



# The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection

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Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

## A Guide to the Santiago Tafolla Collection

1849-1970

Collection 120

### Descriptive Summary

<b>Creator:</b>	Tafolla Family
<b>Title:</b>	The Santiago Tafolla Collection
<b>Dates:</b>	1849-1970 (Bulk dates: 1960-1970)
<b>Abstract:</b>	This collection contains the archive of Santiago Tafolla, which includes Santiago's 1908 handwritten memoir. The Tafolla archive includes personal and research material related to Santiago Tafolla and his family, including photographs, correspondence, records of military service, and books. Some research material, along with a few personal documents and correspondence, belonged to Fidel Tafolla, grandson of Santiago, who initiated researching and editing Santiago's memoir. This collection includes multiple handwritten and typed drafts and translations of Santiago's memoir, which was eventually published in 2009 by Santiago's great-granddaughters, Carmen Tafolla and Laura Tafolla, under the title <i>A Life Crossing Borders</i> . Several drafts of the memoir are titled <i>Nearing the End of the Trail</i> , the working name Fidel used.
<b>Identification:</b>	Collection 120
<b>Extent:</b>	4 boxes (4 linear feet)
<b>Language:</b>	English, Spanish
<b>Repository:</b>	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

## Biographical Sketch

**Santiago Tafolla (1837-1911)** was born in Santa Fe, New Mexico to Mariano Tafolla and Josafa Gutiérrez. He had five sisters and two brothers. A military officer in the Mexican Army, Santiago's father was killed while transporting money from the Mexican capitol when Santiago was only three. His mother died when he was seven, and he went to live with his oldest brother Lorenzo. He was unhappy with his treatment at his brother's and ran away at age eleven.

Invited on board a passing wagon train by American Robert A. Matthews, Santiago headed east. He traveled with Matthews through Missouri, Ohio, Maryland, and New York, ending in Washington D.C. Santiago stayed in Matthews' care in Washington. When Mr. Matthews moved to Talbotton, Georgia, Santiago stayed in South Carolina with Matthew's brother. Unhappy there, Santiago ran away again, continuing on to Talbotton, where he stayed with a relative of Robert Matthews, Dr. F.T. Matthews. During this time, Santiago was converted in a camp meeting.

Growing up, Santiago tried shoe making then tailoring. Unhappy with both professions and wanting to go back to Mexico, he enlisted at seventeen for a five year term in the army. During this process, he met Jefferson Davis, who was then Secretary of War. Traveling with the army, he ended up in Texas. In 1856, he saw San Antonio for the first time. During his time in the army, he fought with the Indians and narrowly missed getting charged with desertion after a fight with a non-commission officer. He left the army in 1860. He married Juanita Torres, who he had met in the service. Shortly after his marriage, he received 160 acres as head of household from the state of Texas and started his own ranch called Bear Creek on Privilege Creek.

In 1862, Santiago joined the Confederate army and marched to Brownsville under the command of Colonel Duff. They guarded the Texas border from the mouth of the Rio Grande to Eagle Pass. After some troubling incidents with some of the other soldiers, who Santiago said "had hanged several men who didn't go along with their ideas," Santiago and some of the other *mexicano* Confederate soldiers began to fear for their lives and decided to desert to Mexico (70). This plan coincided with the Confederate defeat at Vicksburg in 1864. Santiago believed at this point that the Confederate cause was doomed. He sent for his family after he arrived in Mexico and stayed there until 1865. He then returned to his ranch in Texas.

In February 1868, his first wife got pneumonia and died. The couple had three girls and two boys: Pete, Juanita, Catarina, Molly, and Santana. A little over a year later, in May 1869, Santiago renewed his acquaintance with Anastacia Mercado, a widow with two children, Juan J. and Maria. He married her in June. During this time in his life, Santiago worked at various ranching related jobs both on his ranch and other ranches. His work turned to more dishonest dealings as he began to deal in hides taken from poached cattle. He was elected Justice of the Peace for Bandera County in May of 1876. An election, he implies in his memoir that was predicated on his turning a blind eye to illegal activities. He ends his writings here. This time period marks a major turning point in Santiago's life as he began to become more involved with his faith and presumably ended his unlawful activities. In October 1876, he was granted a pastoral license. In December, he resigned as Justice of the Peace and began the difficult life of a Methodist preacher in predominantly Catholic communities. He started his ministry as a pastor in Laredo, Texas, but spent most of it as an itinerate preacher. In addition to the seven children he and Anastacia shared when they began their marriage, they had seven more: Gabriel, Santiago Jr., Mariano F., Ernesto, Lott, Anita, and Santana. Santiago worked up into his seventies and died in 1911 while preaching at his pulpit at age 74.

**Fidel Tafolla (1898 – 1971)** was Santiago's grandson, son of Santiago's son Mariano, Sr. through Santiago's second marriage to Anastacia Salinas. He was an educator, getting his Bachelor of Arts as well as a Masters' degree from Texas State University. He worked as a Spanish teacher at Main Avenue (now Fox Tech) and Thomas Jefferson High Schools in San Antonio, Texas. His career continued at Lanier High School, as he went from Dean of Boys to Vice-Principle and finally to Principle. He retired in 1968. The San Antonio Independent School District has chosen to honor him by naming a school after him, the Fidel Tafolla, Jr. High School.

Fidel became the first Hispanic president of the San Antonio Teacher's Council in 1934. He was crucial in the creation of the San Antonio Retired Teacher's Association and the later San Antonio Teacher's Credit Union (now under the name FirstMark Credit Union). He was active in his community as an elder in the Presbyterian church, a member of the Master Masons,

and later in life, a Shiner. He had five children: Dorothy Jane, ElizabethAnn, Fidel Jr., Donald Edward, and Laura Jean.

Fidel made a personal project of getting Santiago's autobiography published. He personally translated the original text from Spanish to English. He was still looking for a publisher when he died of a heart attack.

**Carmen Tafolla (1951 - )** is Santiago's great-granddaughter. Her father is Mariano Jr., Fidel's brother and son of Mariano Sr. In 2012, she was chosen as the first Poet Laureate for the city of San Antonio, Texas, and in 2015 was named Poet Laureate for the entire state.

Carmen received her bachelors and masters from Austin College in 1972 and 1973 respectively. She graduated with her Ph.D in 1982 from the University of Texas. She started her career at Texas Lutheran College in 1973 as the Director of Mexican-American Studies, initiating among other projects, the El Premio Roberto Salinas Award for students promoting human understanding and cultural harmony. She was the first Chicana faculty member to direct a Chicano Studies Center in the United States. She continued her career at various colleges throughout the Southwest. She has worked as the Associate Professor of Women's Studies at California State University Fresno and the Special Assistant to the President for Cultural Diversity Programming at Northern Arizona University. She currently works as Associate Professor for Transformative Children's Literature for the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Her work has been published in over 200 anthologies. She has written five books of poetry, ten children's books, seven television screen plays, a book of short stories and many articles and essays. She performs a one-woman show that has toured internationally. Her book of poetry *Curandera* was noted for her Spanish to English code switching.

She has received the Art of Peace Award and been recognized by the National Association of Chicano Studies for work which "gives voice to the peoples and cultures of this land." She has received several awards for her books, including being the first Latina awarded the Charlotte Zolotow Award for best children's picture book writing in 2010. She also received The 2009 Tomas Rivera Book Award, the 2010 Tomás Rivera Book Award, the 2010 Américas Award, and two International Latino Book. She received American Library Association (ALA) Notable and Junior Library Guild Selection.

Her writings are archived at the Benson Latin American Collection of the University of Texas Libraries.

**Laura Jean Tafolla (1954- )** is the granddaughter of Santiago Tafolla and the daughter of Fidel León and Olivia Treviño Tafolla.

She received a bachelor's degree in Psychology and Education with a minor in Mathematics from Trinity University in 1976. In 1980, she continued her education at the University of Texas in San Antonio with a Masters in Educational Psychology and Counseling. Most her career in the San Antonio Independent School District was spent teaching math at Highlands High School, but she also taught at Lowell Middle School and Tafolla Middle School. Retired from teaching full time, she works as a math tutor for the Gear-Up Program at Lanier High School.

She is also an accomplished singer and enjoys painting and writing. She discovered Santiago's handwritten manuscript in an old shirt box in the closet.

## Scope and Content Note

The Santiago Tafolla Collection is arranged into four series with the first two being the works of the two main creators, Santiago and Fidel. Following these series are the additional family documents not pertaining to Santiago or Fidel and, lastly, the family artifacts.

Santiago's series mostly consists of his journal, memoir, and military documents such as correspondence. There are preservation concerns with his handwritten journal and memoir, and it is advised for researchers to have access to copies.

Fidel's series mostly contains his work on Santiago's memoir, personal papers, and photos. Also contained in this series are correspondence and writings about him. A small collection of the Tafolla family's papers as well as Carmen's papers can be found at the Benson Latin American Collection.

The family document series is fairly sparse. This series contains the notes and research that Carmen and Laura conducted for Santiago's memoir, along with several photographs of family members.

The family artifacts includes books and over-sized photographs owned by other members makes up the final series, along with a section of Santiago's cane.

# **Administrative Information**

## **Access Restrictions**

Open for research

## **Preferred Citation**

The Santiago Tafolla Collection, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

## **Acquisition Information**

Purchase, 2014

## **Processing Information**

Processed Leanne Cox & ChristyJoy Skaw, 2015

## **Notes to Researchers**

Some documents, such as Santiago's handwritten journal pages (box 1, folder 1) and Santiago's handwritten memoir (box 4) are fragile and digital copies or photocopies will be available.

Select items have been digitized and are available at:

<http://exhibits.library.txstate.edu/thewittliffcollections/exhibits/show/santiago-tafolla-collection/rev-tafolla>

In several areas Santiago Tafolla is known as 'James'.

# Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Santiago Tafolla

### Box Folder

- |   |     |   |
|---|-----|---|
| 1 | 1   | <b>Handwritten Journal Pages 1909-1910</b><br><br>Handwritten journal pages, 1909-1910 (fragile)  |
| 3 | 1-2 | <b>Memoir</b><br><br>Handwritten memoir, part 1<br>Handwritten memoir, part 2   |
| 1 | 2   | <b>Military Records</b><br><br>Gustave Frasch letter verifying that James Tafolla served in the Cavalry of the US Army from 1855 to 1860<br>Discharge Certificate from US Army 1860 (certificate giving 1911, copy)<br>“Oja de Servicio” - Hoja de Servicio/Service sheet (documents 1876-1891, Spanish)<br>Department of the Interior letters - March 10, 1903; March 16, 1903; April 3, 1903; October 10, 1904; April 3, 1906<br>Signed letter from War Department (signed by Adjutant General) (January 4, 1911) |
| 1 | 3   | <b>Family Documents</b><br><br>Marriage Certificate for Santiago Tafolla and Anastacia Mercado, 1869, copy<br>Obituaries for James Tafolla  |
| 1 | 4   | <b>Writings About Santiag Tafolla</b><br><br>Resena Histotica de la Iglesia Metodista, carbon copy, mentioning Santiago, Spanish, undated<br>Article in <i>El Evangelista Mexicano</i> , “El Rev. Santiago Tafolla” by Alejandro H. Sutherland, Spanish, undated<br>Article in <i>El Evangelista Mexicano</i> , “Muerte de un Veterano en la Frontera” by Pedro Grado, Spanish, undated<br>“A La Sentida Muerta Del Rev. Santiago Tafolla”, carbon copy of poem by Pedro Grado, 1911, Spanish                       |



## Series I: Santiago Tafolla, continued

### Box Folder

1 5 **Photographs**

Santiago Tafolla standing, circa 1908, copy  
Reproduction photograph of Santiago, Anastacia and family, circa 1887  
Santiago Tafolla and his sons after Anita's funeral, 1911, original and copy  
Reproduction of Santiago Tafolla camp meeting, circa 1890s

## Series II: Fidel Tafolla

### Box Folder

1 6 **Memoir - Translation**

Handwritten original of Fidel's translation, 131 pages, pencil on notebook paper, 1970

1 7 **Memoir - Notes**

Handwritten research notes, loose pages, undated  
Handwritten research notes, notebook, circa 1960-1970s  
Handwritten research notes, small notebook, circa 1960-1970s  
Handwritten research notes, loose pages, circa 1960-1970s  
Handwritten research notes, loose pages, circa 1960-1970s  
Microfilm receipts, June 25, 1970

1 8 **Memoir - Research**

Santa Fe Official City and County Area Map, undated  
New Mexico road map, undated  
New Mexico Travel Guide, undated  
New Mexico Magazine, March 1969  
*Mi Matamoros Querido*: tourist guide that mentions Bagdad, which is important to Santiago's story, Spanish, undated

### **Memoir - Spanish Drafts**

- 1 9 Early Draft "Copy of Santiago's memoir before corrections were made", undated  
1 10 Early Draft with handwritten corrections, undated  
1 11 Spanish Drafts, loose pages, undated  
1 12 Early typed draft reflecting corrections made, photocopied, undated

## Series II: Fidel Tafolla, continued

### Box Folder

- 1 13 Early typed draft, photocopied and bound, personal copy of Sr. y Sra. Mariano y Maria Tafolla, with handwritten notes and post-its assumed to be made by Carmen and Laura Tafolla, undated

#### **Memoir - English Drafts**

- 1 14 Early Draft, loose pages, undated  
1 15 Introduction, two copies with edits, undated  
1 16 Typed draft, original first copy, 1970  
1 17 *Nearing the End of the Trail*, working copy 1, 1970  
2 1 *Nearing the End of the Trail*, working copy 2, 1970  
2 2 *Nearing the End of the Trail*, working copy 3, 1970  
2 3 *Nearing the End of the Trail*, working copy 4, with folder, 1970

#### 2 4 **Correspondence**

Empty envelopes addressed to Fidel, unknown dates, April 1969, July 1970  
American Association of Retired Persons/National Retired Teachers Association, incoming letter, June 8, 1970  
Chavez, Angelico, incoming letter, May 12, 1970  
Clark, Frances T., outgoing handwritten letter, date unknown  
Clark, Frances T., outgoing typed letter, July 6, 1970  
Driver Trainer Newsletters, 1969 Honors Issue, February 1970, March 1970, and envelope  
Moran, Esperanza C., reference letter for a student, December 18, 1969, copy  
Nanez, Alfredo, Director at Perkins School of Theology, Southern Methodist University, outgoing typed letter, December 7, 1970, copy  
Readers Digest, outgoing letter, December 7, 1970  
Senior Citizens Council of Bexar County News Letter, June 1970

#### 2 5 **Personal Papers**

Personal Records book, includes record of employment and earnings, undated  
The Story of Randolph Air Force Base, undated  
Sidney Lanier High School Yearbook, 1939, Vice Principal F.L. Tafolla  
Speech and notes, given at San Antonio Lodge, August 10, 1964  
Senior Class of 1968, two pages  
Sidney Lanier Alumni Association Fourth Annual "Mr. Ex" Ball program, August 10, 1968  
Naturalization Requirements and General Information booklet, Rev. 4-15-69  
Speech given at Jose Francisco Ruiz School, May 12, 1969

## Series II: Fidel Tafolla, continued

### Box Folder

#### Personal Papers, continued

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 2 | 5 | The Texas Freemason booklet, March 1970<br>Bexar County Democratic Primary Sample Ballot, May 2, 1970  |
| 2 | 6 | <b>Writings About Fidel Tafolla</b><br><br>Sketch of Fidel by Bob Dale for San Antonio newspaper, undated<br>Interview on TV Channel 4 KEWX, July 19, 1962<br>Newspaper clipping from The San Antonio Light, article "Museum in an Office",<br>June 3, 1970  |
| 2 | 7 | <b>Photographs</b><br><br>Lithograph reproduction of Santa Fe vicinity, 1949, obtained by Fidel when doing<br>his research in 1960-1970s<br>Black and white photograph of Fidel, 1960s or 1970s<br>Photograph of Santa Fe Plaza painting, obtained by Fidel when doing his research<br>in the 1960-1970s |

## Series III: Family Documents

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 2 | 8  | Obituaries for James Tafolla, Ernest Tafolla, and Anita Tafolla, undated, 1910  |
| 2 | 9  | Notes by Carmen and Laura Tafolla, appendices and foto captions, undated  |
| 2 | 10 | <b>Photographs</b><br><br>Manuel Tafolla with sons and grandsons on horseback, undated<br>Israel Tafolla Bernel, 9 months old, photo laid in a draft, undated<br>Policarpio Rodriguez with grandson John Hill, c. 1890<br>Camp Meeting, M.F. Tafolla, 1925, torn<br>Family Reunion, M.F. Tafolla far right, mid to late 1930s |

## Series IV: Family Artifacts

### Books

- |   |    |   |
|---|----|---|
| 2 | 11 | Methodist Hymnal book and General Course Plan, Spanish, undated |
| 2 | 12 | Manuel Tafolla's doctrine and sermon book, fragile, 1922        |

3 3 Book of poetry, owned by Santiago Tafolla, fragile, undated

### **Photographs**

3 4 Tintype of Anastacia Salinas de Tafolla, 1864

3 5 Santiago Tafolla standing, La Trinidad, 300 San Fernando, undated  
Santiago Tafolla with sons at the funeral of daughter Anita at their home,  
left to right: Ernesto Tafolla, James Tafolla, Gabe, M.F., and Lott;  
seated, J.J. Macado, Santiago Sr., and Brono Pete; broken original and  
copy print

4 1 Photograph of Santiago Tafolla Jr., Santiago's son who established the Order of  
the Sons of America, a precursor and rival to LULAC, removed from  
frame

### **Physical Artifacts**

4 2 Glass, cardboard, and backing pieces for the frame that held the photograph of  
Santiago Tafolla Sr. standing, undated

4 3 Frame that held the photograph of Santiago Tafolla Sr. standing, undated

4 4 Section of cane used by Santiago Tafolla Sr., when asked why he carried the cane  
he told his grandchildren "For the dogs, suh, for the dogs."

4 5 *The Texas Methodist*, newspaper clippings

April 23, 1971 - Original newspaper about 1900 Methodist Conferencia  
Fronteriza with photos of Santiago and Policarpio, among other  
Hispanic ministers, Spanish

April 30, 1971 - article on Polly's Chapel, Spanish