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.

Ese general Cortina
Is very sovereign and free
His honor has increased
Because he has saved a Mexican.*

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