

THEY WERE AND NO LONGER ARE...

National locations that served as post offices during the Classical Era (1856-1883), canceled stamps, and are now abandoned or nearly vanished sites

Padilla

By: Magdalena García Ramírez

The town of San Antonio de Padilla was founded on January 6, **1749**, by José de Escandón, it was named in honor of Doña María Padilla, wife of the then Viceroy of New Spain, the Count of Revillagigedo. Located on the right bank of the Purificación River, it was populated by 41 people from Río Blanco (present-day Arramberri) and Linares in Nuevo León, and Hidalgo in Tamaulipas. They were engaged in agriculture, livestock farming, and fishing. From July 5, **1824**, to the end of January 1825, it served as the capital of the state of Tamaulipas; the first Constituent Congress of the state was held there in July 1824.

On **July 19, 1824**, Agustín de Iturbide, a prominent military and political figure who played a significant role in achieving Mexican Independence in 1821, was executed by firing squad in this town; in independent Mexico, he proclaimed himself emperor for a brief reign from May 18, 1822, to March 20, 1823, when he abdicated and went into exile; he returned to the country, **disembarking in Soto La Marina**, Tamaulipas, in **July 1824**, and was taken to Padilla, where the state government was located, and sentenced to death; in his defense, Iturbide argued that he was unaware that the National Congress had condemned him to death if he returned to the country, and that he had returned to defend the homeland because he knew of an attempt by the Spanish crown to reconquer the country. His remains remained in Padilla until **1838** when, with the authorization of the then president Anastasio Bustamante, they were taken to Mexico City, to a chapel in the Metropolitan Cathedral.

General Manuel Mier y Terán (1) committed suicide in Padilla on **July 3, 1832**, he was a distinguished engineer and career military officer who fought in the War of Independence alongside José María Morelos; he sympathized with Iturbide but did not support him when he was deposed after proclaiming himself emperor; in independent Mexico, he was in charge of the Eastern Interior Provinces, including Tejas (now Texas), and he had strong fears that Tejas would become independent; in 1832, he was a strong contender for the presidency of the country, he arrived in Padilla on July 2 of that year; it is said that he spent two hours in front of Iturbide's tomb, lamenting the very likely loss of Tejas, the next day, he placed his sword on the spot where Iturbide was executed and let himself fall upon it; his secretary, on Mier's explicit orders, placed his body next to Iturbide's, where they remained together **until 1838**. **Since 1972**, his remains were rescued by a group of historians from Tamaulipas to prevent the Vicente Guerrero dam from making them disappear; they were taken to Matamoros, Tamaulipas, and are at the base of the Mariano Matamoros monument in that city.

García Cubas, in his *Atlas* (1856) indicates that Padilla was a municipality of the **political district Del Centro** and had 994 inhabitants and notes that the distance between Ciudad Victoria and Padilla was 13 leagues (2), and in his *Geographical Dictionary* (end of the 19th century) he notes that Padilla was the main town of the municipality of its name, in the district *Del Centro*, located on the right bank of the Purificación River, situated about 56 kilometers northeast of Ciudad Victoria, and they report 1,192 inhabitants for the **municipality**. Fig.1.



Fig. 1

Partial map of the state of Tamaulipas; the light blue area delineates the Central District; the town of Padilla is highlighted in a red circle.
(Source: García Cubas Atlas)

In the philatelic field...

Padilla was a sub-office of the Victoria **Postal District**.

Schatzkes shows 1 **cancellation** (Fig. 2) from the Village of Padilla and indicates that it received stamps from the **1872 Hidalgos series**.

Karl H. **Schimmer** shows the same cancellation as Schatzkes (Fig. 2) and indicates that Padilla received stamps from the **1874 Hidalgos series**.

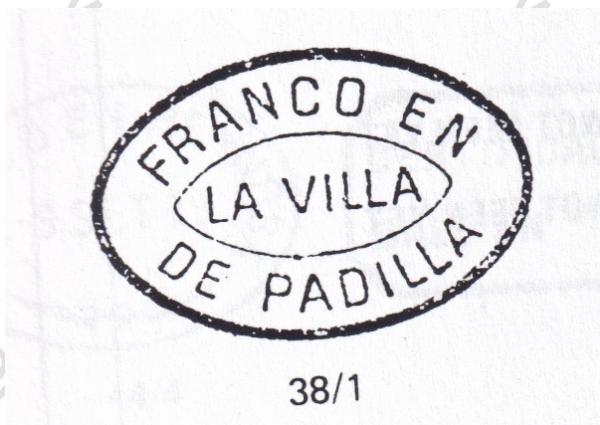


Fig. 2

Padilla's cancellation; the number at the bottom is Schimmer's, and in Schatzkes it corresponds to number 1834BA.
(Source: Schimmer)

ESTADO DE TAMAULIPAS

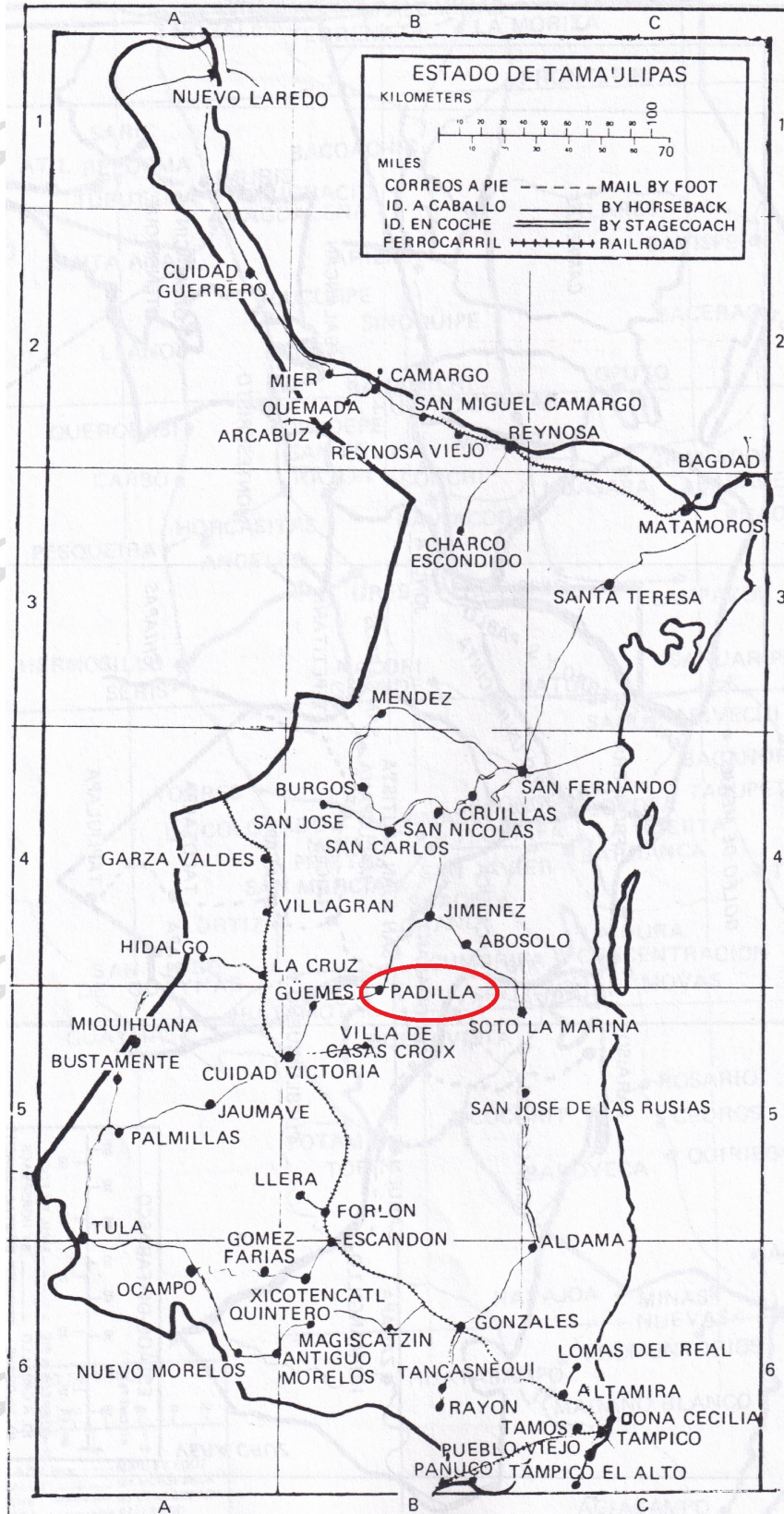


Fig. 3

Map of the state of Tamaulipas;
The town of Padilla is highlighted in a red circle.
(Source: Schimmer)

In 1970, the population of Padilla was evacuated due to the construction of the Vicente Guerrero Dam (also known as Las Adjuntas), which was inaugurated on September 27, 1971. Las Adjuntas is the sixth largest dam in Mexico. The dam captures the flow of the Purificación and Corona rivers, as well as the San Carlos, Pilón, San Marcos, and Santa Rosa rivers, and the Sarnoso and El Grande creeks. The residents of Padilla relocated to a new town, Nuevo Padilla, which is now the municipal seat of Padilla. (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4

**The New Padilla and Old Padilla are highlighted in red circles and the size of the dam is shown.
(Source: Google Maps, current version)**

Fig. 5 shows the location of the municipality of Padilla in the state of Tamaulipas.

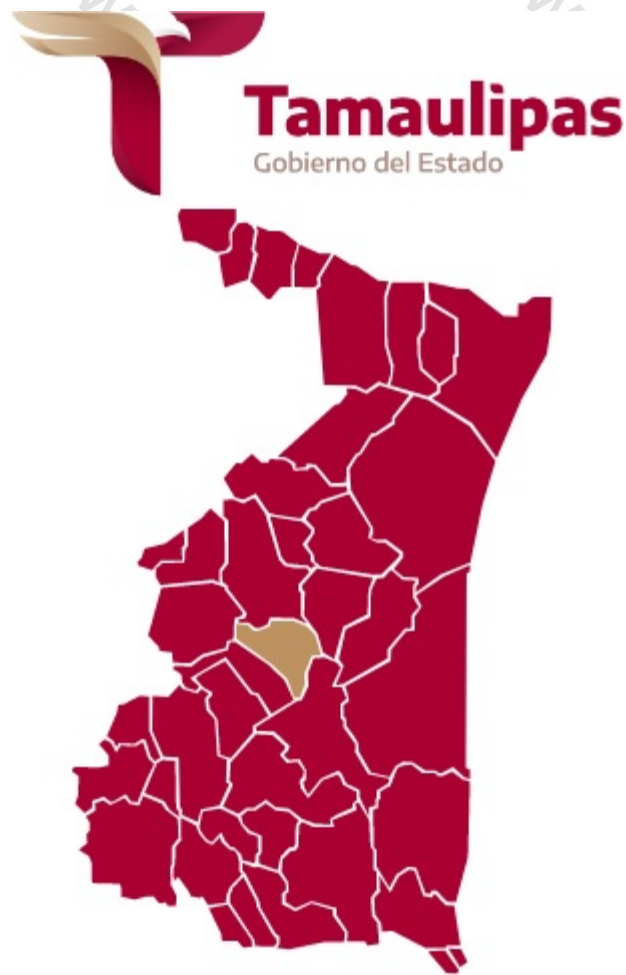


Fig. 5
Current map of the state of Tamaulipas;
the municipality of Padilla is highlighted in ochre.
(Source: Government of the State of Tamaulipas)

Fig. 6 shows a satellite image of the ruins of the village:

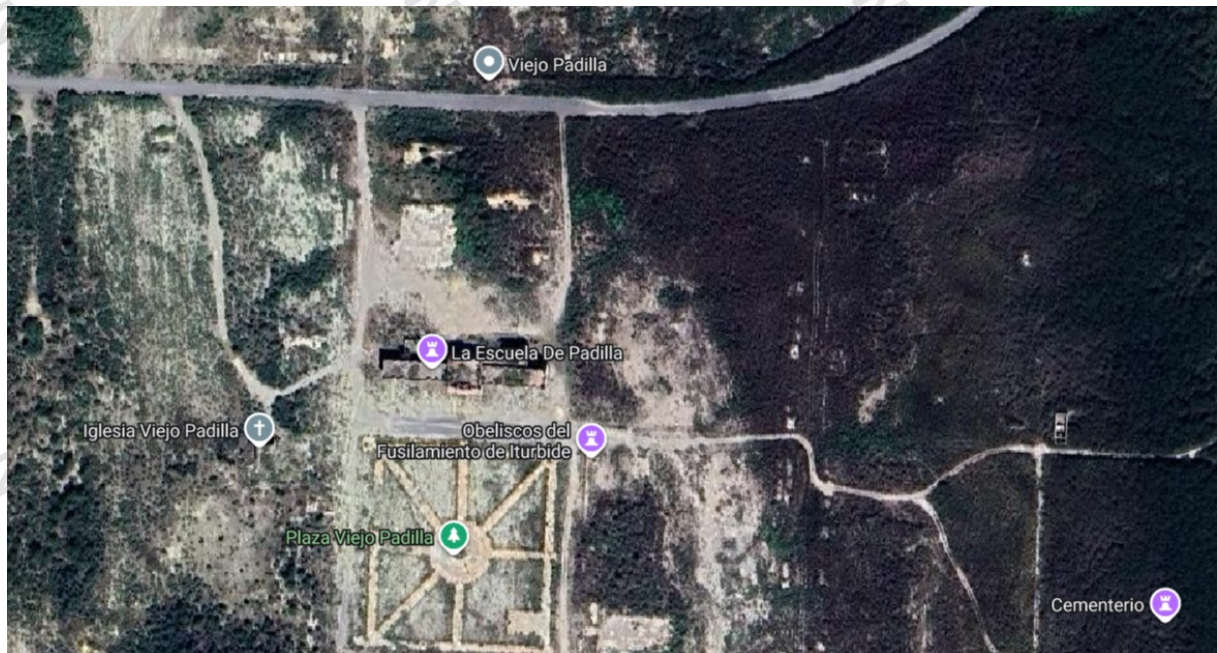


Fig. 6
Satellite view of Old Padilla, showing and labeling the main buildings.
(Source: Google Earth, current date)

When the reservoir level drops due to droughts in the area, the old buildings emerge. (Fig. 7 and 8):



Fig. 7
With the reservoir's water level low, the local school can be seen in the background of the image.
(Source: On instagram.com @tamaulipas_mexico, November 2024)



Fig. 8

With the reservoir's water level low, the cemetery of Viejo Padilla is visible.

(Source: José Luis Tapia for El Sol de Tampico, February 22, 2022)

Notes.-

(1) In this link you can find more information about Manuel Mier y Terán:

https://etiangui.com/noticias_detalle.php?idReg=192&idioma=1&pg=0&pgv=0

or directly at www.etiangui.com Editorials section where on November 1, 2023 I published: Behind the vignette: The blurred figures.

(2) 1 league = 4.82803 kilometers, then 13 league = 63 kilometers

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