Park	Port Isabel	28	40
Tarpon RV Park & Marina	Port Isabel	38	0
Traveler RV Park	Port Isabel	93	0
	Total	544	154
	Total Parks/Total Sites	8/698	
Gateway RV & MH Park	Raymondville	134	57
South Forty RV Park	Raymondville	15	0
	Total	149	57
	Total Parks/Total Sites	2/206	
Adolph Thomae Co. Park	Rio Hondo	35	0
Channelview RV Park	Rio Hondo	33	0
Hummingbird Cove	Rio Hondo	120	5
Rio Hondo RV Park	Rio Hondo	36	0
River Ranch Resort	Rio Hondo	66	103
Twin Palms RV Resort	Rio Hondo	75	75
	Total	365	183
	Total Parks/Total Sites	6/548	
Circle RV Park	San Benito	50	0
De Los Santos RV Park	San Benito	31	3
El Ranchito RV Park	San Benito	69	22
First Colony NG & RV Park	San Benito	149	35
Fun N Sun Resort	San Benito	812	143
Garden MHC Park	San Benito	0	67

Green Acres RV Park	San Benito	0	33
Pan American RV Park	San Benito	83	14
Resaca Bend RV Park	San Benito	82	2
Riverwalk at Camino Real	San Benito	16	60
Snowbird Court	San Benito	38	0
Southwind MH Park	San Benito	0	23
Tropics MH Community	San Benito	20	200
Villa Los Reyes MH & RV park	San Benito	20	163
Williams Roak MH Park	San Benito	0	59
Tropical Trail Park	San Benito	306	0
	Total	1676	824
	Total Parks/Total Sites	16/2500	
Country Palms RV Park	San Juan	133	2
Los Pinos Park	San Juan	20	10
Orangewood Estates	San Juan	3	61
Rio Palms	San Juan	0	50
San Juan Gardens	San Juan	117	97
The Grove	San Juan	65	68
	Total	338	288
	Total Parks/Total Sites	6/626	
San Ygnacio RV Park	San Ygnacio	70	6
	Total	70	6
	Total Parks/Total Sites	1/76	
Isla Blanca Park	South Padre Island	594	0
South Padre KOA Resort	South Padre Island	200	0
	Total	794	0
	Total Parks/Total Sites	2/794	
1015 RV Park	Weslaco	89	44
Clearview Park	Weslaco	0	33
Country Sunshine	Weslaco	244	133
Magic Valley RV Park	Weslaco	72	320
Pine to Palm	Weslaco	20	369
Leisure World Village	Weslaco	96	208
Ranchero Village	Weslaco	112	401
Rio Valley Estates	Weslaco	99	237
Siesta Retirement Village	Weslaco	0	410
Snow to Sun RV & MH Park	Weslaco	311	178
Southern Comfort	Weslaco	187	216
Trails End MH & RV Park	Weslaco	114	249
Weslaco Park	Weslaco	217	0

	Total	1561	2798
	Total Parks/Total Sites	13/4359	
Amigo Inn and RV Park	Zapata	72	0
Bass Lake RV Park	Zapata	65	0
Beacon Lodge	Zapata	50	4
Bridgeview RV Park	Zapata	40	10
Copes RV Park	Zapata	10	0
Four Seasons	Zapata	150	150
Lakefront Lodge	Zapata	414	30
Oso Blanco Lodge RV park	Zapata	50	0
Shady Haven Park	Zapata	127	120
Veleno Trailer Park	Zapata	24	4
	Total	1002	318
	Total Parks/Total Sites	10/1320	

APPENDIX B: 1015 RV Park Activities Calendar, March 2023

March 2023



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
26 <i>Daily Billiards</i> 7AM	27	28	1 Waffles & Sausage 7:30 am, Karaoke 5 pm, Mexican Bingo 7:30 pm	2 Ladies Night Out 4 pm, Poker 5 pm, Dominos or Cards 6:30 pm	3 Coffee and Donuts 10 am* Identifying Phone/Computer Scam Presentation 10:15 am	4 Poker Run & 50/50 1:30 pm Aces 6:30 pm
5	6 <i>shuffleboard</i> Shuffleboard 9 am, Water Aerobics 9:30 am M-TH, Card Bingo 6:30 pm	7 Golf 10:30am/ Darts 3pm/ Vegas Night 6:30pm	8 Biscuits and Gravy 7:30 am / Karaoke 5 pm Mexican Bingo 7:30 pm	9 Ladies Night Out 4 pm, Poker 5 pm, Dominos or Cards 6:30 pm	10 Coffee and Donuts 10AM	11 Aces 6:30 pm Party 3pm <i>Bday</i>
12 Texas Hold'em 1:30 pm, Birthday/Anniversary Ice cream Social 6pm	13 Shuffleboard 9 am, Water Aerobics 9:30 am M-TH, Card Bingo 6:30 pm	14 Golf 10:30 am/ Darts 3 pm/ Vegas Night 6:30 pm	15 Breakfast 7:30 am, Park Activity Meeting 9 am, Karaoke 5 pm Mexican Bingo 7:30 pm	16 Ladies Night Out 4 pm, Poker 5 pm, Dominos or Cards 6:30 pm	17 Coffee and Donuts 10 am	18 Winter Texan Farewell BBQ 5:00 pm Aces 6:30 pm
19	20 Shuffleboard 9 am, Water Aerobics 9:30 am M-TH, Card Bingo 6:30 pm	21 9 Hole Golf 10:30 am/ Darts 3 pm/ Vegas Night 6:30 pm	22 Biscuits and Gravy 7:30 am / Karaoke 5 pm Mexican Bingo 7:30 pm	23 Ladies Night Out 4 pm, Poker 5 pm, Dominos or Cards 6:30 pm	24 Coffee and Donuts 10 am	25 Music by E-E ISO HS ESTUDIANTINA 3 pm Aces 6:30 pm
26 Omaha Toumey 1:30 pm	27 Shuffleboard 9 am, Water Aerobics 9:30 am M-TH, Card Bingo 6:30 pm	28 9 Hole Golf 10:30 am/ Darts 3 pm/ Vegas Night 6:30 pm	29 Surprise Breakfast 7:30 am, Karaoke 5 pm, Mexican Bingo 7:30 pm	30 Ladies Night Out 4 pm, Poker 5 pm, Dominos or Cards 6:30 pm	31	1

APPENDIX B

Notes

Please look at Daily Activity Calendar for daily events and times if not list on this calendar