

# No Night For Mexican Tears Juan Cortina and the Brownsville Raid

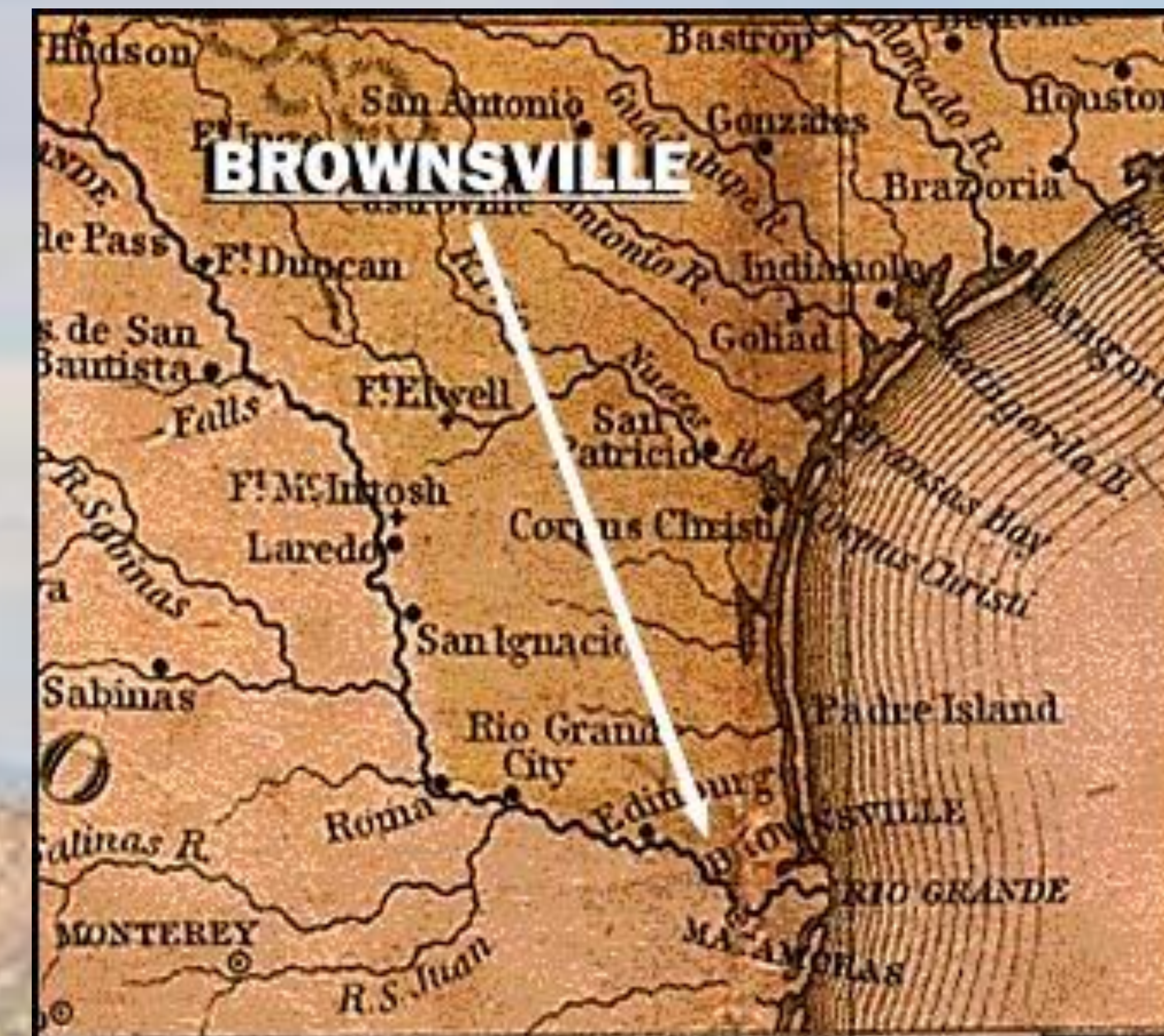
Justin Oakley  
Dr. Scott Sosebee



<http://www.taringa.net/posts/ciencia-educacion/18782118/Juan-Nepomuceno-Cortina-Heroe-mexicano-mata-gringos.html>

## THEY CALLED HIM THE “RED ROBBER OF THE RIO GRANDE....”

Whether this moniker developed from the reddish tinge of his beard, or from the red blood that he shed on either side of the border depends on who is telling the story. The image of this man that is left to posterity is muddied; obscured by the rhyme and the romance of the *corrido*, and subject to the whims of political lionization or character assassination. Why Juan Nepomuceno Cortina rode into Brownsville on that early autumn day in 1859 at the head of an armed band of men has been argued over ever since. Juan Cortina was, and still is, an enigmatic figure whose legacy can be seen in the “social bandits” of later generations, and the cultural, racial, and international tensions that plagued the border for decades. Cortina's bold action of riding through Brownsville, and for all purposes taking it hostage, ignited an on again-off again war that lasted for years and left south Texas in a state of fear. This raid has its roots in the politics of Brownsville, racial tension and abuse, and in the aggressive, intelligent, bold, and uncompromising character of Juan Cortina.



[http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/places/states/texas/tx\\_brownsville.htm](http://www.pbs.org/weta/thewest/places/states/texas/tx_brownsville.htm)

## The Brownsville Raid Timeline

- 1824-** Juan Cortina is born in Camargo, Mexico
- 1836-** Texas gains its independence from Mexico and becomes a republic.
- 1845-** Texas is admitted into the union.
- 1846-** The Mexican War breaks out  
Juan Cortina serves in the Mexican army during the war.
- 1848-** Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo ends the Mexican War and cedes massive stretches of Mexican territory to the United States.
- 1857-**The “Cart War” breaks out in south Texas due to inflamed racial and economic relations between Anglo Texans and Mexican Texans.
- July 13, 1859** – Juan Cortina shoots Marshall Shears in Brownsville after a disagreement over the treatment of a disorderly vaquero.
- September 28, 1859** – Cortina enters Brownsville in the early hours of the morning with a party of around 100 men. Cortina and his men proceeded to release Mexican citizens they felt were unjustly imprisoned; Cortina rides in search of all of the men he felt had harmed both him and his fellow countrymen. By the end of the day, several lay dead.

## Juan Cortina In Song

Juan Cortina and his actions at Brownsville would be memorialized in song by the common Mexican people. An entire genre of folk ballad, the *corrido*, would grow around the character of Juan Cortina. One early *corrido* in particular would focus on the reputation that Cortina earned among the Mexican population of Brownsville as an avenging angel, an agent of justice, and an advocate for them and their interests.

<i>Ese general Cortina</i>	That general Cortina
<i>es muy libre y soberano</i>	Is very sovereign and free
<i>han subido sus honores</i>	His honor has increased
<i>porque salvó a un mexicano</i>	Because he has saved a Mexican.*

\*Taken from *With His Pistol In His Hand* by Americo Paredes