

## THEY WERE, AND NO LONGER ARE...

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

### Guerrero City

By: Magdalena García Ramírez

#### Before we begin.-

My gratitude to Licenciado Antonio Guerrero Aguilar, whom I met many years ago and whose generous dissemination of northeastern history has benefited me. He is the author of more than 45 books and more than 2,000 articles, a chronicler, historian, and teacher to multiple generations, proudly from Santa Catarina, Nuevo León. He kindly shared photos of Old Cd. Guerrero from his personal collection. Thank you for your trust.

#### The Old Guerrero.-

This town has had a long history, has changed its name, and has had 4 different locations.

It was founded on **October 10, 1750**, by 62 families from Coahuila, totaling 368 people, who named it *Villa del Señor San Ignacio de Loyola de Revilla*. It was commonly called *Revilla*, a name it retained until November 12, 1827, when the state legislature changed it to Ciudad Guerrero, in honor of the Independence hero Vicente Guerrero.

Regarding **its location**, the year after its founding (**1751**) it changed geographically, and it changed again in **1754** (third location) when José de Escandón, founder and first governor of the Province of Nuevo Santander, visited the area. He ordered the relocation of Revilla 1,000 varas (1) downstream, remaining on the left bank of the Salado River, but at a bend in the river and 8 kilometers from its confluence with the Rio Grande. **This third location was maintained until 1948** when it was officially announced that a dam would be built in partnership with the neighboring country of the United States of America (USA) and the town had to be relocated; the **Falcon Dam** was inaugurated on **October 19, 1953** by the presidents Adolfo Ruiz Cortines of Mexico and Dwight Eisenhower of the USA; the new settlement was called *New Guerrero City* and the ruins of the old one were known as *Guerrero Viejo (or Old Guerrero)*, they were submerged in the dam and sporadically, depending on the water level, vestiges of them can be observed.

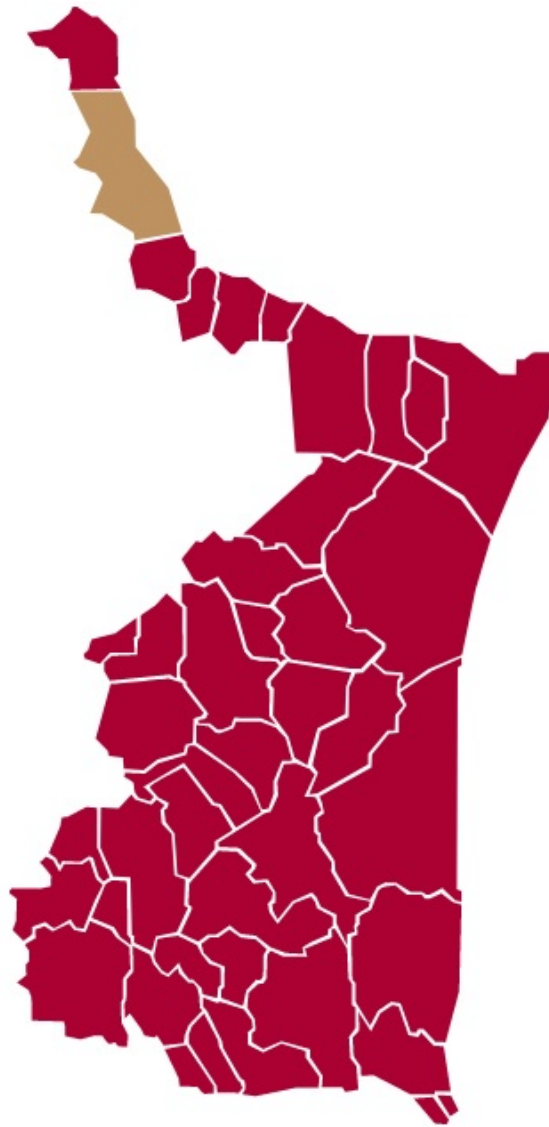
The subject of this article refers to the **town of Guerrero Viejo** in its third geographical location, the one it had in the 19th century.

The municipality of Guerrero is located in the northwest part of the state of Tamaulipas, bordering to the north with the municipality of Nuevo Laredo, to the south with the municipality of Mier, both in the same state, to the east with Texas, USA and to the west with the state of Nuevo León (Fig.1 and 2).



Fig.1

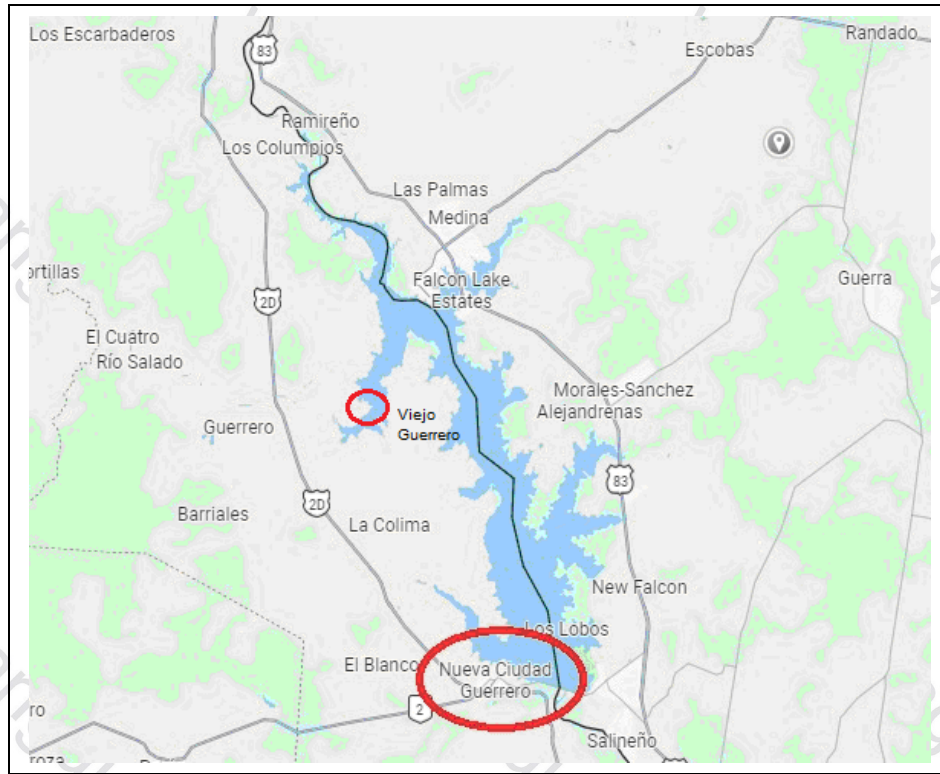
Image courtesy of Antonio Guerrero Aguilar  
The area of the municipality is circled in red



**Fig.2**  
**Map of the government of Tamaulipas,**  
**the municipality of Guerrero is highlighted in ochre**

In the *Atlas* of García Cubas (mid-19th century) it is noted that Guerrero was 102 leagues (2) from Victoria and the **municipality (3) of Guerrero had 2,817 inhabitants**, belonging to the Prefecture or District of the North; while in the *Geographical Dictionary* (late 19th century) it describes Guerrero as a border town and customs house, located at the confluence of the Salado and Bravo rivers, 250 kilometers West-Northwest (WNW) of the port of Matamoros, with a population in the **municipality of 5,684 inhabitants**.

Currently, a large part of the municipality of Guerrero is occupied by the dam, due to its vertical shape (Fig. 3). The decision was made to locate Nuevo Guerrero in the area of the dam's *spillway*, which required modifying the municipality's boundaries through an agreement with the municipality of Mier.



**Fig.3**  
**Location of Old Guerrero and New Guerrero City, the Falcon Dam can be seen.**  
 (Source: Google Maps)

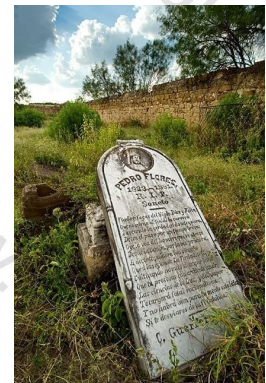
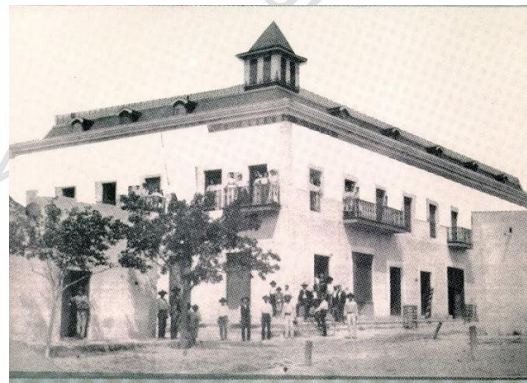
The Old Guerrero did not die, he passed on to a better life, but in the old location his ancient stone buildings remained underwater, which suddenly refuse to be forgotten and emerge slightly (Fig.4-6).



**Fig.4**  
**The effect of time on the Church of Our Lady of Refuge of the Old Guerrero**  
**The left side was just flooding, while the right side was emerging after a drought years later.**  
 (Source: Antonio Guerrero Aguilar's personal archive)



**Fig.5**  
**Ruins of the Old Guerrero**  
 (Source: Antonio Guerrero Aguilar's personal archive)



**Fig.6**  
 A living town who paved the way for progress by sacrificing themselves  
 (Source: Antonio Guerrero Aguilar's personal archive)

In the **philatelic field**, Schatzkes points out that Ciudad Guerrero was a sub-office of the Victoria (or Ciudad Victoria) postal district, received remittances in 1856 and 1861 and shows 3 cancellations, (Fig. 7):



**Fig. 7**  
 Cancellations compiled by Schatzkes, his number appears at the bottom of each one.

In memory of Cucú...

**Notes.-**

- (1) 1 Mexican vara = .838 meters; 1 Castilian vara = .8359 meters, so 1,000 varas is around 838 meters.
- (2) 1 league = 4.82803 kilometers. 102 leagues = 492.5 kilometers.
- (3) In the 19th century, the state of Tamaulipas was divided into 3 Prefectures or Districts and had a total of 30 municipalities.

**Bibliography.-**

- Schatzkes, Joseph. *The Cancellations of Mexico, 1856-1874*. Revised Edition by Karl H. Schimmer. 1983.
- García Cubas; Antonio. *ATLAS geográfico, estadístico e histórico de la República Mexicana*. Imprenta J. M. Lara. 1856
- García Cubas, Antonio. *Diccionario geográfico, histórico y biográfico de los Estados Unidos Mexicanos*. Antigua Imprenta de Murguía. 1888-1891
- <https://ciudadguerrero.gob.mx/municipio/historia/>
- <https://www.tamaulipas.gob.mx/estado/municipios/guerrero/>
- Sánchez , Enrique and Magdalena García. *Oficinas Postales de México (1856 – 1883)*, 2006, México.