

PARISH REGISTERS IN JACALTENANGO, GUATEMALA

W. George Lovell

Queen's University, Kingston, Canada

Jacaltenango is a forlorn, unkempt-looking town lying in the *tierra templada* toward the western edge of the Cuchumatán highlands of Guatemala. It is perhaps best known to the academic world as a stop on the route taken by Frans Blom and Oliver La Farge (1926, 1927) in their pioneering reconnaissance of Mesoamerica earlier this century, a place to which the latter returned with Douglas Byers to document an intriguing array of Maya cultural survivals (La Farge and Byers 1931). More recently, one of its native sons has given local lore and storytelling eloquent written form, as well as documenting the town's painful experience during counterinsurgency operations in the early 1980s (Montejo 1984, 1987).

Despite the advent of a new road and improved transportation services, Jacaltenango remains off the beaten track, a sleepy destination at the end of the line, somewhere only a lost few would stumble across by accident. I first arrived there in May 1978 to set off on a walking tour of remote parts of the Sierra de los Cuchumatanes, wishing to see as much of that wild, beautiful country as possible before writing a doctoral dissertation about land and life in the region during colonial times (Lovell 1980). Three archival sojourns (two in Guatemala City and one in Seville) had furnished me with what I considered enough raw material to satisfy reasonable scholarly expectations, and thus I was not especially disposed toward finding additional data that might call for more research than I had already done or could still undertake, given the time and resources then available.

It turned out, in fact, that a rich assortment of documents had been housed for safekeeping in a room of the hospital built by the Maryknoll order adjacent to the parish church. Some of the documents were gleaned by Anne Collins (1980) in her reconstruction of how the colonial experience in Jacaltenango resulted in the formation, along lines first suggested by Fernando Cámara (1952) and Eric Wolf (1957), of what anthropologists consider a "closed corporate peasant community." Other scholarly demands (to say nothing about the violent civil war) prevented me from revisiting the archive until June 1990, by which time postdoctoral endeav-

ors had transformed my original thesis into two books (Lovell 1985, 1990). Thus it was not until twelve years after first knowing about the archive that the opportunity arose to return to Jacaltenango and to look more carefully at the information at hand.

The preservation of local records in Jacaltenango resulted from the foresight and initiative of one individual, a woman doctor (now in her seventies) whose real name is Dorothy Erickson but who generally goes by her adopted Maryknoll name, Rosa Cordis. Everyone in Jacaltenango refers to her simply as Madre Rosa, and a bronze bust of her likeness stands in the park in front of the hospital. The analogy with a more celebrated mother of the church a continent away is neither contrived nor off the mark, simply valid and compelling. Ever since she moved to Guatemala from Bolivia in 1960, Madre Rosa has attended to the spiritual and medical needs of the people of Jacaltenango, spending long hours in hospital wards as well as in the consulting room and the operating theatre. Three decades of such service have been combined with what Madre Rosa calls her hobby, the meticulous classification and transcription of bundles of documents that she rescued from slow disintegration in the parish church, mostly registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths. After putting Jacaltenango's records in order, Madre Rosa then contacted resident clergy in surrounding communities, asking them to send to her the registers extant for their parishes, which she has also classified and transcribed. When I asked how many years this project had taken, Madre Rosa smiled and joked, in a lingering Bostonian drawl, that nights in Jacaltenango can be decidedly long.

Her unique effort means that anyone interested in studying historical demography can go to Jacaltenango and expect to find there data relating not only to the town itself but also to some two dozen neighboring communities, three of which (Amatenango, Masapa, and Motozintla) now belong to Mexico. Madre Rosa's work does not dispense with having to go elsewhere in Guatemala for material on vital population statistics, but her dedication complements nicely sources available from the Archivo General de Centroamérica (Lutz and Webre 1980; Luján Muñoz 1982) and the Dirección General de Estadística, to name but two key repositories of demographic information. In view of the loss of records suffered in recent years through flood, fire, earthquake, theft, or neglect, Madre Rosa's example as a part-time researcher (to say nothing of her quirky humanity) constitutes a bright spot in a country where even the most cheerful of optimists soon recognizes the inevitability of despair.

The appendix that follows concentrates exclusively on parish registers of baptisms, marriages, and deaths. These sources reveal illuminating details of local events and circumstances that, in turn, modify patterns of population collapse, recovery, and growth at the regional level of analysis (Lovell 1982, 1988). Madre Rosa has also catalogued and pre-

served records concerning payment of tribute (1655–1690) and *cofradía* resources (1673–1862). In addition, she has pieced together elaborate chronologies of the men who served in the region as parish priests. Among other interesting items are two impressive volumes of music, masses written by hand and in Gregorian notation that date to the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Original documents are those relating to Jacaltenango and its immediate parish constituents, the communities of Petatán, San Antonio Huista, Santa Ana Huista, San Andrés Huista, San Marcos Huista, and Concepción. All other listings exist at Jacaltenango in typescript form only. Anyone wishing to consult these sources should contact Dr. Rosa Cordis Erickson at the Hospital Jacaltenango, 13007 Jacaltenango, Department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala.

APPENDIX 1

JACALTENANGO	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1740–1854 (4 libros)
1718–1802 (8 libros)	1854–1936 (3 libros)
1802–1836 (4 libros)	
1831–1857 (5 libros)	CONCEPCION
1857–1880 (5 libros)	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1880–1889 (3 libros)	1770–1791
1889–1894 (2 libros)	1792–1821
Twenty-seven books in total, plus an	1821–1836
<i>índice de bautismos</i> for the nineteenth	1837–1848
century	1848–1875
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
1754–1799	1849–1879
1786–1841	1859–1860
1787–1832	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
1814–1832	1754–1801
1840–1887	1802–1879
1857–1859	
1859–1863	SAN ANTONIO HUISTA
1864–1873	<i>Libro de bautismos</i>
1885–1891	1781–1876
1888–1904	<i>Libro de casamientos</i>
1892–1914	1675–1880
<i>Matrimonios civiles</i>	<i>Libro de defunciones</i>
1856–1873 (various towns)	1689–1879
1857–1860 (Jacaltenango)	
1888–1926 (various towns)	
1929 (various towns)	

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

SANTA ANA HUISTA	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1754–1821
1713–1752	1822–1879
1752–1821	
1821–1875	
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	HUEHUETENANGO (INCLUDES SAN LORENZO MAZATENANGO)
1714–1837	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1849–1880	1804–1816
	1816–1822
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	1822–1826
1675–1820	1826–1830
1820–1874	1830–1837
	1849–1853
PETATAN	1856–1863
<i>Libro de bautismos</i>	1863–1865
1714–1875	1865–1868
	1869–1871
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	1871–1873
1789–1796	1873–1875
1858–1879	1875–1878
	1878–1881
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	1881–1884
1677–1831	1884–1886
1849–1880	1886–1889
SAN ANDRES HUISTA	<i>Libro de confirmaciones</i>
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1873–1906
1713–1778	
1778–1848	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
1849–1876	1817–1865 (San Lorenzo Mazatenango)
	1829–1847
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	1847–1862
1735–1777	
1778–1847	<i>Informaciones de matrimonios</i>
1849–1881	1872–1876
	1876–1880
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	1880–1888
1718–1820	
1820–1880	
	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
SAN MARCOS HUISTA	1819–1840
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1840–1847
1797–1848	1847–1857
1849–1876	1869–1903
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	
1753–1834	
1849–1880	

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

CHIANTLA	<i>Libro de casamientos</i>
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1699–1795
1711–1770	
1770–1792	
1794–1806	SANTA BARBARA
1806–1818	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1818–1834	1769–1802
1834–1843	1802–1835
1843–1849	1836–1860
1849–1855	1860–1871
1855–1859	1872–1875
1859–1864	1875–1885
1864–1871	1885–1895
1871–1875	1895–1901
1875–1878	1901–1906
1878–1881	
1881–1886	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
1886–1889	1759–1809
1889–1893	1809–1836
1894–1896	1836–1848
1905–1907	1848–1869
	1869–1887
	1879–1895
19 books in total, plus an <i>indice de bautismos</i> (1711–1782)	(includes Colotenango and San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán)
<i>Libro de confirmaciones</i>	
1684–1819	
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	COLOTENANGO
1668–1798	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1798–1820	1767–1783
1843–1856	1783–1793
1901–1910	1793–1807
	1807–1819
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	1827–1834
1725–1807	1835–1840
1870–1887	1840–1846
	1846–1859
	1859–1865
	1865–1870
SANTA ANA MALACATAN	1870–1872
(MALACATANCITO)	1873–1882
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1882–1888
1728–1758	1888–1895
1758–1770	1895–1899
1770–1782	1899–1906
1782–1795	
1795–1816	
1816–1836	

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

AGUACATAN AND CHALCHITAN

Libros de bautismos

1722–1773

1774–1793

1794–1803

1805–1814

1814–1830

1830–1843

1844–1855

1855–1867

1867–1871

1871–1878

1878–1882

1882–1886

1886–1890

1890–1893

1893–1899

1900

Libros de casamientos

1722–1806

1806–1844

Informaciones matrimoniales

1855–1871

1873–1900

Libros de defunciones

1731–1772

1806–1831

1831–1843

TODOS SANTOS AND SAN MARTIN

CUCHUMATAN

Libros de bautismos

1675–1733

1717–1813 (San Martín)

1843–1858

1871–1879

1879–1888

1888–1894

1894–1896

1896–1900

1908

Libros de defunciones

1715–1830 (San Martín)

1797–1830

1831–1841

SANTA ISABEL

Libros de bautismos

1816–1863

1863–1887

1887–1903

Libros de casamientos

1768–1816

1817–1882

Libros de defunciones

1843–1865 (includes San Juan

Atitán, Santiago Chimaltenango,

San Pedro Necta and Santo

Domingo Usumacinta)

1865–1881 (includes San Juan

Atitán)

SAN SEBASTIAN HUEHUETENANGO

Libros de bautismos

1796–1804

1823–1828

1828–1844

1863–1866

1866–1874

1874–1878

1878–1883

1883–1889

1889–1904

Libros de casamientos

1809–1825

1870–1882

Libros de defunciones

1828–1869

1871–1879

SAN JUAN ATITAN

Libros de bautismos

1785–1808

1808–1826

1848–1860

1860–1868

1868–1876

1875–1881

1881–1892

1892–1902

1902–1904

9 books in total, plus an *índice de bautismos* (1857–1871)

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

<i>Libro de casamientos</i>	1880–1884
1864–1881	1884–1886
	1887–1890
<i>Informaciones matrimoniales</i>	1890–1894
1872–1877	1894–1901
1877–1881	1901–1903
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	<i>Libro de confirmaciones</i>
1795–1852	1814–1889
1843–1865 (includes Santa Isabel, Santiago Chimaltenango, San Pedro Necta and Santo Domingo Usumacinta)	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
1863–1865 (includes Santa Isabel)	1727–1784
	1784–1798
	1824–1873
<i>Indice de bautismos</i>	1873–1901
1857–1871	1903–1922
	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
SANTIAGO CHIMALTENANGO	1720–1782
<i>Libro de bautismos</i>	1782–1820
1663–1730	1820–1867
<i>Libro de casamientos</i>	
1663–1766	TECTITAN
<i>Libro de defunciones</i>	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1678–1723	1774–1796
	1796–1814
	1814–1822
	1814–1824
SAN PEDRO NECTA AND SANTO DOMINGO USUMACINTA	1824–1867
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	1867–1895
1843–1865	1899 (Tacaná)
1865–1888	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
	1765–1819
CUILCO	1824–1867
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	1868–1896
1729–1759	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
1759–1774	1767–1780
1774–1785	1781–1829
1786–1801	1829–1871
1801–1816	
1816–1823	MASAPA
1831–1842	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1843–1853	1765–1843
1853–1864	1843–1875
1864–1873	1886–1899
1873–1876	
1876–1880	

APPENDIX 1 (continued)

<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	<i>Libros de defunciones</i>
1725–1826	1681–1776
1825–1892	1777–1876
	1875–1877
<i>Libros de defunciones</i>	
1684–1788	
1788–1876	
MOTOCINTLA	AMATENANGO
<i>Libros de bautismos</i>	<i>Libros de bautismos</i>
1723–1791	1809–1873
1792–1865	1874–1888
1884–1890	1888–1898
1890–1898	
	<i>Libros de casamientos</i>
	1815–1872
	1872–1891
<i>Libros de casamientos</i>	<i>Libro de defunciones</i>
1682–1824	1810–1877
1825–1873	

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