

SG-1038

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service
National Register of Historic Places Registration Form



1. Name of Property

Historic Name: García, M. E. and Estela Cueto, House
Other name/site number: García House
Name of related multiple property listing: NA

2. Location

Street & number: 155 Calle Anacua
City or town: Brownsville State: Texas County: Cameron
Not for publication: Vicinity:

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this
 nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.

I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following levels of significance:
 national statewide local

Applicable National Register Criteria: A B C D

Mark Wolfe State Historic Preservation Officer Date 4/17/17
Signature of certifying official / Title
Texas Historical Commission
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria.
Signature of commenting or other official Date
State or Federal agency / bureau or Tribal Government

4. National Park Service Certification

I hereby certify that the property is:
 entered in the National Register
 determined eligible for the National Register
 determined not eligible for the National Register.
 removed from the National Register
other, explain:

For Colson H. Beall Date of Action 6.5.17
Signature of the Keeper

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

5. Classification

Ownership of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Private
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Local
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - State
<input type="checkbox"/>	Public - Federal

Category of Property

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	building(s)
<input type="checkbox"/>	district
<input type="checkbox"/>	site
<input type="checkbox"/>	structure
<input type="checkbox"/>	object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	0	buildings
0	0	sites
0	1	structures
0	0	objects
1	1	total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register: 0

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions: Domestic/single dwelling

Current Functions: Domestic/single dwelling

7. Description

Architectural Classification: LATE 19th AND 20TH CENTURY REVIVALS/Colonial Revival

Principal Exterior Materials: Brick, Wood

Narrative Description (see continuation sheets 7-8)

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8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria: A, C

Criteria Considerations: n/a

Areas of Significance: Ethnic Heritage/Hispanic, Architecture

Period of Significance: 1961-1967

Significant Dates: 1961

Significant Person (only if criterion b is marked): n/a

Cultural Affiliation (only if criterion d is marked): n/a

Architect/Builder: Edward J. Romieniec & Associates, architects; E. J. Waitman, general contractor

Narrative Statement of Significance (see continuation sheets 9-20)

9. Major Bibliographic References

Bibliography (see continuation sheet 21-24)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey #
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record #

Primary location of additional data:

- State historic preservation office (*Texas Historical Commission, Austin*)
- Other state agency
- Federal agency
- Local government
- University
- Other -- Specify Repository:

Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned): NA

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10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 0.7 acres

Coordinates

Latitude/Longitude Coordinates

Datum if other than WGS84: NA

1. Latitude: 25.916913° Longitude: -97.503121°

Verbal Boundary Description: Lot 1, Block 5, Río Viejo subdivision, Brownsville, Cameron County TX

Boundary Justification: The nominated parcel includes all the property historically associated with the building.

11. Form Prepared By

Name/title: Stephen Fox
Organization: Anchorage Foundation of Texas
Street & number: Anderson Hall, MS-50, Rice University, 6100 Main Street
City or Town: Houston State: Texas Zip Code: 77005
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Date: June 14, 2016

Additional Documentation

Maps (see continuation sheet 25)
Additional items (see continuation sheets 26-27)
Photographs (see continuation sheets 28-52)

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photograph Log

Garcia House
Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas
Photographed by Juan Velez

Photo #1 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0001)
Southeast elevation (front), camera facing northwest.

Photo #2 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0002)
Southeast elevation. Detail of portico, camera facing northwest.

Photo #3 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0003)
View of portico, camera facing southwest.

Photo #4 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0004)
Northeast elevation (left) and two rear elevations (right), camera facing southwest.

Photo #5 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0005)
Northeast elevation detail, camera facing southwest.

Photo #6 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0006)
Northwest elevation (porch enclosure), camera facing southeast.

Photo #7 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0007)
Northeast elevation (rear addition), camera facing southwest.

Photo #8 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0008)
Detached non-contributing carport, camera facing northeast.

Photo #9 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0009)
Historic windows on First & Second Floors. Entrance porch.

Photo #10 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0010)
Historic window on First Floor. Detail from exterior.

Photo #11 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0011)
Historic window on First Floor. Detail from interior, camera facing southeast.

Photo #12 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0012)
Historic window on Second Floor. Detail from interior, camera facing southeast.

Photo #13 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0013)
Historic door on First Floor. Detail, camera facing northwest.

Photo #14 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0014)
Entrance hall, camera facing southeast.

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Photo #15 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0015)
Historic stair and historic rail from First Floor (entrance).

Photo #16 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0016)
Historic stair and historic rail from Second Floor.

Photo #17 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0017)
Historic rail and historic floor boards on Second Floor.

Photo #18 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0018)
Bedroom with historic floor boards & historic windows on Second Floor.

Photo #19 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0019)
Kitchen with historic terrazzo.

Photo #20 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0020)
Dining Room.

Photo #21 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0021)
View of front yard foliage, camera facing northeast.

Photo #22 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0022)
View of front yard foliage, camera facing northwest.

Photo #23 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0023)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing northwest.

Photo #24 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0024)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing southeast.

Photo #25 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0025)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing southeast.

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 100 hours per response including time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Office of Planning and Performance Management, U.S. Dept. of the Interior, 1849 C. Street, NW, Washington, DC.

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Description

The 1961 Estela Cueto and Martín E. García House is a two-story, brick veneer, Southern Colonial style house with a southeast-facing, double height Tuscan portico fronting a central, two-story, five bay wide, symmetrical, side-gable-roofed block. Recessed one-story side-gable-roofed wings bracket the two-story central block. The García House was built in the Brownsville, Texas, subdivision of Río Viejo, an elite garden suburban neighborhood developed in 1950-51 that is characterized by curvilinear streets with Spanish plant names, a lush mixture of native and subtropical vegetation, and frontage on Town Resaca, a meandering oxbow lagoon that courses through Brownsville. The García House faces southeast onto Calle Anacua; its east side elevation faces northeast onto Calle Retama. The house is surfaced with red brick. The six-pane-over-nine-pane ground-floor windows in the portico, which rise from floor level sills; doors; the rail of the main stair; and second-floor floor boards were salvaged from the c. 1854 house of M. E. García's maternal grandfather, don Francisco Yturria. The Garcia House retains a high level of historic integrity.

Location and Setting

The García House was built on Lot 1 of Block 5 of the Río Viejo subdivision at the intersection of Calle Anacua and Calle Retama. This corner lot of 7/10 of an acre is terraced up above the adjoining streets and slopes down on the northwest to the bank of Town Resaca. Calle Anacua is a loop street on the southeast edge of Río Viejo. Houses on Calle Anacua are predominantly one-story, brick veneer, ranch type houses built in the 1950s. The major exception is the two-story brick veneer Israel Lizka House at 44 Calle Anacua (2004), which is closely patterned on the design of the García House. Profuse plantings of subtropical vegetation, especially various species of palm trees, as well as such native tree species as Texas ebony and mesquite give Calle Anacua and Río Viejo its verdant character. There are no sidewalks on Calle Anacua, so lawns of St. Augustine grass curve down to low, sloped curbs bounding the paved street.

Exterior

The García House is of wood-frame, brick veneer construction. The symmetrical front (southeast) elevation consists of a two-story, side-gable-roofed block that is five bays wide. One-story, side-gable roofed wings, each three bays wide, flank the central two-story block. A double-height portico supported on five Tuscan columns projects forward of the two-story street front of the house. The double-doored front entry is centered in the portico and framed by a pair of superimposed transoms, a dentil band, and a simply detailed classical architrave. Two tall, floor-length, six-pane-over-nine-pane double-hung wood framed windows symmetrically flank the front entry. Each is capped with a slender projecting architrave above a running band of dentils and each window is framed by a pair of green-painted hinged and louvered shutters. The portico is paved with flagstones. Second-floor openings consist of double-hung, aluminum-framed windows bracketed by louvered shutters stationed above each of the ground-floor openings. The wings are each faced with three double-hung, high-set, aluminum-framed windows bracketed with louvered shutters. The columns support an architrave detailed with a smooth frieze below a running band of thick dentils and a thin projecting cornice. The side-gabled roofs are low pitched and capped with very shallow boxed eaves.

The northwest resaca elevation of the García House is a flat brick plane. Three second-story double-hung aluminum-framed sash windows bracketed by louvered shutters are evenly spaced across the rear elevation. The porch along the rear elevation was originally open, but was enclosed between 2014 and 2016. The porch roof was also replaced. Ground floor openings consist of sliding glass doors that open onto a shallow roofed terrace. The one-story wing extends north into the backyard to become a hipped-roof two-car carport and guest room. The rear extension of this one-story wing transforms what would have otherwise been the central-block-with-wings plan into an L plan. A driveway from Calle Retama proceeds through a brick screen wall into a backyard parking court and the carport. A non-contributing detached wooden carport structure added in 2006 stands inside the brick wall along Calle Retama.

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The northeast side elevation of the house, facing Calle Retama, consists of the end-gabled one-story wing, on which a pair of high-set shuttered aluminum-framed windows are centered, and the end-gabled two-story central block, on which four high set shuttered aluminum-framed windows are centered. A circular vent is centered beneath the peak of the gable on the one-story wing and the two-story block. A shed-roofed, one-story, painted wood board-and-batten addition extends off the back side of the Retama wing.

Interior

The interior of the García House is detailed with simple classical architraves framing door openings. Inside the front double doors, the stair rises in a dogleg arrangement, turning at a mid-level landing. The lower run is bracketed by the dark polished wood newel post and rail salvaged from the c. 1854 Yturria-García House. A corridor passes to the right of and alongside the stair and connects to the kitchen at the rear of the house. To the right of this corridor and accessible from the entrance hall is the living room, located behind the pair of ground-floor windows salvaged from the Yturria-García House. To the left of the stair is a lateral passage that leads to the original dining room (now used as a downstairs master bedroom). Behind the house's rear elevation is a single room, running the length of the central block, from which intervening partitions and a dropped ceiling have been removed. This is now the kitchen-dining room. The one-story wing alongside Calle Retama contains the family room, originally a study. A dropped tile ceiling was removed in this room, exposing the upper portion of the brick wall and a structural wood roof truss aligned beneath the ridge of the roof. First-floor surfaces are polished white terrazzo, except in the living room, which was (and is) carpeted. The second floor contains three bedrooms, each with its own bathroom. The wood floors on the second floor were salvaged from the Yturria-García House. The one-story rear wing contains a two-car carport and a guest room, now used as an exercise room. The rear yard slopes down to the bank of Town Resaca on the northwest side of the property. Additions to the rear of the house are compatible with the design of the García House.

The García House was designed and built in 1960-61 and owned by the Garcia family until 2005. The architect was Edward J. Romieniec & Associates and the builder was E. J. Waitman. Despite the alterations over time, the house retains integrity of location, setting, design, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Statement of Significance

The García House, a single-family domestic dwelling named for its original occupants, Estela Cueto and Martín Enrique García, and completed in 1961, is a locally significant example of Southern Colonial style domestic architecture. The García House demonstrates the enduring appeal of traditional house types even during the postwar period of the twentieth century, when appreciation of modern architecture was at its height. The fiction of age that twentieth-century traditional architecture fostered was enhanced in the case of the García House because it incorporates material salvaged from the house that M. E. García's maternal grandparents, Felicitas Treviño-Domínguez and Francisco Yturria-Navarro, built in Brownsville about 1854. The house is nominated under Criterion A at the local level in the area of Ethnic Heritage/Hispanic, because it demonstrates how the South Texas cattle rancher and Brownsville civic leader and businessman, Martín E. García, and his wife, Estela Cueto García, contributed to the perpetuation of a social identity through domestic architecture that affiliated them with other elite South Texas ranching families, several of whom were also of Mexican descent. It is nominated under Criterion C, significant at the local level in the area of Architecture, as an example of the Late 19th and 20th Century Colonial Revival sub-style popularly called Southern Colonial and as an unusual residential work of the Bryan- and Harlingen-based architectural practice of Edward J. Romieniec & Associates and the Harlingen general contractor E. J. Waitman. The period of significance begins in 1961 with the construction of the property and closes in 1967 to align with the fifty year threshold.

Brownsville, Texas, county seat of Cameron County, is in 2016 a city of more than 180,000 people. Brownsville is located near the mouth of the Río Grande at the southmost tip of Texas, across the border from its sister city, Matamoros, Tamaulipas, Mexico (founded 1784), twenty miles west of the Gulf of Mexico. Brownsville was founded in 1848 at the end of the U.S.-Mexico War in order to establish a U.S. trade gateway opposite Matamoros, which had risen to prominence as a Gulf port in the 1820s. During its first twelve years of existence, Brownsville was one of the largest cities in Texas. As the site of the U.S. Army's Fort Brown, Brownsville was occupied by both the Confederacy and the U.S. during the Civil War. Because Matamoros was not subject to the U.S. Naval blockade of Confederate ports, it became the gateway for funneling Confederate cotton to Europe and the United States between 1862 and 1865, generating immense wealth for the Texan merchants participating in this trade, including the Mexican-born Brownsville merchant, banker, and cattle rancher Francisco Yturria.¹ After the Civil War, Brownsville lost its commercial primacy as railroads that linked Texas and Mexico were built in the early 1880s much farther upriver, bypassing the entire southern tip of Texas until construction of the St. Louis, Brownsville & Mexico Railway, which linked Brownsville to Corpus Christi and Houston in 1904-05 and in which Francisco Yturria was an investor. Railway construction opened the door to rapid social change as developers bought tens of thousands of acres of arid ranch land and installed steam-driven irrigation systems to transform the fertile alluvial delta of the Río Grande into highly productive agricultural real estate. Developers encouraged the immigration of Midwestern farmers and investors in the 1900s and 1910s and founded thirteen new towns and associated farming tracts in Cameron and Hidalgo counties to accommodate the newcomers. Developers sought to appeal to affluent Midwestern Anglo-American transplants by constructing California Mission style buildings in the 1910s and planting evergreen vegetation that thrived in the Lower Río Grande Valley's subtropical climate in an effort to re-image the flat, hot, humid, borderland as an Exotic Tropical Paradise. Rapid population growth created social instability however, as newcomers sought to impose

¹ Milo Kearney and Anthony Knopp, *The Historical Cycles of Brownsville and Matamoros* (Austin: Eakin Press, 1991); Alicia A. Garza and Christopher Long, "Brownsville, TX," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 12, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/hdb04>; Verna J. McKenna, "Yturria, Francisco," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 07, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fyt01>.

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Southern style segregation on the borderland's primarily Mexican-descended and Mexican immigrant population, provoking such violent reactions as the Sedicioso Uprising of 1915.²

During the 1920s, the focus of development shifted from agricultural real estate to urban real estate in the Valley's small towns. Spanish Mediterranean architecture, the more sophisticated 1920s' successor to the California Mission style of the 1910s, marked this episode. So robust was the Valley's construction market that by 1930 it seemed that the region might escape the impact of the Great Depression. By 1931 the error of this supposition had become evident. However, as in the rest of Texas, real estate and construction activity began to recover in 1935. Brownsville International Airport, dedicated in 1929, became a hub for Pan American Airways during the 1930s. Between 1934 and 1936 Brownsville recovered its role as an international seaport when the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged a 17-mile-long, deep-draft ship channel that enabled ocean-going vessels to call at the new Port of Brownsville. Especially associated with this period was the construction of houses for the Valley's Anglo-American elite, often employing Regional American house types, such as the California Monterey suburban house type, to continue to suggest through architecture a connection to the border's Hispanic heritage.³ The U.S. war effort in the first half of the 1940s spurred industrialization, urban expansion, and new economic activities along the Texas-Mexico border. Brownsville's Mexican sister city, Matamoros, emerged in the postwar period as the site of a cotton production boom that occurred with such rapidity that U.S. news media—*Time*, *Business Week*, and the *Christian Science Monitor*—took notice.⁴ During the postwar period, the Lower Río Grande Valley was also where a new school of modern architecture took form, rejecting the historically influenced Mission, Spanish, and Regional models of the recent past. This trend was identified especially with the architects John G. York and Alan Y. Taniguchi of the neighboring city of Harlingen, both of whom designed modern buildings in Brownsville.⁵

Modern architecture occurred in tandem with a renewed emphasis on suburbanization as Brownsville's population, which, after doubling in the 1920s, had experienced no growth in the 1930s, then expanded by nearly 60 percent in the 1940s and by another 37 percent in the 1950s, to achieve a population of 48,000 by 1960. The development of the 118-acre Río Viejo subdivision by the Harlingen real estate investors W. Vernon Walsh (1904-1964) and Paul Carruth (1899-1972) capitalized on Brownsville's expanding market for elite residential property in the postwar period. Río Viejo ("old river") was named for its frontage on Town Resaca, an abandoned distributary of the Río Grande that courses sinuously through much of the territory that was subject to suburban development in Brownsville in the postwar period. The subdivision's winding streets, identified by the Spanish names for local flora (Calle Anacua, Calle Cenizo, Calle Jacaranda, Calle Retama), were designed to serve only single-family house sites. Vernon Walsh and Paul Carruth's Río Viejo Corporation advertised the native tree canopy of "mesquite, ebony, and flowering trees and shrubs" that spread across the site.⁶

²George C. Werner, "St. Louis, Brownsville and Mexico Railway," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 08, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/eqs30>; Kearney and Knopp, *The Historical Cycles*, pp. 167-240; J. Lee Stambaugh and Lillian J. Stambaugh, *The Lower Río Grande Valley of Texas* (San Antonio: Naylor Co., 1954), pp. 160-287; Stephen Fox, "Architecture in Brownsville: The Twentieth Century, 1904-1970," in *Studies in Matamoros and Cameron County History*, ed. Milo Kearney, Anthony Knopp, and Antonio Zavaleta (Brownsville: The University of Texas at Brownsville/Texas Southmost College, 1997), pp. 284-292.

³Fox, "Architecture in Brownsville," pp. 293-312.

⁴"Cotton Boom for Brownsville," *Business Week*, August 27, 1949, p. 23; Charlotte A. Dubois, "Cotton Saves the Day," *Christian Science Monitor Magazine*, October 8, 1949, p. 7; "Big Five," *Time*, 58 (September 10 1951): 89-90.

⁵Fox, "Architecture in Brownsville," pp. 312-322; "The Architect and His Community—Cocke, Bowman & York: Harlingen, Texas," *Progressive Architecture* 36 (June 1955): 102-115, 153; "The Coastal Bend Revolution," *Texas Architect* 13 (September 1963), entire issue.

⁶"Río Viejo Subdivision Gets Ready for City's Expansion," *Brownsville Herald*, February 4, 1951, p. 5; "Undeveloped Tract Becomes Showplace," *Brownsville Herald*, January 25, 1953, p. 9.

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The García House is the most architecturally distinctive house near the south entrance to Río Viejo from Palm Boulevard. Its location at the corner of Calle Retama and Calle Anacua exposes not only the house's front elevation on Calle Anacua to public view but also the depth of the lot along Calle Retama as it slopes down to Town Resaca. Planted with bamboo, oleanders, bougainvillea, Royal Poinciana trees, Texas ebony trees, and Washingtonia palm trees, the long Calle Retama side of the property condenses the Exotic Tropical Paradise image evident in the overall community plan of Río Viejo. Because the García House was built on a lot where Calle Retama crosses Town Resaca, it is adjacent to one of the two locations where those passing through the community have long, lateral views encompassing the conjunction of the lagoon-like resaca and the subtropical planting clustered along its banks. The García House is significant for the way its suburban residential design contributes to perceptions of the high status of the planned community of Río Viejo. It is significant for the singularity of its two-story spatial organization and traditional architectural design and for its resaca-side site, which affords a public vista of the Exotic Tropical Paradise landscape complex characteristic of elite residential space in Brownsville and the Lower Río Grande Valley during the twentieth century.

The García House is also associated with a crucial mid-twentieth-century Ethnic Heritage episode because its owners helped set in motion the transfer of economic and political authority from Anglo-Americans to Mexican-Americans that occurred in the South Texas borderlands in the last quarter of the twentieth century, a transition that began in the 1960s but did not become fully evident until the 1970s. The García House additionally materializes the Ethnic Heritage dynamics of kinship, family networks, religious affiliation, and transnational cultural and commercial connections that marked the personal histories of Estela and Tino García and represent the experiences of the Hispanic ranching elite of the South Texas borderlands during the 1960s.

Background of Historic Persons Associated with the Property

The García House is significant for its association with Martín Enrique García (1911-1976) and his wife Estela Cueto García (1914-1984).⁷ Mr. and Mrs. García were members of elite Hispanic merchant and ranching families of the South Texas borderlands. Through their social, business, and religious networks and their family ties to the layered culture of the South Texas-Tamaulipas border, they perpetuated in mid-twentieth-century suburban forms a regionally distinctive ethnic heritage with which their homesite is associated. Because the house incorporates architectural components salvaged from the house built by M. E. García's maternal grandparents, Mr. and Mrs. Francisco Yturria, the García House additionally became a vehicle for conserving family memory and identity, and community tradition. That Mrs. García's great-great-grandfather, don Mariano Treviño-García, was the uncle of Mr. García's grandmother, doña Felicitas Treviño-Domínguez de Yturria, indicates the historical layers of belonging and identity embedded in the house's architectural artifacts.

Martín E. García raised cattle at El Devisadero Ranch in Kenedy and Willacy counties, which was conveyed to him by his mother, Isabel Yturria García (1872-1950), and which she in turn inherited from her father, Francisco Yturria-Navarro (1830-1912).⁸ Beginning in 1861, Francisco Yturria assembled what became the 80,000-acre Punta del Monte Ranch, which overlaps the county lines of Willacy and Kenedy counties, fifty-seven miles north of Brownsville. After

⁷ On M. E. García see the entry for "Martín E. García," in Joseph Clark, *Texas Gulf Coast: Its History and Development: Family and Personal History* Vol. 4 (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1955), pp. 541-542, and "Obituaries: Martín E. García," *Brownsville Herald*, November 5, 1976, p. 2-A. On Estela Cueto García see "Murió la Señora Estela Cueto García," *El Heraldo de Brownsville*, October 17, 1984, p. 12-A.

⁸ "García Rites To Be Held Here Monday," *Brownsville Herald*, April 23, 1950, p. 1. On the history and subdivisions of Francisco Yturria's Rancho Punta del Monte see: Tonnyre Thomas Joe, "My Name Is Tonnyre Thomas Joe and I Am a Woman Rancher," *Texas Monthly*, August 2006, <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/my-name-is-tonnyre-thomas-joe/>; <http://www.elcaneloranch.com/history.html>; <http://thomascharolais.com/history/>; and http://www.raymondville-chronicle.com/news/2008-03-12/farm_ranch/018.html.

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Yturria's death, the ranch was partitioned between his two children, Daniel Yturria (1859-1940) and Isabel Y. García. In 1932 Mrs. García conveyed her half of the Punta del Monte Ranch, El Devisadero ("the partition"), in equal shares to her four surviving children, Miguel Francisco García (1901-1978) of Río Grande City, Joseph Alexander García (1905-1985) of Brownsville, María del Rosario García Thomas of Raymondville (1907-1999), and M. E. García. M. E. García obtained the ranch headquarters.⁹ Mrs. García conveyed a fifth share to her attorney, James R. Dougherty (1871-1950), a Beeville lawyer, cattle rancher, and oilman. Judge Dougherty's children, Dudley Tarlton Dougherty, May Dougherty Baxter (subsequently Carr, subsequently King), and Rachael Dougherty Vaughn, and their descendants thus became closely involved with the García family's ranching operations and other business enterprises.¹⁰

Although M. E. García's mother's family was identified with Brownsville and Matamoros, his father, Miguel Alejandro García-Decker (1872-1923), was from Río Grande City and its companion border city, Camargo, Tamaulipas. At the time of his death, Miguel García worked for the Walker-Craig Company, a Brownsville wholesale grocery company. Miguel García's mother, Victorina Decker-Morales de García (1851-1922), was the daughter of don Juan Decker (born c. 1820), a French immigrant merchant who lived at various times in Camargo and Río Grande City. The Franco-Mexican merchant families of Río Grande City—the Laborde, Lacaze, and Lafargue families—attest to the commercial ties between Matamoros and New Orleans that predated the U.S.-Mexico War, ties that were perpetuated until the construction of railroads in the 1880s diverted trade routes with Mexico much farther upriver to Laredo, Eagle Pass, and El Paso.¹¹

M. E. García's obituary in the *Brownsville Herald* noted that he was a graduate of Brownsville High School and had attended Brownsville Junior College. In addition to his ranching interests, he managed oil and gas operations. García was an organizer and director of the Brownsville National Bank, which opened in 1974, and a director of the Raymondville Bank of Texas in Raymondville, the county seat of Willacy County. From 1954 to 1958 he was a trustee of the Brownsville Independent School District and he served one term on the Brownsville City Commission during the four-term administration of Antonio González, Brownsville's first Mexican-American mayor (1963-70). A parishioner of St. Mary Catholic Church at the time of his death, García had earlier been a parishioner of Sacred Heart Church. M. E. García was a member of the Brownsville Assembly of the Knights of Columbus, the Order of the Alhambra (also a Catholic fraternal organization), and a past president of the Men's Club of St. Mary Church. In 1952 he was awarded the papal medal Proecclesia et Pontificie by Pope Pius XII, the highest award that the pope bestows on lay people to recognize service to the church.¹² M. E. García's business career and public service were amplified by other family members: his elder brother, J. Alex García, was also a Brownsville City Commissioner and a director of the Pan American State Bank. J. Alex García's eldest son, J. A. García, Jr., served three terms in the Texas Legislature

⁹ See the biographical profiles of M. E. García's brothers Miguel Francisco García and Joseph Alexander García, and of his brother-in-law, Harl R. Thomas, in *Texas Gulf Coast: Its History and Development: Family and Personal History*, Vol. 4, pp. 710 and 266-267, and Vol. 3, p. 212. Also the website for The Inn at El Canelo <http://www.elcaneloranch.com/history.html>.

¹⁰ Tonnyre Thomas Joe, the granddaughter of María García Thomas, explains the division of the ranch into five parcels in <http://www.texasmonthly.com/articles/my-name-is-tonnyre-thomas-joe/>. On James Robert Dougherty see: Grace Bauer, "Dougherty, James Robert," *Handbook of Texas Online*, accessed June 08, 2016, <http://www.tshaonline.org/handbook/online/articles/fdo22>. Indicative of the extent to which the Doughertys became involved in business dealings with the Garcías is the report on a lawsuit involving title to a 120-acre site near the Port of Brownsville that lists the individual plaintiffs who shared undivided interest in the property. The list includes multiple generations of Yturrias, Garcías, and Doughertys. "People Sue to Get Land Back," *Brownsville Herald*, May 11, 1984, p. 1B.

¹¹ "Miguel A. García Dies From Effects of Paralytic Stroke," *Brownsville Herald*, March 22, 1923, p. 3; Shirley Brooks Green, *When Río Grande City Was Young: Buildings of Old Río Grande City* (Edinburg: Pan American University, 1989), pp. 14-15, 24-25, 30-31.

¹² "Obituaries: Martín E. García," *Brownsville Herald*, November 5, 1976, p. 2-A.

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representing Willacy County (1967-72). Frank D. Yturria, the son of M. E. García's cousin, Fausto Yturria (1897-1973), organized the National Bank of Commerce in 1964, Brownsville's first suburban bank.

M. E. García belonged to a generation of Brownsville civic leaders who quietly set in motion a momentous historical shift away from Anglo-American economic and political hegemony, dominant in Brownsville and the Lower Río Grande Valley since the beginning of the twentieth century. Four of the five co-organizers of the Brownsville National Bank were Mexican Americans: M. E. García, Jesús Castellano, Dr. Vidal Longoria, and Dr. Joseph A. Zavaleta. Alfredo Gavito joined them on the bank's first board of directors at the time it opened in 1974.¹³ J. Alex García had been the Pan American State Bank's only Spanish-surnamed director in the 1950s. When Frank Yturria organized the National Bank of Commerce in 1964, all but one of his co-organizers were Anglo-Americans (John A. Beck of Houston, Cecil Burney of Corpus Christi, and Howard K. Cummings, Dr. J. C. George, Barry Putegnat, and E. B. Roberts of Brownsville. The exception was Antonio Esteve, a Spanish national then residing in Matamoros).¹⁴ Mr. and Mrs. García's across-the-street neighbors at 234 Calle Retama were Mary Bertha Champion and Reynaldo G. Garza (1915-2004). In 1961 Reynaldo Garza became the first Mexican American to be appointed a federal district judge. In 1979, when he was named to the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, Judge Garza became the first Mexican-American federal appeals court judge.¹⁵ The extent to which Río Viejo in the 1950s and '60s was home to affluent Hispanic Brownsville families represented the emergence of what would prove to be a historically significant demographic trend, even though the neighborhood remained primarily Anglo American through the 1980s. In addition to Judge Garza and his family, Judge José Tomás Canales (1876-1976), the first Mexican American to represent Brownsville in the Texas Legislature (1905-11), moved to a house at 25 Calle Jacaranda in the 1960s. M. E. García's cousin, Herminio Yturria (1892-1960), built his house at 154 Calle Cenizo (1954), and the two sons of Herminio Yturria's brother, Fausto Yturria, built or moved to houses in Río Viejo: Mary Altman and Frank D. Yturria built the house at 54 Calle Cenizo (1958) and Sandra Longoria-Hodge and Fausto Yturria, Jr., moved into a house at 556 Calle Retama. M. E. García's brother, J. Alex García and his wife, Bertha Champion, built a long, low ranch type house at 104 Calle Cenizo (1965). The Spanish immigrants Marta Alonso de Celada and José Antonio Ortiz-Fernández (1918-2009) built their house at 344 Calle Cenizo (1965) when they moved to Brownsville from Matamoros in 1964. Although Antonio Ortiz was a native of Spain, he was also the grandson of Francisca Champion and Miguel Fernández of Brownsville, and the great-grandson of Estefanía Solís de Champion, a descendant of don Juan José Solís, one of the founders of Matamoros.

Estela Cueto García's family background bespeaks both the generational layering and national diversity of Hispanic ethnic heritage on the South Texas border. Mrs. García's father, Manuel Cueto (1869-1923), and his brothers Andrés, José, and Fernando were not Mexican Americans. They were merchants who immigrated to Brownsville in 1881 from Pendueles, Asturias, a Spanish village on the Cantabrian Sea, which in 2016 had a population of 225 people. The Cueto brothers followed the brothers José and Miguel Antonio Fernández, who emigrated from Pendueles to the U.S. in 1856 and subsequently brought collateral relatives, Victoriano Fernández in 1865 and Juan H. Fernández in 1875, to work as merchants in late nineteenth-century Brownsville. Manuel Cueto's first wife, Pilar Orive (1879-1915), Mrs. García's mother, was the daughter of Cenobia Hinojosa (1856-1926) and Atenógenes Orive (1845-1930). Atenógenes Orive owned the 7,226-acre Palmito Ranch on the Río Grande downriver from Brownsville; it is where the last battle of the Civil War was fought on 13 May 1865. Orive inherited the property from his mother, doña Benigna Treviño de

¹³ "Application to Organize a National Bank and Representations of Applicants," *Brownsville Herald*, September 20, 1972, p. 3B; "Rezoning Item Tabled By Board," *Brownsville Herald*, April 13, 1973, p. 3A; "Ceremonies for Bank on Monday," *Brownsville Herald*, January 20, 1974, p. 9A.

¹⁴ "Charter Given For New National Bank," *Brownsville Herald*, May 19, 1964, p. 1.

¹⁵ Louise Ann Fisch, *All Rise: Reynaldo G. Garza: The First Mexican-American Federal Judge* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1996).

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Orive, heir to don José Ignacio Treviño, who in 1827 was awarded title to the 27,289-acre Potrero de San Martín by the state of Tamaulipas. Treviño had occupied the property since 1810.¹⁶

In 1856 San Martín was partitioned into shares among Treviño's seven children. Benigna Treviño de Orive inherited this property through her father, Manuel Treviño-García. Manuel Treviño's brother, Ignacio Treviño-García, was the father of M. E. García's grandmother, Felicitas Treviño de Yturria. The intermarriage of members of Mexican ranching families with Spanish immigrant and other European immigrant merchants diversified marriage patterns by expanding the circle of eligible marriage partners. Mrs. García's mother's family was closely tied by marriage to the family of Joseph Champion, who, with his brothers Albert, Peter, and Nicholas, and their cousin George, had immigrated from Austrian Istria (now in Croatia) to New Orleans in 1846 and from there to Point Isabel in 1848, where three of the brothers and their cousin married the Mexican Solís sisters. Pilar Orive de Cueto's sisters, Enriqueta and Margarita, and her brother, Praxedis Orive, married Joseph Champion's children, John G., Charles, and Eufemia Champion respectively; Mrs. Cueto's youngest brother, Eduardo, married Lidia Champion, the niece of John G., Charles, and Eufemia. Bertha Champion, the daughter of Margarita Orive and Charles Champion (and thus the first cousin of Estela Cueto García), was the wife of M. E. García's elder brother, J. Alex García. Judge Reynaldo Garza's wife, Mary Bertha Champion, was the second cousin of Bertha Champion García because their grandfathers were brothers. Intertwined family relationships were reinforced by social, business, educational, and religious ties that bound the elite Hispanic families of south Texas into a self-conscious but also largely self-effacing elite. Thus the García House is significant in the area of Ethnic Heritage for spatially representing the "modernization" of patrician identity in a mid-twentieth-century Texas-Mexican border city. Mr. and Mrs. García's son-in-law, Robert B. Vezzetti, underscored this phenomenon when he illustrated both the Yturria-García House and its successor, the M. E. García House, in the book he co-authored with Ruby A. Wooldridge, *Brownsville: A Pictorial History* (1982).¹⁷

According to her obituary, Estela García was a graduate of Villa María Academy in Brownsville and had attended Brownsville Junior College prior to her marriage in 1937. She and her husband were the parents of five children: María Estela García (1939-2002), Dr. Martín E. García II, Isabel Pilar García (Mrs. Robert B. Vezzetti), Cecilia Marie García (Mrs. Donald J. Schulz), and Miguel Alejandro García. After her husband's death, Mrs. García took his place on the board of directors of the Brownsville National Bank; she also served on the board of directors of the Delta Machine Company. She was active in parish activities at St. Mary Church and was a member of the Pan American Round Table 1 in Brownsville. Mrs. García was a founding member of the International 300 Club, formed in 1958. The International 300 Club was a social organization of elite Mexican and American women (the initial American members were primarily of Mexican American or Spanish American descent, or Mexican immigrants) that through participation in social rituals affirmed their elite status in a mid-twentieth-century transborder context. The founding members were largely from Brownsville and Matamoros, but membership was expanded to include Anglo-American women from Brownsville and other Valley cities during the 1960s. The International 300 Club's annual October ball received extensive coverage in the *Brownsville Herald*. Almost every year during the 1960s, Mr. and Mrs. García were photographed at the gala event. Mrs. García was also photographed in her house in January 1965 for a report in the

¹⁶ Betty Bay, *Historic Brownsville: Original Townsite Guide* (Brownsville: Brownsville Historical Association, 1980), pp.145-46. On Palmito Ranch and the Orive-Treviño succession, see Mary Boss, "Roots Run Deep at Palmito Hill," *Brownsville Herald*, November 1, 2006: http://www.brownsvilleherald.com/community/article_2466f9e6-c7b0-5f30-8fa3-247d1e6a4a61.html and the website "Santanderos: Researching Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas: Descendants of Ignacio Hinojosa Treviño" [sic: should be Treviño Hinojosa]

: <http://santanderos.blogspot.com/2008/05/descendants-of-ignacio-hinojosa-trevino.html>

"No. 307—Treviño, José Ignacio de," *Guide to Spanish and Mexican Land Grants in South Texas* (Austin: Texas General Land Office, 1988).

¹⁷ A. A. Champion, *Champion: The Champion Family of Point Isabel* (Brownsville: Border Press Publishing, 2000); Ruby A. Wooldridge, and Robert B. Vezzetti, *Brownsville: A Pictorial History* (Norfolk-Virginia Beach: The Donning Co., 1982), pp. 92, 191.

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Herald that the house would be shown on the first Casas Hermosas tour sponsored by the Zonta Club, a business and professional women's service club. The Casas Hermosas tour, and the newspaper publicity associated with it, stressed the old-family status of Mr. and Mrs. García (and of M. E. García's brother, J. Alex García, and his cousin Frank Yturria, when their houses were on tour in 1966 and 1969) by emphasizing heirloom furnishings and fixtures, especially those inherited from don Francisco Yturria.¹⁸

Estela Cueto and M. E. García led lives that were very connected to the places they were from, Brownsville and the Devisadero Ranch. Their business interests, education, family, religious, and social affiliations and community activities reflected this strongly local focus. The lists of pallbearers and honorary pallbearers published in the *Brownsville Herald* at the times of their deaths demonstrate how profoundly they were connected to the old family ranching elite of the Lower Río Grande Valley of South Texas, the Texas Coastal Bend, and northern Tamaulipas. Their house, although newly built and located in a recently developed neighborhood, sought to express continuity with local historical traditions rather than newness.

Contractor and Architect

The contractor who built the García House was Elgar John Waitman of Harlingen (1901-1977). Born in Clay, Ohio, E. J. Waitman lived in San Benito at the time of the Census of 1930 but moved to Harlingen during the 1930s and spent the rest of his career there. In Harlingen Waitman built Minnie V. Gay Junior High School (1950, Cocke, Bowman & York, architects), Congregation Beth Israel Temple (1950, Cocke, Bowman & York), and the First National Bank Building (1951, Cocke, Bowman & York). Harlingen historian Norman Rozeff identifies the Holsum Baking Co. plant, the Nehi Bottling Co. plant, and Luby's Cafeteria in the Coronado Village Shopping Center as other important examples of Waitman's work.¹⁹

The architects who designed the García House were Edward John Romieniec of Bryan and his associates Tommy T. Carruth and Robert W. Cline of Harlingen. Edward J. Romieniec (1920-1996) was an esteemed professor of architecture at Texas A&M University from 1956 to 1960 and again from 1963 until his retirement in 1988. He was a professor of architecture at Columbia University from 1960 to 1963, before he returned to A&M to become chairman of the division of architecture and then the first dean of architecture (1969-73) after the College of Architecture and Environmental Design was established. Two awards programs at Texas A&M University are named for Romieniec as is the annual educator's award given by the Texas Society of Architects. Romieniec's associates in this firm were Tommy T. Carruth and Robert W. Cline, both recent A&M architecture graduates who were from the Lower Río

¹⁸ "Murió la Señora Estela Cueto García," *El Heraldo de Brownsville*, October 17, 1984, p. 12-A; "Chinese Costume," *Brownsville Herald*, November 1, 1959, p. 1-B; "International 300 Club's Masquerade Ball is Held," *Brownsville Herald*, p. 2-B; "Dance Planned," *Brownsville Herald*, October 7, 1960, p. 1-B; "The International Three Hundred Club Holds Gala Formal Dance at Center," *Brownsville Herald*, November 6, 1960, p. 1-C; 5; "International '300' Ball Was Trip 'Around the World,'" *Brownsville Herald*, November 1961, p. 1-B; "International 300 Members Dance Into Small Hours of Morning," *Brownsville Herald*, November 4, 1962, p. 1-B; "International 300 Members Dance Into Small Hours of Morning," *Brownsville Herald*, October 27, 1963, p. 1-B; "International Three Hundred Members Dance Till Dawn," *Brownsville Herald*, October 25, 1964, p. 1-B. "Antique Chandelier," *Brownsville Herald*, 17 January 1965, p. 18; "Unusual Design," *Brownsville Herald*, 24 January 1965, p. 20; "J. A. Garcías Blend Old With New," *Brownsville Herald*, 23 January 1966, p. 1-B; "Zontians and Guests Visit Beautiful Homes Today," *Brownsville Herald*, 26 January 1969, p. 4-B.

¹⁹ "Hallaron Muerte a un Hombre en su Casa," *El Heraldo de Brownsville*, July 26, 1977, p. 1; Norman Rozeff, "The Chronological History of Harlingen," Decade 1940 to 1949 and Decade 1950 to 1959: <http://www.myharlingen.us/users/0118/historical%20info%20HAHM/07%20Decade%201940%20to%201949.pdf> and <http://www.myharlingen.us/users/0118/historical%20info%20HAHM/08%20Decade%201950%20to%201959.pdf>

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Grande Valley. Carruth and Cline were Romieniec's associates from 1958 to 1960. The architectural firm was dissolved in 1960, when Romieniec received the faculty appointment at Columbia University.²⁰

Tommy Turner (Perkins) Carruth (1928-2014) was born in Quanah, Texas, but grew up in Harlingen, to which his mother and stepfather moved in 1937. He was the stepson of Paul Carruth, one of the developers of Río Viejo. Carruth lived in Brownsville between the mid 1970s and early 1990s and for a time owned the historic Merchants National Bank Building downtown (1057 E. Elizabeth Street; 1912, Atlee B. Ayres, architect). A sailor from the time his family moved to the Gulf coast, Carruth spent nine years living on his boat. He then settled in Harlingen but in 2007 moved to Port Isabel. Carruth was the founder of the Laguna Madre Yacht Club in Port Isabel (1976) and the architect of its clubhouse.²¹

Robert Wayne Cline (1928-1976) was from San Benito. During the 1960s Cline practiced in Aspen, Colorado. He returned to Harlingen around 1970, where he spent the last years of his brief career, dying there of cancer at age forty-eight. Upon returning to Harlingen, Cline designed a substantial addition to the Lon C. Hill Memorial Library, Wilson Elementary School in Primera (1974), and the Plaza National Bank Building (1975), Harlingen's first majority Mexican-American-owned bank, in which Fausto Yturria was an investor. In Brownsville Cline was the architect of M. E. García's Brownsville National Bank Building (629 E. Elizabeth Street; 1974, extensively altered and refaced in 1983).²²

The only Valley buildings that can be attributed to the Romieniec-Carruth-Cline firm are the W. Vernon Walsh Building, 910 E. Levee St. in downtown Brownsville (1959), the Tropical Savings & Loan Association Building in downtown Harlingen (1960, demolished), the Seville Motor Hotel at 1800 W. Harrison Avenue in Harlingen (1960, extensively altered), and the García House (1960-61). The Walsh Building and the García House are the Romieniec-Carruth-Cline buildings that remain substantially intact.²³

Architectural Significance

The García House is an example of so-called Southern Colonial domestic architecture, a twentieth-century American Colonial Revival sub-style whose most prominent identifying feature is a double-height portico supported on classical columns, most often attached to a symmetrically composed two-story house front. Conflating the double height portico of nineteenth-century American Greek Revival architecture with the symmetrically composed, two-story house form of eighteenth-century American Georgian architecture, the Southern Colonial is a twentieth-century architectural pastiche that proved immensely popular despite its tenuous historical pedigree. The García House derives significance from the way this innocuous suburban genre intersected the elite Mexican-American cultural affiliation of its owners to materialize their patrician status in an architecturally unassertive and understated manner that is visible elsewhere in South Texas. Incorporation of architectural material salvaged from the demolished house of M. E. García's grandfather, Francisco Yturria, imbued their house with an aura of venerability that would not otherwise pertain to a house built in the early 1960s. The architectural conservatism of the García House is provocative because it ran

²⁰ Kelly Roberson, "First A&M Dean Dies," *Texas Architect* 46 (September-October 1996): 18.

²¹ "Tommy Turner Carruth," *Valley Morning Star*, January 9, 2014:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/valleystar/obituary.aspx?pid=168982252>;

Danielle Altenburg, "Sailing Away: For Yacht Club Members the Journey is the Destination," *Valley Morning Star*, August 15, 2011:

http://www.valleymorningstar.com/news/article_e7ef92ef-5c21-5a18-9fb1-faf18f3a5cd8.html

²² "Cline, Robert Wayne," *American Architects Directory*, ed. John F. Gane, (New York: R. R. Bowker & Co., 1970), p. 163;

"Obituaries: Robert Wayne Cline," *Brownsville Herald*, July 18, 1976.

²³ "Walsh Building Combines Beauty With Service," *Brownsville Herald*, December 4, 1959, p. 8.

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counter to the mid-twentieth-century modern design trends with which its architects, Edward J. Romieniec & Associates, were otherwise identified.

The Southern Colonial house type is especially associated with George Washington's house, Mount Vernon, an eighteenth-century American house with a double height portico located on a Southern plantation.²⁴ Such twentieth-century Texan derivatives as the E. L. Flippen House in Highland Park (1910, C. D. Hill & Co., demolished), the William L. Clayton Summer House in Houston (NRHP, 1984. 1924, Briscoe & Dixon, architects), and the Thomas Pickett-H. L. Hunt House in Dallas (1929, Arch C. Baker) reinterpreted Mount Vernon as a two-story, twentieth-century, suburban house.²⁵ In the Lower Río Grande Valley, the Pat S. Devine House in Pharr (426 W. Caffery Avenue; 1928, R. Newell Waters) and the Dr. Thurman A. Kinder, Jr. House in Los Ebanos Estates in Brownsville (38 Sunset Drive; 1935, W. Frank Godwin), and, in Laredo, the Dr. William R. Powell House (subsequently the Adela Ligarde and J. C. Martin, Jr., House, 1620 Clark Boulevard; 1938, Henry Steinbomer) transmitted the Mount Vernon type to the South Texas borderlands, an indication of how widespread its appeal was, especially during the Regionalism trend of the 1930s, when Southern Colonial was one of the many historic American house types that were revived and adapted for contemporary suburban use.²⁶ The Mexican architectural historian Juan Ignacio Barragán-Villarreal noted the popularity of what he categorized as the "*lo que el viento se llevó*" style (the Spanish title of the novel and film *Gone With the Wind*) in Monterrey in the 1940s and early 1950s, especially as interpreted by such U.S.-trained Monterrey architects as Arturo E. González.²⁷ A prominent example of this Mexican interpretation of the Southern Colonial is the Octaviano L. Longoria-Theriot House in Colonia Madero in Nuevo Laredo, Tamaulipas (1951, Arq. Guillermo Belden-Gutiérrez). A much more unusual example, because it looks so Texan-suburban, is a brick-faced house at the intersection of Paseo de los Ahuehuetes Sur and Calle Bosque de Zapotes in the Lomas del Bosque, a large, elite, residential garden suburb developed in Mexico City by O. L. Longoria in the 1970s. Architecturally and materially, the Lomas del Bosque house is startling because it is so alien in a Mexican suburban architectural context. It demonstrates the mystique that this architectural genre exercised in a mid-twentieth-century Mexican national context as well as in U.S. suburban settings during the 1950s and '60s. The García House derives significance from the way its architecture negotiates a transnational appeal that to Americans may seem mystifying because the architecture appears so unexceptional in a U.S. national context.

The high style of mid-twentieth-century American domestic architecture was modernism, which rejected the use of historical models visible in the García House. Río Viejo, like Laurel Park, its counterpart garden suburban neighborhood in Harlingen, contains striking examples of distinctive mid-twentieth-century modern residential design.²⁸ The J. Gilbert Philen House (424 Calle Cenizo, 1951, Page, Southerland & Page) in Brownsville is a dramatic and glamorous interpretation of the sprawling, one-story California contemporary ranch house. Its architectural imagery proved very compelling around 1950. The Mexican-immigrant cotton broker Alberto Terrazas-Creel built a contemporary style ranch house in Los Ebanos Estates in Brownsville (1834 Palm Boulevard; 1949) completed just before the Matamoros entrepreneur, Shelby Longoria-Theriot, the brother of O. L. Longoria and the father of Sandra

²⁴ Joseph Manca, *George Washington's Eye: Landscape, Architecture, and Design at Mount Vernon* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012).

²⁵ Cheryl Caldwell Ferguson, *Highland Park and River Oaks: The Origins of Garden Suburban Community Planning in Texas*, (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2014), pp. 77-80, 173-176. Lisa Ruffin, "Dallas: Mount Vernon—The Hilltop Mansion of Legendary Oilman H. L. Hunt," *Texas Homes* 9 (February 1985): 64-71.

²⁶ "\$75,000 Building Program Launched by Interests Here," *Brownsville Herald*, July 26, 1935, p. 1; "Personals," *Laredo Times*, 9 October 1938, p. 3.

²⁷ Juan Ignacio Barragán Villarreal and Enrique Díaz Díaz, *Arquitectos del noreste: Del Noreste de México* 3 (Nos. 10-12, 1992): 26; "Big Five," *Time*, 58 (10 September 1951): 89-90.

²⁸ "Laurel Park Takes Shape as Exclusive Home Area," "House Designed for Today's Living On View Today," "Furnishings Provide Livable Background to New Home," and "Many Firms Assist in Building Home: House Designed for Today's Living," *Valley Morning Star*, June 12, 1949, pp. 12-15.

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Longoria de Yturria, built an even more expansive version in Colonia Jardín in Matamoros (Calle Primera 240, Colonia Jardín, Matamoros; 1950).²⁹ Both of these houses were designed by the Brownsville architect Ellis F. Albaugh. A business associate of Shelby Longoria and Alberto Terrazas, the Laredo-born cotton broker Gustavo Peña, commissioned the firm in which his brother William M. Peña was a partner, Caudill Rowlett Scott & Associates of Bryan, to design his modern house in Brownsville (37 S. Coria Street in East Banker Terrace; 1950). The Harlingen architect John G. York designed a pair of stunning modern houses in Río Viejo in 1955: the limestone-faced Bernard Whitman House (544 Calle Retama) and the flat-roofed Antonio Cisneros, Jr., House (244 Calle Jacaranda). Harlingen's other notable modern architect, Alan Y. Taniguchi, also designed a landmark modern house on a corner site in Río Viejo for the retail merchant Harry Katz (414 Calle Retama; 1961, altered beyond recognition).³⁰ Although most of the houses built in Río Viejo were builders' ranch houses, rather than houses designed by architects, the architect-designed modern houses of the 1950s and early '60s contributed to the neighborhood's exceptional distinction and reinforced its social standing.

In building a traditional design, Mr. and Mrs. García marked a change in attitude that occurred in the 1960s, when even fewer architect-designed modern houses were built in Brownsville than had been the case in the 1950s. The García House, completed ten years after the first houses built in Río Viejo, was not characteristic of the community's residential architecture. Its two-story height and Southern Colonial countenance differentiated it from the single-story contemporary ranch houses as well as the architect-designed modern houses built in Río Viejo in the 1950s. This reappraisal of traditional design was forecast in the Francisca Echazzereta and Herminio Yturria House (1954, William C. Baxter with A. H. Woolridge). The detailing of the one-story, brick-faced, patio-centered Yturria House was unusual in referencing the nineteenth-century vernacular Border Brick style architecture of the Texas-Tamaulipas border. When Herminio Yturria's nephew, Frank Yturria, and his wife Mary Altman built their house in Río Viejo in 1958, it was a two-story, symmetrically organized, hipped-roof Monterey type house with an inset central balcony faced with an ornamental cast iron railing. The García, Frank Yturria, Reynaldo Garza, and Virgil Versaggi (1960, 125 Calle Jacaranda) houses were the only two-story houses built in Río Viejo in the 1950s and '60s. Judge and Mrs. Garza's house, built in 1962, is also a Southern Colonial design. Even one-story houses of the 1960s reflected the new turn to tradition: the architectural designer Ruth Young McGonigle's J. Kendall Hert House (1962; 244 Calle Cenizo) revived the Border Brick style vernacular, while the long, low, ranch type house that J. Antonio Ortiz built at 344 Calle Cenizo, designed by Ortiz in collaboration with the designer-builder Bill Burns, has richly textured antique brick walls with stone columns and sills.³¹ In its Southern Colonial architectural attributes and two-story construction, the García House registered the movement away from modernism and back to historical models current around 1960.

This reversal occasioned misgivings among modern architects. Proponents of modern architecture so insistently moralized their rejection of traditional architectural practices that many modern architects refused on principle to design historically styled buildings. When Walter Bowman, John York's partner in the Cocke, Bowman & York architectural practice, designed the Monterey style J. Lewis Boggus House in Harlingen (1950, 505 Lake Dr.), his young draftsmen refused to work on the project because they considered its design too traditional. Yet there are other conspicuous examples of South Texan modern architects who produced traditional designs. The Corpus Christi architect Charles P. Donnelley designed both the pink-stucco-faced, Bahamian style "Mermaison" for May Dougherty Baxter (1950, 4002 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi) and the modern Dudley T. Dougherty House for Mrs. Baxter's brother at San[to] Domingo Ranch near Beeville (1951), as well as the modern Arnold O. Morgan House (subsequently the Leonor Yturria and Lawrence Wood House; 1958, 3344 Ocean Drive, Corpus Christi). The Weslaco architect Merle A. Simpson, who was known for such modern houses as the flat-roofed, glass-walled Ann Maddox

²⁹ "Large Residence to be Built Here," *Brownsville Herald*, May 21, 1948, p. 8; Margaret Tipton, "Longoria Home in Matamoros Is Setting for Afternoon Tea," *Brownsville Herald*, May 7, 1950, p. 14.

³⁰ Fox, "Architecture in Brownsville," pp. 317-20.

³¹ Fox, "Architecture in Brownsville," pp. 319, 327.

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Moore House in McAllen (1959, 111 E. Erie Avenue), designed the symmetrical, two-story, Southern Colonial style Charles Parce House in Harlingen (1959, 501 Lake Drive) across the street from the Boggus House, subsequently owned by Herminio Yturria's grandson, Richard E. Butler II. The Frederick W. Heldenfels, Jr., House at 5015 Ocean Drive in Corpus Christi (1961, George Louis Walling) and the Madeline Fleming and Thomas M. O'Connor House at 507 N. Victoria Street in Victoria (1965, Fred G. Gaubatz) stand out as other Southern Colonial style houses identified with old family South Texan elites that were built in the aftermath of the ascendancy of mid-twentieth-century modern architecture. Mrs. O'Connor was the great-granddaughter of James Power, impresario of the Power-Hewetson Colony, and the great-great-granddaughter of don Felipe Roque de la Portilla-Colmenero, *alcalde* of Matamoros in 1814.

The windows and doors of the Yturria-García House that were incorporated into the exterior design and construction of the M. E. García House materialize the theme of generational continuity, lending the Río Viejo house a "family resemblance" to the mid-nineteenth-century Francisco Yturria House, which M. E. García and his siblings demolished in 1960. When the García House was built, its arrangement of shuttered ground-floor sash windows rising from floor-level sills to symmetrically flank double doors set beneath a glazed transom, all seen through a screen of columns supporting a portico, could still be experienced at the one-story, red brick Isabel Kidder and Indalecio Treviño-Domínguez House at 838 E. Levee Street (c. 1890; demolished 1970), which had been built by the brother of Felicitas Treviño de Yturria. The one-story, brick Miller-Treviño de los Santos Coy House at 1305 E. Washington Street in Brownsville, constructed in 1851 one block from the site of the Yturria-García House at 1424 E. Washington Street, also displays this five-bay arrangement, set behind the columns of a street-facing veranda.³² The attention this house received in Brownsville after 1958, when it was bought from the Treviño de los Santos Coy family, who had owned it for a hundred years, by the New York City philanthropist, Chauncey D. Stillman, who then financed its restoration to become a historic house museum commemorating his great-grandfather, Charles Stillman, the founder of Brownsville (who had rented the house for two years in the early 1850s), indicates the ways that the history of Brownsville was being re-negotiated through architecture around 1960, both through the restoration of a mid-nineteenth-century house associated with one of the mythified entrepreneurs of the South Texas borderlands and a new house's "inheritance" of mid-nineteenth-century architectural artifacts associated with the demolished house of another of these larger-than-life historical personalities.³³

The Southern Colonial architectural image projected by the García House is not tied to an obvious cultural narrative, as was the case when Anglo-American newcomers to the borderlands appropriated Spanish style architectural images in the first half of the twentieth century to fabricate a narrative of belonging. Yet the consistency with which South Texan elites, some of them Mexican descended and still involved in the operation of legacy ranches, sought to register their shared patrician identity and cultural authority architecturally around 1960 gives the otherwise innocuous design of the García House its local (but also transnational) twentieth-century historical resonance. The García House affiliates with Judge Garza's house across Calle Retama, the Parce-Butler House in Harlingen, "Mermaison" and the Heldenfels House in Corpus Christi, don Pepe Martin's house in Laredo, the O'Connor House in Victoria, and also the Longoria House in Nuevo Laredo (even the Southern Colonial style house in the Lomas del Bosque), to craft a narrative of family superiority and belonging that counter-intuitively displaced Ethnic Heritage assertiveness with assimilationist images of Anglo-American colonialism. The generation of Mexican-American ethnic elites who built such houses was also responsible for initiating the shift in economic and political authority that would change the demographics of power in the South Texas borderlands during the last quarter of the twentieth century. Their attraction to Southern Colonial style domestic architecture can be interpreted as a reversal of the process of Anglo-American appropriation of Spanish style imagery, which had occurred during the childhoods of Mr. and Mrs. García and their peers. The García House, because of its association with Estela Cueto and M. E. García, their family, family history, business and

³² Bay, *Historic Brownsville*, pp.139-142, 37-46.

³³ Bay, *Historic Brownsville*, pp.139-142, 37-46.

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ranching interests, and network of family relationships and friendship, represents the perpetuation of an Ethnic Heritage complex of Social History relations maintained behind the house's complacent Southern Colonial façade.

Summary

The García House is significant for its association with local historical patterns, especially the development of the elite garden suburban neighborhood of Río Viejo, where it stands out as the most architecturally singular house at the south entrance to the subdivision from Palm Boulevard. It is significant because of its location at a prominent street intersection in Río Viejo, its frontage on Town Resaca, its distinctive Southern Colonial architecture, and its subtropical landscaping, which reinforce Río Viejo's high status local identity and its Exotic Tropical Paradise landscape theme.

The García House is locally significant under Criterion A in the area of Ethnic History for its association with the Brownsville rancher, businessman, and civic leader Martín E. García and his wife, Estela Cueto García. It is significant for its association with a generation of elite Hispanic community leaders who, beginning in the 1960s, quietly initiated a historic transfer of political and economic authority from the Lower Río Grande border's Anglo-American minority to its Mexican-American majority.

The García House is also architecturally significant under Criterion C as a mid-twentieth-century example of the Colonial Revival sub-type of the Southern Colonial, an architectural identity it shares with other houses built during the mid-20th-century period that are associated with South Texan and Mexican elites. It is significant for contributing to the dissemination of the Southern Colonial suburban house type in the borderlands of south Texas in the 1961-67 period as a coded symbol of patrician authority and family continuity. The García House is also significant for being one of the few known works of the architectural firm of Edward J. Romieniec, Tommy T. Carruth, and Robert W. Cline, although it is not a modern design. Additionally it is significant as the work of the Harlingen builder E. J. Waitman.

While the García House has been modified to some degree, it retains sufficient historic integrity. The García House is worthy of preservation because it is associated with the development of the Brownsville garden subdivision of Río Viejo; is associated with the lives of Estela Cueto and M. E. García, significant in the twentieth-century social, business, and civic history of the south Texan border city of Brownsville; and embodies the distinctive characteristics of the Southern Colonial sub-style of the 1960s.

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

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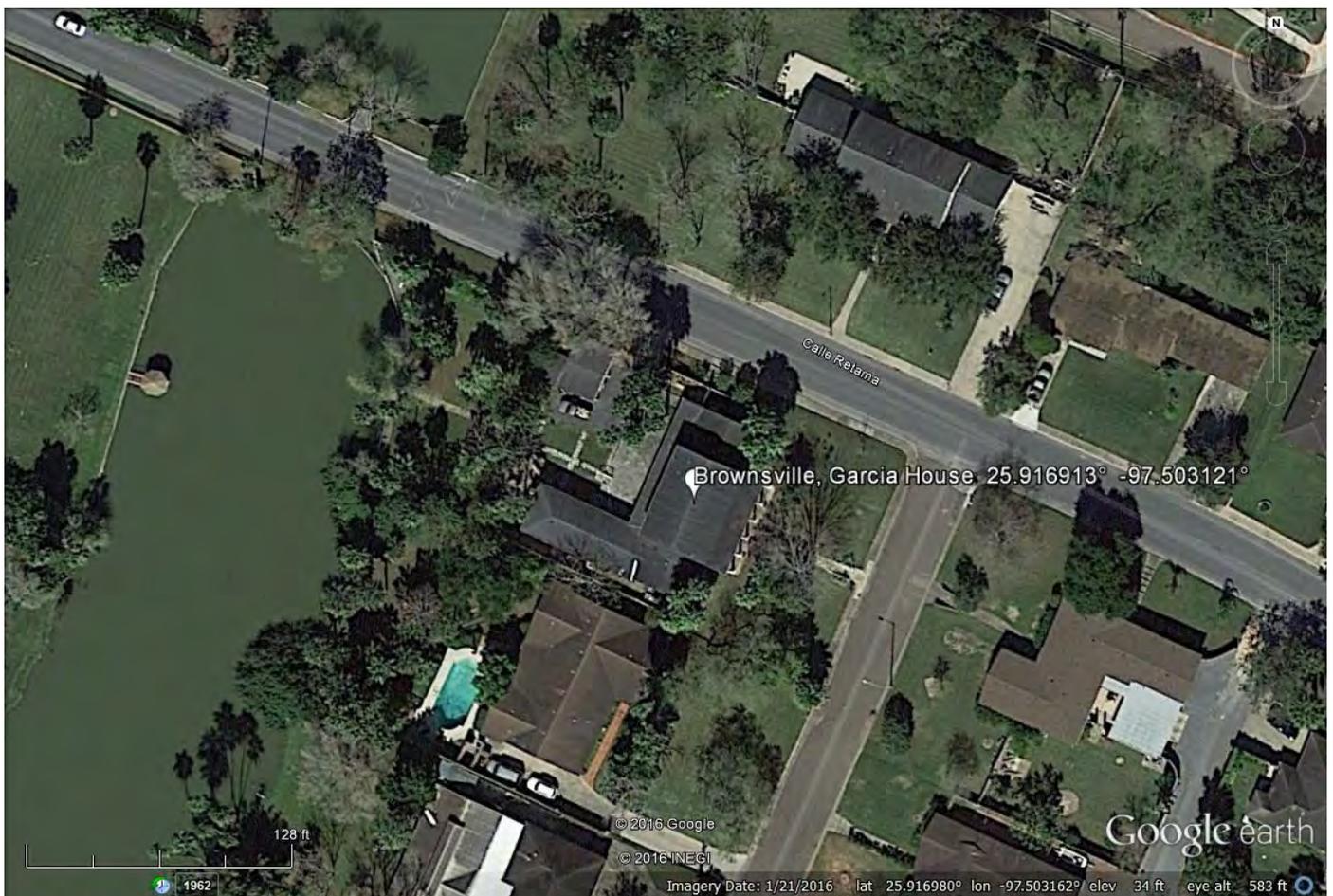
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García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Cameron County, Texas



Google Map, accessed August 23, 2016



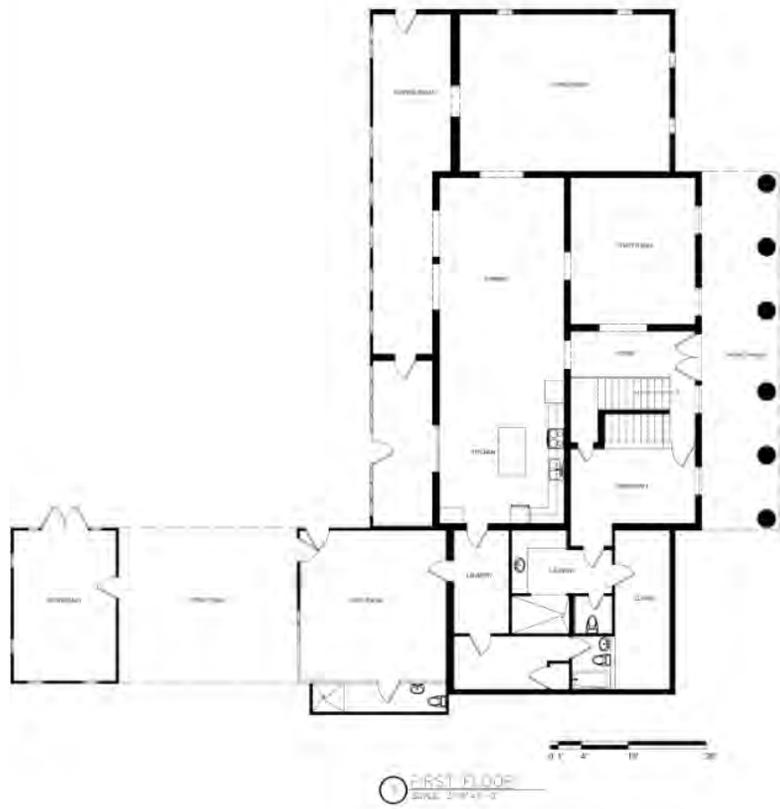
García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Figure 1
 Site Plan



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Figure 2
Floor Plan



DESIGNED BY: LEAZAR BARRILETT DATE: 02.2017
CLIENTS: GOWEN JEFFREY NIXON & ROSE MARIE DATE: 02.17
PROJECT: 155 CALLE ANACUA LOT 1 BLOCK 5
SHEET A-2
FLOOR PLAN

García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photographs

Photo #1 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0001)
Southeast elevation (front), camera facing northwest.
Photographed October 2016.



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #2 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0002)
Southeast elevation. Detail of portico, camera facing northwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #3 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0003)
View of portico, camera facing southwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #4 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0004)
Northeast elevation (left) and two rear elevations (right), camera facing southwest.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #5 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0005)
Northeast elevation detail, camera facing southwest.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #6 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0006)
Northwest elevation (porch enclosure), camera facing southeast.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #7 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0007)
Northeast elevation (rear addition), camera facing southwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #8 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0008)
Detached non-contributing carport, camera facing northeast.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #9 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0009)
Historic windows on First & Second Floors. Entrance porch.
Photographed June 2016



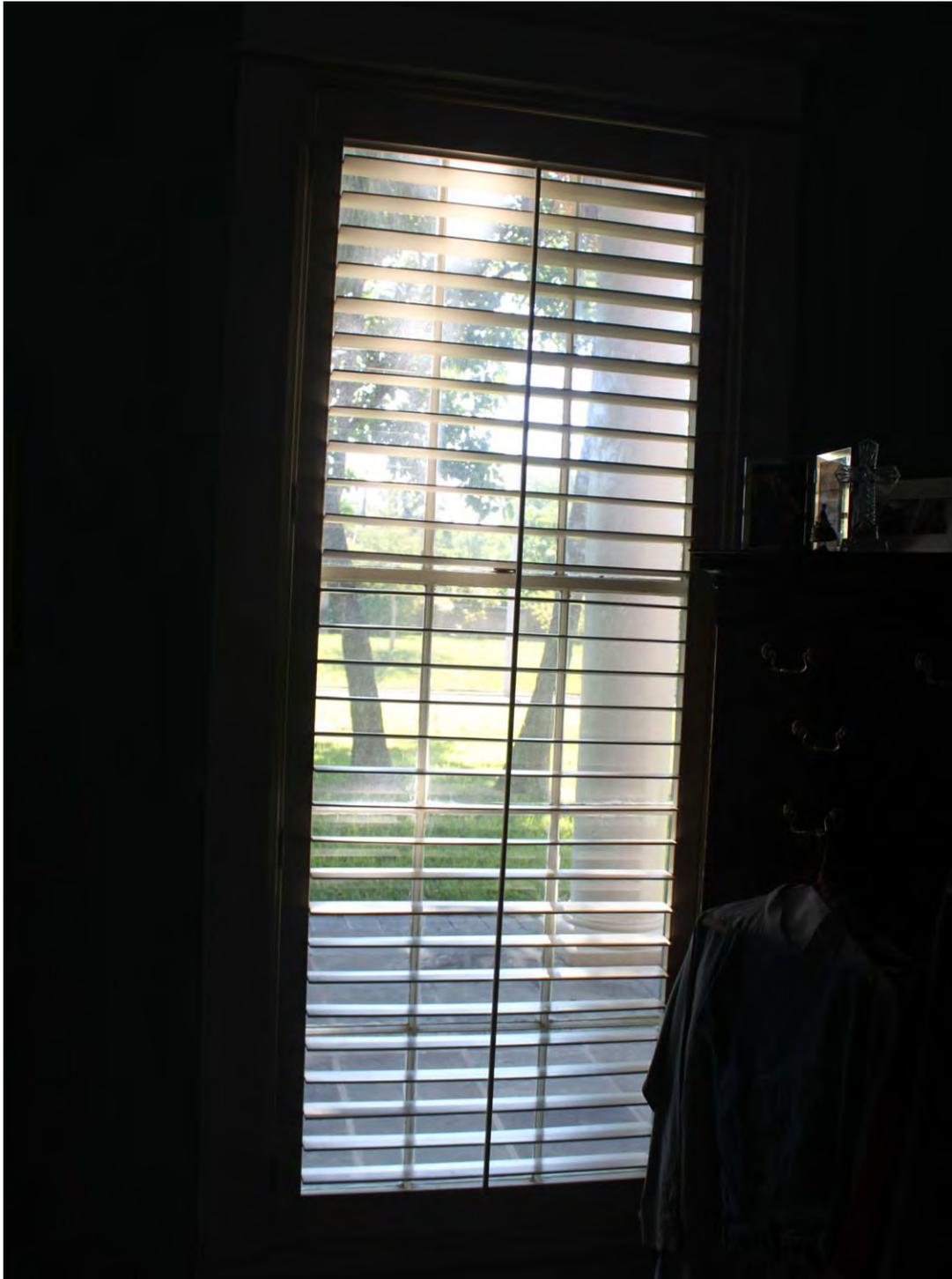
García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #10 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0010)
Historic window on First Floor. Detail from exterior.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #11 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0011)
Historic window on First Floor. Detail from interior, camera facing southeast.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #12 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0012)

Historic window on Second Floor. Detail from interior, camera facing southeast.

Photographed June 2016



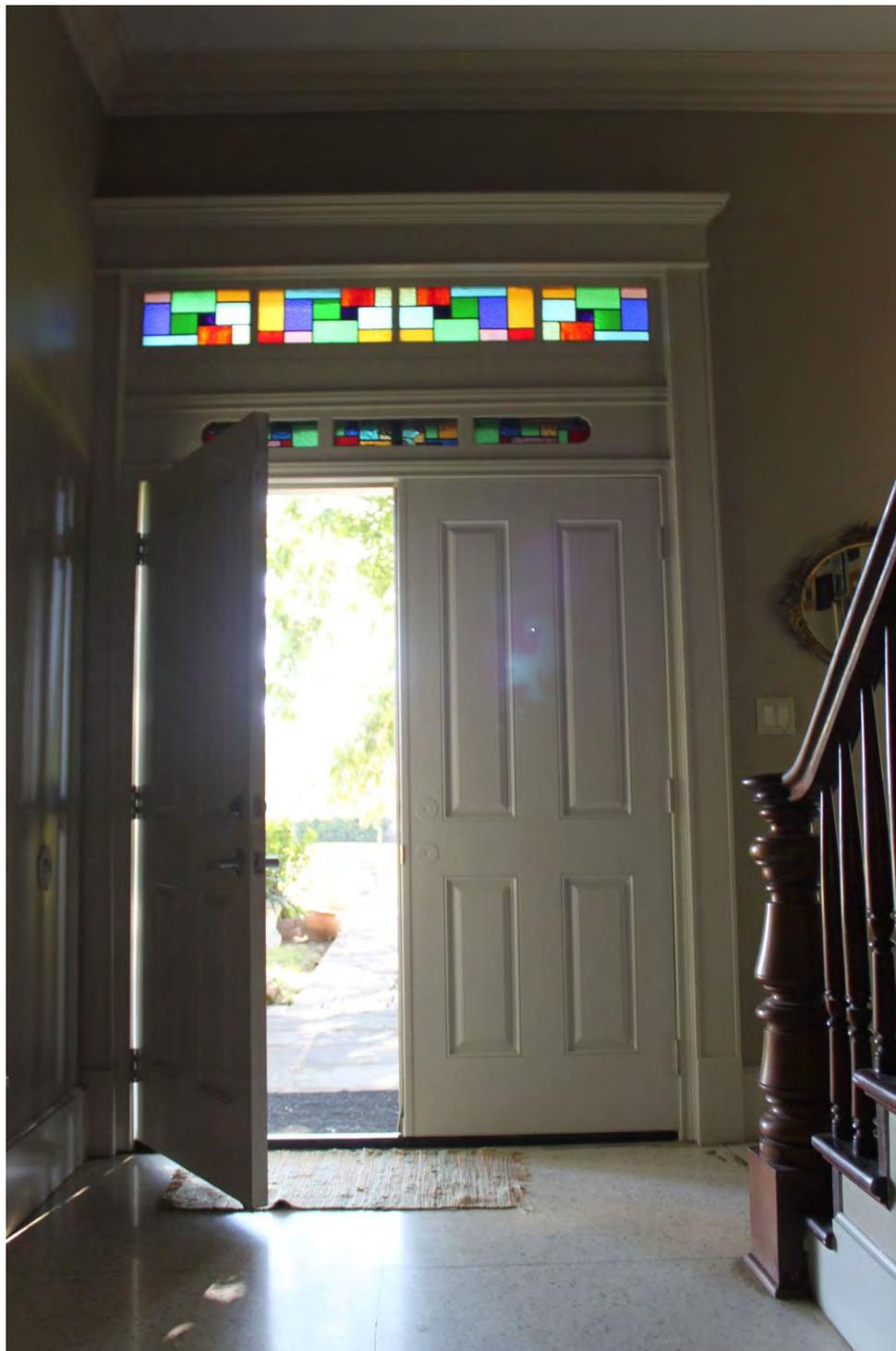
García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #13 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0013)
Historic door on First Floor. Detail, camera facing northwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #14 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0014)
Entrance hall, camera facing southeast.
Photographed October 2016



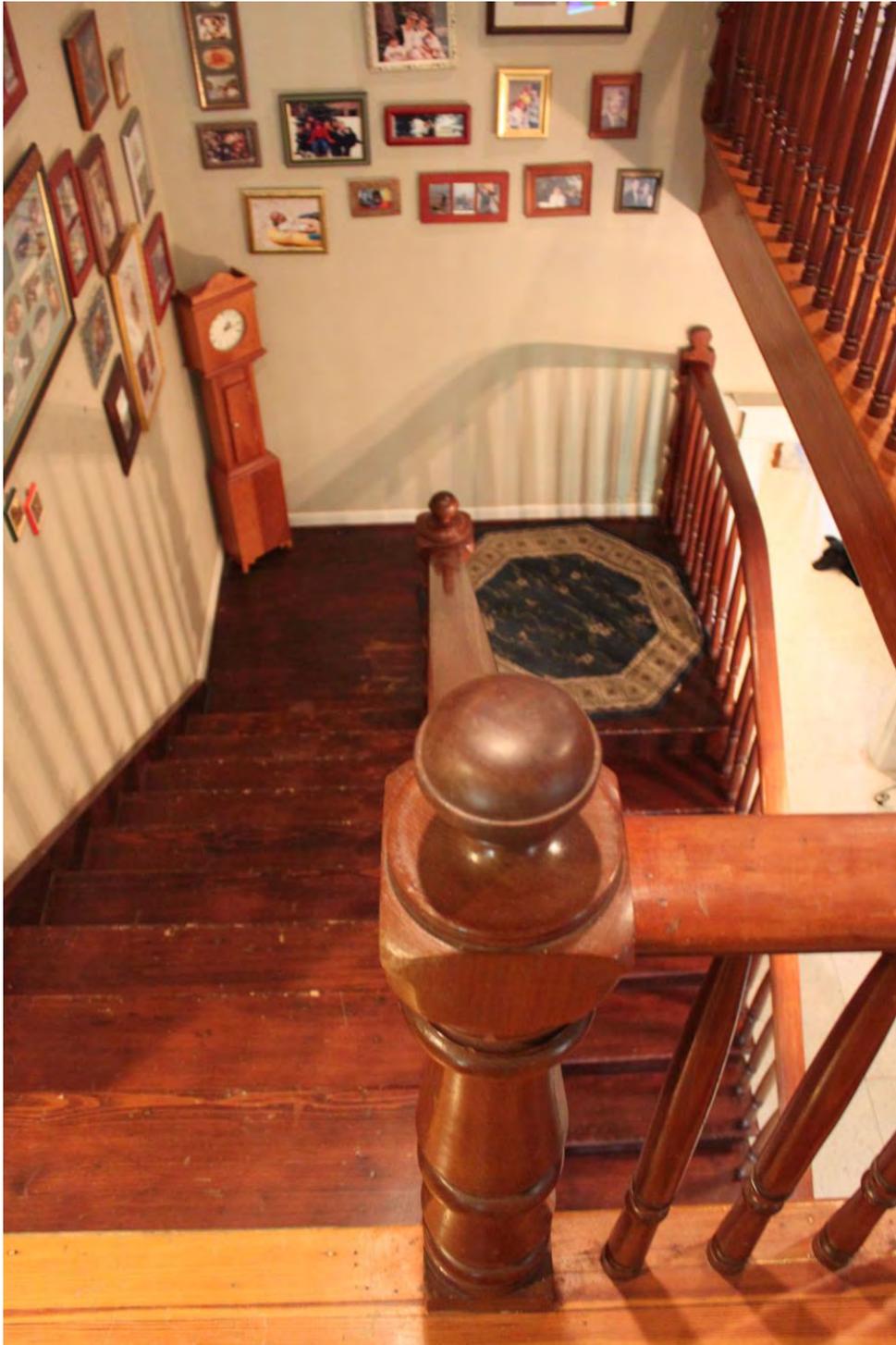
García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #15 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0015)
Historic stair and historic rail from First Floor (entrance).
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #16 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0016)
Historic stair and historic rail from Second Floor.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #17 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0017)
Historic rail and historic floor boards on Second Floor.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #18 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0018)
Bedroom with historic floor boards & historic windows on Second Floor.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #19 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0019)
Kitchen with historic terrazzo.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #20 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0020)

Dining Room.

Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #21 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0021)
View of front yard foliage, camera facing northwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #22 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0022)
View of front yard foliage, camera facing northwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #23 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0023)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing northwest.
Photographed June 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #24 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0024)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing southeast.
Photographed October 2016



García House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

Photo #25 (TX_Cameron County_Garcia House_0025)
View of rear yard foliage, camera facing southeast.
Photographed October 2016





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NO PARKING
ANYTIME

SJA













It's your behavior, your actions that
have helped us THINK, I understand
I can help you achieve the goal

THE EARTH DOES NOT
BELONG TO US
WE BELONG TO THE EARTH





























UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Requested Action:

Property Name:

Multiple Name:

State & County:

Date Received: Date of Pending List: Date of 16th Day: Date of 45th Day: Date of Weekly List:

Reference number:

Nominator:

Reason For Review:

Accept Return Reject Date

Abstract/Summary Comments:

Recommendation/ Criteria

Reviewer Edson Beall Discipline Historian

Telephone _____ Date _____

DOCUMENTATION: see attached comments : No see attached SLR : No

If a nomination is returned to the nomination authority, the nomination is no longer under consideration by the National Park Service.

TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

real places telling real stories



TO: Edson Beall
National Register of Historic Places
Mail Stop 7228
1849 C St, NW
Washington, D.C. 20240

From: Mark Wolfe, SHPO
Texas Historical Commission

RE: Garcia, M.E. and Estela Cueto, House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas

DATE: April 18, 2017

The following materials are submitted:

	Original National Register of Historic Places form on disk.
X	The enclosed disk contains the true and correct copy of the National Register of Historic Places nomination of the Garcia, M.E. and Estela Cueto, House, Brownsville, Cameron County, Texas
	Resubmitted nomination.
X	Original NRHP signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
	Multiple Property Documentation form on disk.
	Resubmitted form.
	Original MPDF signature page signed by the Texas SHPO.
X	CD with TIFF photograph files, KMZ files, and nomination PDF
	Correspondence.

COMMENTS:

- SHPO requests substantive review (cover letter from SHPO attached)
- The enclosed owner objections (do___) (do not___) constitute a majority of property owners
- Other:

