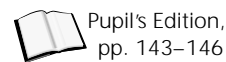




## Primary Source

Pupil's Edition,  
pp. 143–146

## Life in the Missions

### Diary of Fray José de Solís

From 1767 to 1768 Fray José de Solís visited missions across Texas and recorded his view of the progress of each one.

March 4 [1768]. I concluded the visitation of the Rosario mission. As far as its temporal<sup>1</sup> goods are concerned, it is in a flourishing condition. . . . The church, a very fine, frame building, is white-washed and beautifully decorated.

[The Indians] are very fond of certain kinds of dances which they call mitotes. . . . These mitotes last three days and three nights.

The task of converting and of inducing<sup>2</sup> the Indians to live at the mission has been a difficult one, and some of those who had been living there have fled back again to the hills, to the river-banks or to the seashore. The reasons for this are various. First of all, these Indians are . . . anxious to be free from all servitude<sup>3</sup> and from work and wish to return to their life of freedom and idleness. They have, moreover, a . . . distaste for the teachings of our holy faith and . . . our holy commandments. . . . Still another reason is because the military officers neglect to . . . inflict punishment upon those that run away, and because they neglect to pursue them and bring them back.

April 6. . . . The mission of San José y San Miguel de Aguayo . . . is so pretty and in such a flourishing condition, both materially and spiritually, that I cannot find words or figures with which to express its beauty. . . . At a distance of about ten or twelve leagues [about 8 miles] from the town it has a ranch . . . where all the stock is kept. White overseers or administrators are not needed, for the Indians take complete charge of the ranch. The Indians themselves take care of the work in the cloth factory, carpenter shop, forge, [and] tailor shop . . . and attend to all other work that is to be done in the town. They are industrious<sup>4</sup> . . . and are skilled in all kinds of labor. They act as mule-drivers, masons, cowboys, shepherds, etc.

With the exception of such as were already old when they came to the mission . . . all of these Indians speak Spanish and are baptized and know

how to pray. Most of them play some musical instrument, the guitar, the violin or the harp. All have good voices, and on Saturdays, the 19th of each month and on the feast [days] . . . a choir . . . sings so beautifully that it is a delight to hear it. . . . The able-bodied men attend to the manual labor, the old men make arrows for the warriors, the grown-up girls weave cloth, card wool and sew, the old women catch fish for the padres, and the younger boys and girls go to school and recite their prayers.

That these Indians have a weakness for their mitotes is evident from the fact that both men and women of the San José mission, who are so cultured and so well instructed, go off to the woods to dance there with the pagans whenever the priests are not watching. Great care is taken in order to keep them from this wicked practice, and whenever they are found guilty of it they are punished severely. All of them sleep in beds raised off the ground and are provided with fine, large blankets made of wool and of cotton, with sheets made from gunny-sack,<sup>5</sup> and with mattresses made from bison hides.

### Review Questions

1. Why, according to Solís, did many Native Texans leave the missions?
2. What kinds of work did the Native Texans do in and for the missions?

### Critical Thinking

3. **Making Inferences** What does Solís think is wrong with the Native Texan lifestyle?
4. **Identifying Point of View** How does Solís view the Native Texan religious practices? How does he suggest discouraging them?

1 **temporal** worldly

2 **inducing** persuading

3 **servitude** condition of serving others

4 **industrious** hard-working

5 **gunny-sack** coarse cloth