

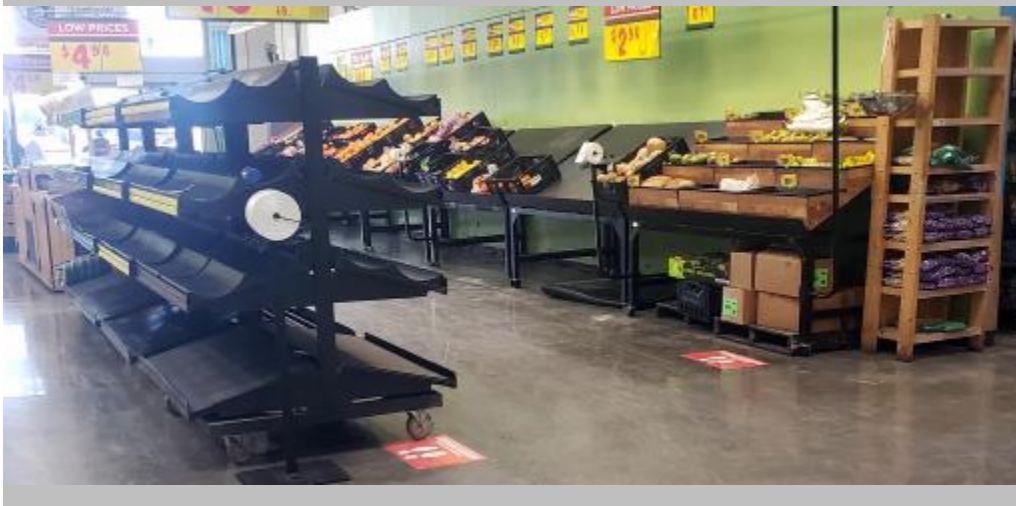


# In Search of El dorado

A daily journal of my travels and adventures in my.....Search for Eldorado

Hello to Family & Friends

Tuesday, February 16<sup>th</sup> 2021 Day 30



As predicted, the guy next door never showed up with a generator and the power never came back on. After breakfast I headed off to Laredo. Most of the traffic lights were still out in Zapata and Laredo, but there were police directing traffic at several of the intersections in Laredo. The H.E.B. gas station was closed but I went in to do some shopping.



It looked like the pandemic back in March all over again. Empty produce shelves, empty meat cases, empty milk racks, signs stating only one case of water per person, and, even now I am laughing out loud, most shopping carts had a pack of toilet paper. LOL. How long do people think the power is going to be off?

I found diesel across the street, waited in line for 10 minutes to get to the pump, then sat in the RV for another twenty minutes while I filled up. The pump was sooo slow. The poor lady behind me waited all that time only to find that premium was the only gasoline left.





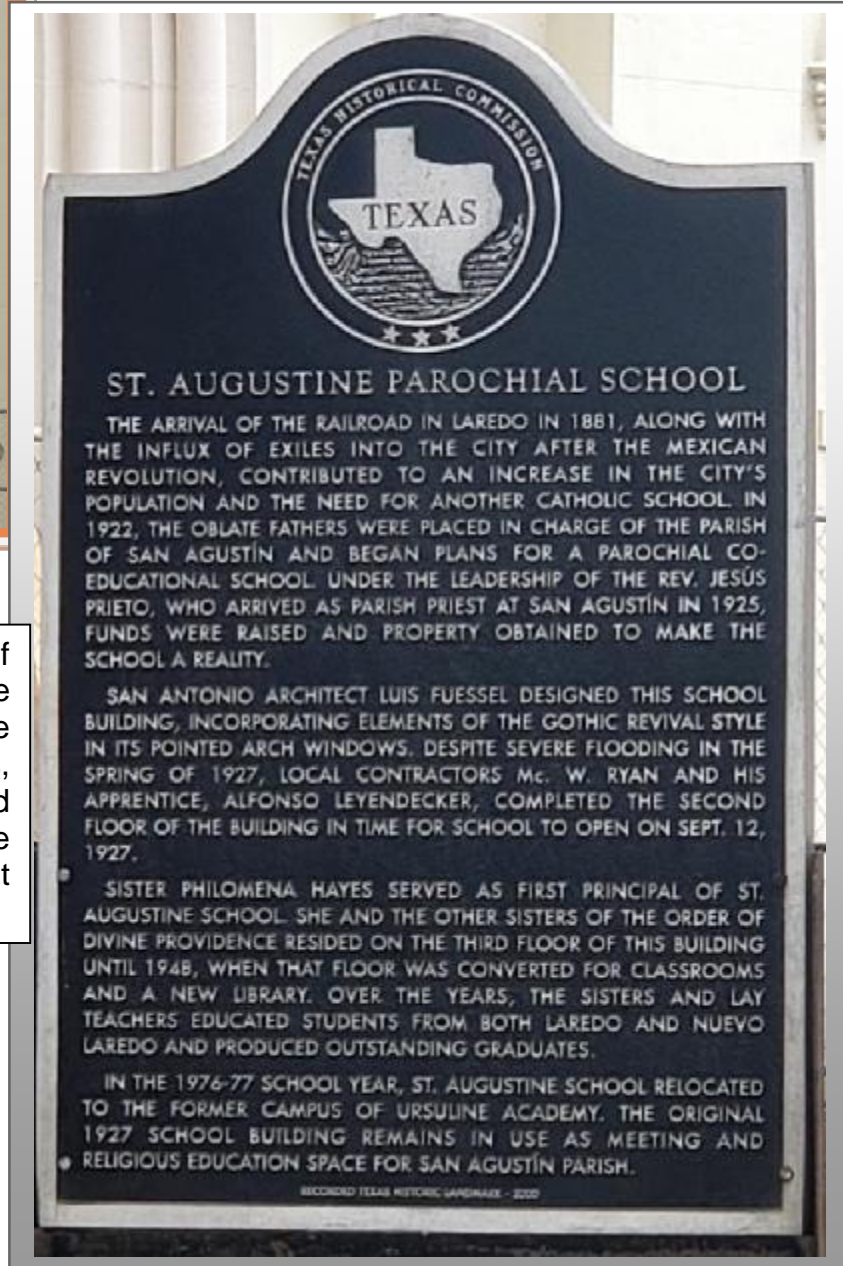
I had to enter the parking lot through the exit as the entrance was narrow, lodged between two, four foot round billboard standards and under low hanging branches. By this time it was noon and I ate lunch before venturing forth. I'm pretty sure the museums are supposed to be open, so I'm not sure if it's Covid, no power, or a plumbing issue that has them closed. I will find out tomorrow.



San Agustin de Laredo  
Founded in 1755

Since I was already in the oldest part of Laredo I decided to go for a walk

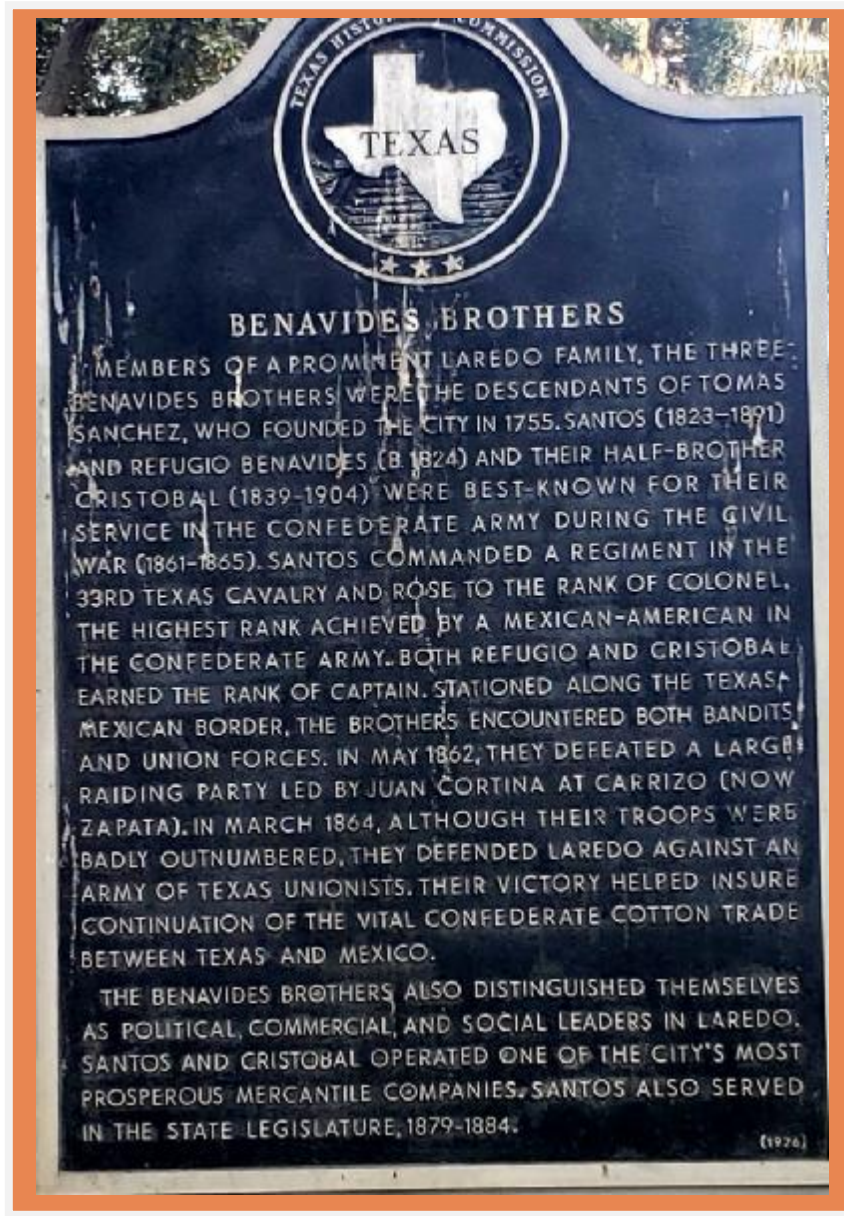




It looks like they're doing a pretty nice job of restoration here. The cathedral sits alongside the St Augustin Plaza with a band shell in the middle and several plaques and monuments, including one of General Zaragoza. It looked like the same statue, and same size, as the one at his memorial in Goliad, and I didn't think you needed another photo of that.











## THE REPUBLIC OF THE RIO GRANDE

IN JANUARY 1840 SEÑOR ANTONIO CANALES AND OTHER FEDERALISTS MET NEAR GUERRERO TO FOUND THE REPUBLIC OF THE RIO GRANDE. CANALES AND FRIENDS WERE LOYAL TO THE MEXICAN CONSTITUTION OF 1824, WHICH HAD BEEN SET ASIDE BY CENTRALISTS IN MEXICO CITY. THE REPUBLIC WAS TO GOVERN NORTHERN MEXICO AND THE PART OF TEXAS SOUTH OF THE NUECES. JESUS CARDENAS WAS PRESIDENT; FRANCISCO VIDAURRI Y VILLASENOR, VICE PRESIDENT; AND JUAN FRANCISCO FARIAS, SECRETARY. THE CAPITOL WAS ESTABLISHED AT 1000 ZARAGOZA STREET, ON THIS PLAZA IN LAREDO.

CENTRALIST GENERAL MANUEL ARISTA BROUGHT AN ARMY HERE TO CRUSH THE REPUBLIC. IN MARCH HE TOOK LAREDO WITHOUT A FIGHT; THEN AFTER A BATTLE AT MORELOS, HE CAPTURED AND KILLED FEDERALIST LEADER ANTONIO ZAPATA. MEXICAN AND ANGLO-TEXAN FEDERALISTS COUNTERATTACKED, AND RECAPTURED LAREDO AND SEVERAL OTHER TOWNS; BUT CONFRONTED BY A LARGE CENTRALIST FORCE AT SALTILLO, THE ANGLO-TEXANS FOUND THEMSELVES AND SOME CARRIZO INDIANS MAKING A LONE STAND. MANY COMRADES HAD FLED. AFTER A BLOODY BATTLE, THE INDIANS AND TEXANS ESCAPED TO THE NORTH OF THE RIO GRANDE. CANALES, DESERTED BY HIS ARMY, SURRENDERED TO ARISTA NEAR CAMARGO, AND IN A FEW DAYS CARDENAS GAVE UP LAREDO. THE REPUBLIC OF THE RIO GRANDE HAD LASTED 283 DAYS.

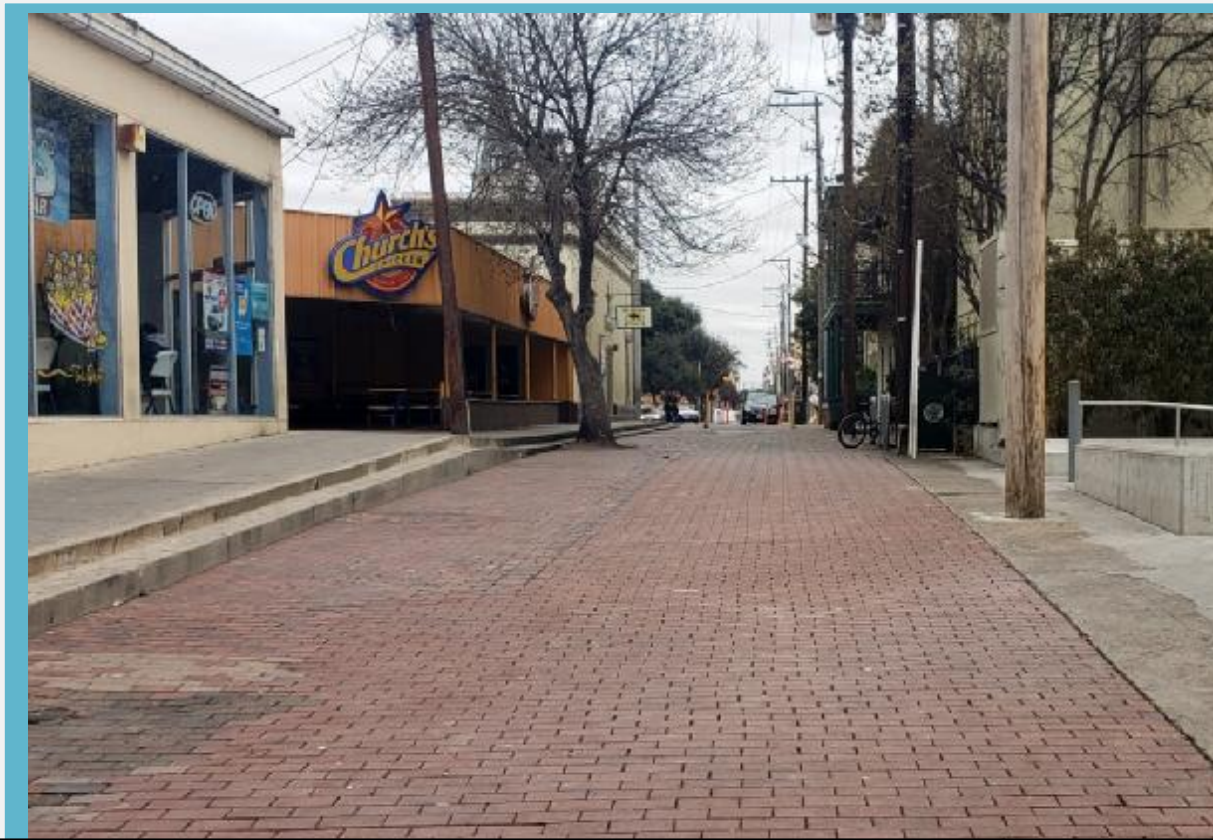
(1976, 1975)



I walked a couple blocks this way, and a couple blocks that way and ended up at the Gateway to the Americas International Bridge. This is one of four crossings in Laredo, pretty obvious by the amount of Border Patrol vehicles everywhere you go. The largest is the Juarez-Lincoln International Bridge. I will check that one out tomorrow. I have some interesting facts for you on it.







Does this bring the same thing to your mind as it does to mine?

As I walked out on the streets of Laredo.  
As I walked out on Laredo one day,  
I spied a young cowboy wrapped in white linen  
Wrapped in white linen as cold as the clay.

I can see by your outfit that you are a cowboy  
These words he did say as I boldly walked by.  
Come an' sit down beside me an' hear my sad story.  
I'm shot in the breast an' I know I must die.

### **Do You Know the Song's Origin?**

The classic cowboy ballad “Streets of Laredo” or “The Cowboy’s Lament” bears a permanent place in the annals of American music. Perhaps no other song so perfectly captures the spirit of the old west and the men who worked the range. The song came in at #4 on the Western Writers of America’s survey of the Top 100 Western songs, and dozens of famous artists have covered it, including Johnny Cash, Willie Nelson, and Waylon Jennings, just to name a few. But do you know the truth about Streets of Laredo?

The song’s narrator isn’t the protagonist. Streets of Laredo is about bearing witness. The narrator shares the tragic story of a dying cowboy’s last request and how he faced the end of his life, “cut down in his prime.” In the version we all know so well, the cowboy dies from a bullet to the chest. However, the song has its origins in an older Irish ballad known as the “The Unfortunate Rake,” and in this original version, the protagonist perishes from something quite different. In fact, many variants of the original song change the lyrics in order to hide or obscure the true cause of the young man’s demise.

The song may date from as early as 1740. However, the earliest discovered version of the Irish song, so far anyway, was a broadside in the late 18th/early 19th century called “The Buck’s Elegy.” This version contains explicit clues about what spells death for the youth. The song is set in Covent Gardens, which was at that time a well-known locale for acquiring the services of prostitutes. The lad laments the fact he didn’t know his condition in time to take mercury and treat his illness, which is strongly implied to be a venereal disease. A later 19th-century broadside begins with the line “As I was walking down by the Lock Hospital,” a reference to a hospital for venereal disease treatments.

“Had she but told me when she disordered me,/Had she but told me of it at the time,/I might have got salts and pills of white mercury,/But now I’m cut down in the height of my prime.” The many different versions of the song cast the protagonist as a youthful soldier, cowboy, maiden, or sailor. The character who has done this “disordering” is variously referred to as a prostitute or camp follower, but in one version she is “my heart’s delight.” The dying youth laments his earlier act of ignoring of his father’s warnings about his “wicked ways,” and requests a funeral to be organized by the narrator, one featuring a pall of six pretty maidens. The maidens will carry “bunches of roses” to overwhelm the stench of his dead body.

The man responsible for adapting the lyrics of the Irish ballad to the modern version was likely a working cowboy named Frank H. Maynard. When he was sixteen, Maynard left his Iowa home and set out in search of adventure in the glory days of the old west. In 1870, he hunted buffalo for the first time in Kansas. By spring 1872, Maynard was a working cowboy, thriving in a lifestyle he apparently loved. He participated in numerous horse and cattle drives. Maynard’s cowboying days came to an end when he was married in 1881. He later worked as a successful carpenter in Colorado.

As early as 1876, Maynard had devised new lyrics to the song that would become “Streets of Laredo.” Over time, Maynard would come to write articles and poetry about his cowboy days. In 1878, Ed Masterson, Marshal of Dodge City and the brother of famed Bat Masterson, was killed in a gunfight. Maynard sang one of his poems over his friend’s grave. In 1911, Maynard self-published his book Rhymes of the Range and Trail.

It wasn’t until 1923 that Maynard achieved a degree of fame as the lyricist of “Streets of Laredo.” At the Pikes Peak or Bust Rodeo in Colorado Springs, Maynard was working as a night watchman for the simple pleasure of being close to the cowboy world of his glory days. While at the rodeo, a professor and former reporter named Elmo Scott Watson learned Maynard’s story. Watson wrote an article about him, and the story made national news.

From its origin as the lament of an Irish rake suffering from a fatal case of venereal disease to its adaptation to tell the story of a dying cowboy, “Streets of Laredo” bears the mark of many bards in its folk evolution. It also preserves the spirit of a lost time and place, never losing its power to touch us with its tragic tale. The song is destined to remain an immortal classic of American music.

Thanks to [texashillcountry.com](http://texashillcountry.com) for that history.

I hope the facts above did not ruin the song for anyone.

I did visit the Water museum, but it was closed also. If none of these museums are open there won't be much to keep me here.

There are a few outdoor sights that the supposedly 61 degree high for tomorrow might induce me to visit.

A check of the weather has lowered the high to 57 and cloudy. Freeze warnings again Thursday and Friday nights. I have received one email so far asking if I am available for claims – across the country – so my good friend Mother Nature is having her way with us again.

I drove about ten miles north to a Flying J truck stop for the night. I am nestled in-between a few semis to block the wind.

I will have to try and find propane today. The campground was out, Flying J is out, gas is an issue. Ha ha.

I don't think it's as good as the original, but there it is. Yesterday's redone episode.

Until next time.....