

Images of James James, a Black Seminole and Circus performers with a Mascogo performer on extreme left

(Photography – Texas – Mexico) Cockrell, Thomas J., **Group of Fifty -seven Photographs of Mexico along the Line of the Mexican Railway, Largely Taken by Thomas J. Cockrell, Photographer of Laredo Texas, circa 1887-1888, Includes Rare Images of Black Seminoles, Mascogo and Kickapoo Individuals**

Fifty-seven albumen views, mounted on both sides of 13 quarto cardstock mounts. The images measure between 11.4 x 18.7 cm and 11 x 16 cm. Several of the images are captioned in ink underneath the photographs, others are captioned on the negative, the rest are unidentified. The images consist of views in Mexico along the line of the Mexican Railway, Native Americans including Mascogos, and members of the Kickapoo Nation, then resident in El naciemento, Muzquiz Municipality, Mexico, including an image of James James, a Mascogo, a formerly enslaved man, a Black Seminole, Mexicans, Mexican cattlemen, and several more informal shots likely of Cockrell and

the party he was traveling with, these images include candid photographs of camping, traveling in wagons, et cetera. The bulk of the images are in good condition with strong contrast, the informal shots are somewhat faded and with low contrast.

The present collection was likely taken by Thomas Cockrell on an 1887 trip into Mexico to photograph views along the Mexican International Railway. James James, the formerly enslaved man, native of South Carolina, then living in Santa Rosa, Mexico, whose image appears in the collection, was featured in several newspaper stories that appeared in America in 1887. James claimed to be 135 years old, and the published accounts include his recollections of slavery in South Carolina, memories of the termination of the Revolutionary War, etc. James was, in fact, a Black Seminole who had escaped slavery and fled to Mexico. Cockrell's viewbook containing several of the images in this collection was published in 1888, in Laredo.



Mexican Water Wages



Mexican Barillers

The identified images include: Mexican Water Works, Mexican Barrillero, Mexican Moranas, James James 135 Years Old Santa Rosa Mexico. Cathedral, Paso del Norte, Mexico, three images of Bull fights, in Saltillo, Mexico, Chihuahua, Mexico, Quinta de Don Pae Lunce, Monterey, Mex., two images of Pedra Negras, Mex., Scene near Cleotes, Ranch, Mex., Plaza, Santa Rosa, Mexico, Giant Cactus, Topo Chico, Mexico, Plaza San Francisco de Assis, Saltillo, Mex., Sabinas River, Sabinas Bridge, "The Shanty" Sabinas. The album includes images of members of the Kickapoo Nation in El naciemento, Mexico. There are also several images of Mascogo people, descendants of Black Seminoles who escaped slavery in the United States and settled in El naciemento, Muzquiz, Mexico, one of whom was a circus performer.



Kickapoo Nation members in El naciemento, Mexico

Little is known about Thomas Cockrell, photographer from Laredo, he is known to have executed a series of photographs which includes views of south Texas and Monterrey, Mexico and along the Mexican Central Railway and Mexican National Railway. He is found in the Texas State Gazeteer¹ in 1890-1891, and 1892. He published three viewbooks, dating from 1888 through early 1890s. They were all in the same format, consisting of 12 leaves, all illustrations. They are entitled: *The Mexican International Railway Views: Series No. 1*, Laredo: 1888; *The Mexican National Railway Views*, New York: Albertype Company, c. 1890s; and *Mexican Typical Views*, c. 1890s.

The DeGolyer Library has only 7 of Cockrell's mounted views, per their website: only one of which "Mexican Barrillero" is found in the present collection.

[https://digitalcollections.smu.edu/digital/collection/mex/search/searchterm/Cockrell%2C%20Thos.%20J.%20\(Thomas%20J.\)field/create/mode/exact/conn/and](https://digitalcollections.smu.edu/digital/collection/mex/search/searchterm/Cockrell%2C%20Thos.%20J.%20(Thomas%20J.)field/create/mode/exact/conn/and)

\$ 3,500.00

1. Haynes, David, *Catching Shadows A Directory of Nineteenth-Century Texas Photographers* Austin: Texas State Historical Association, 1993, p. 25





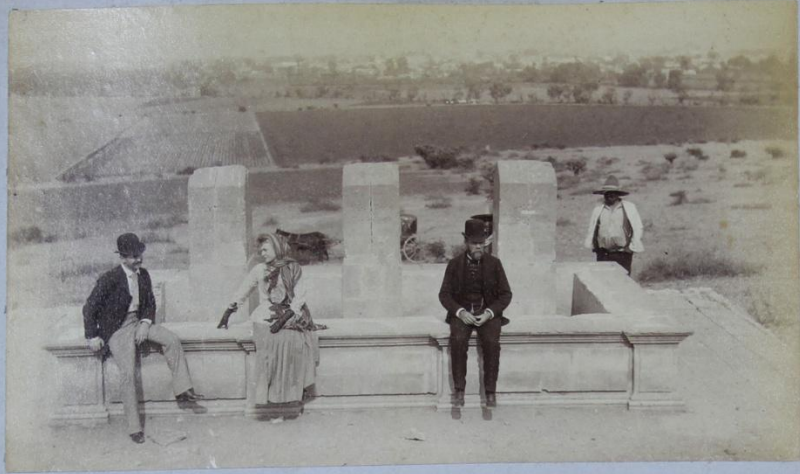
"The Shanty"

Sabinas



El corral de la plaza de San Juan
de los Rios

Piedras Negras, Mex.

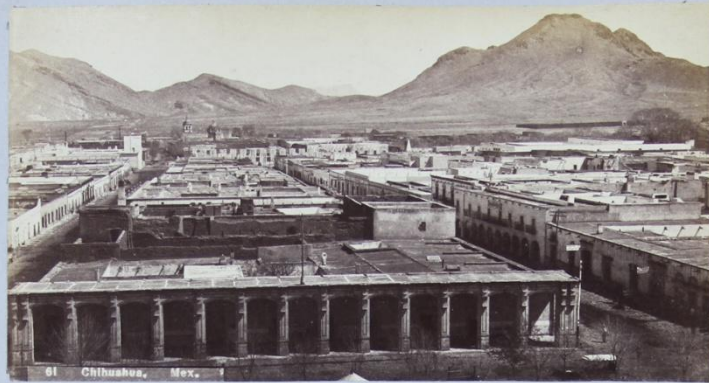




Plaza - Santa Rosa Mexico



Sabinas Bridge



Chihuahua

Mexico



Llanta de Don Papi Lunce Monterrey Mex.