

Above: An 1847 lithograph by Daniel P. Whiting made during the U.S. occupation looks from the Cerro del Obispado toward the center of Monterrey. The Cerro de la Silla ("Saddle Mountain") is in the background. Left: A detail of La Reineria, an early department store (1901, Alfred Giles).

# Mapping Change

## Monterrey in Three Acts

BY ARMANDO V. FLORES SALAZAR

FOR ITS FIRST 200 YEARS, Monterrey existed as a northern outpost of Nueva España, but the 19th century changed everything about the place. Monterrey grew from a colonial town to a city of national consequence; from a population of 7,000 to a population of 70,000; from a closed economy to an open one; from an agricultural base to an industrial one; and from provincial somnolence to cosmopolitan dynamism. Architectural readings of three maps from the period show how those changes literally shaped the city.

On September 20, 1597, New Spain government officials created the City of Our Lady of Monterrey, which they designated the capital of the New Kingdom of León. (To this day, Monterrey remains the capital of the Mexican state Nuevo León.)

A broad range of cultures shaped Monterrey. In the 16th century, when Spaniards arrived in the region, they displaced the Chichimecas, indigenous nomadic and semi-nomadic people. The Spaniards brought with them their allies, the Tlaxcaltecas, an urban people from Central Mexico, and African Bantus, who had been imported to the New World as slaves. The dominant Spanish and Tlaxcaltecan cultures had independently developed similar urban styles. Both the Spaniards and the Tlaxcaltecas favored plazas surrounded by gridded streets, and they expected their new city to follow that pattern.

But even Spanish culture showed a mixture of influences: Iberian, Sephardic, Moorish, and Greco-Roman-Christian (especially Franciscan). And by the time of Mexico's independence, Monterrey had begun to interact with still other cultures: Anglo-American, French, Austrian, Italian, and German, among others. As Monterrey grew, it would reflect all of those cultural influences.<sup>1</sup>

But for 200 years, the settlement developed slowly. In 1775, Governor Melchor Vidal de Lorca reported that Monterrey's entire population — including both the "city" and its neighboring haciendas, and both Europeans and non-Europeans — totaled only 238 people.<sup>2</sup> Without a central industry, Monterrey was little more than a cluster of farms and ranches.

### Act I: Religious City

In the late 18th century, Monterrey developed a religious economic base. In 1777, the Catholic Church created the new diocese of Linares, and in 1792, the Church moved the diocese's see city from nearby Linares to Monterrey. Two early bishops, Fray Rafael José Verger (1781-1790) and Andrés Ambrosio de Llanos y Valdés (1792-1799), equipped Monterrey with a cathedral, a house and summer house for the bishop, a seminary, an indigents' hospital, the Capuchin Convent, and a school of arts

and crafts, as well as new churches and chapels.

Bishop de Llanos y Valdés recruited architect Juan Crouset from the Academia San Carlos in Mexico City, and afterward, Crouset worked for the colonial governor, don Simón Herrera y Leyva. In 1798, Crouset prepared for the governor the *Map Showing the Location of Improved and Unimproved Building Sites in the City of Monterrey of the New Kingdom of León*.<sup>3</sup>

The map, scaled in Castilian varas, shows the town bounded by the Río Santa Catarina on the south and the irrigation ditches and reservoirs of the Springs of Santa Lucía on the north.<sup>4</sup> The town plan consisted of six east-west streets and 11 north-south streets, within which Crouset noted the principal public squares, the Plazas de Armas and Comercio, and outstanding buildings (the pro-cathedral, a church built to serve until the proper cathedral was finished; the Franciscan monastery of San Andrés; the chapels of San Javier, Santa Rita, and La Purísima; the bishop's and the governor's houses; a temporary hospital; and the seminary). He also showed the streets, dams, and buildings being constructed under his direction: a northward extension of the town plan, the Hospital of Nuestra Señora del Rosario, the Capuchin Convent, and the present Metropolitan Cathedral of Nuestra Señora de Monterrey. The only major new building not shown on the map was the Obispado, the Palace of Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which was the bishop's summer house. It had been completed ten years earlier to the west of Monterrey. The civil and religious buildings erected by the bishops and academically trained architects, such as Crouset, marked the region's first appearance of high-style architecture.

Bishop Verger and his successors sought to expand Monterrey's town plan

to the north and the west to take advantage of the area's higher, breezier, and more healthful altitudes. And certainly, the city was growing. The Census of 1802, carried out by Governor Herrera y Leyva, found a population of 7,000.

### Act II: Military Headquarters

In the 1810s, Joaquín de Arredondo, the last colonial governor, made Monterrey the general military headquarters of the Eastern Internal Provinces. Effectively, Monterrey had become the capital of the future states of Nuevo León, Coahuila, Texas, and Tamaulipas.

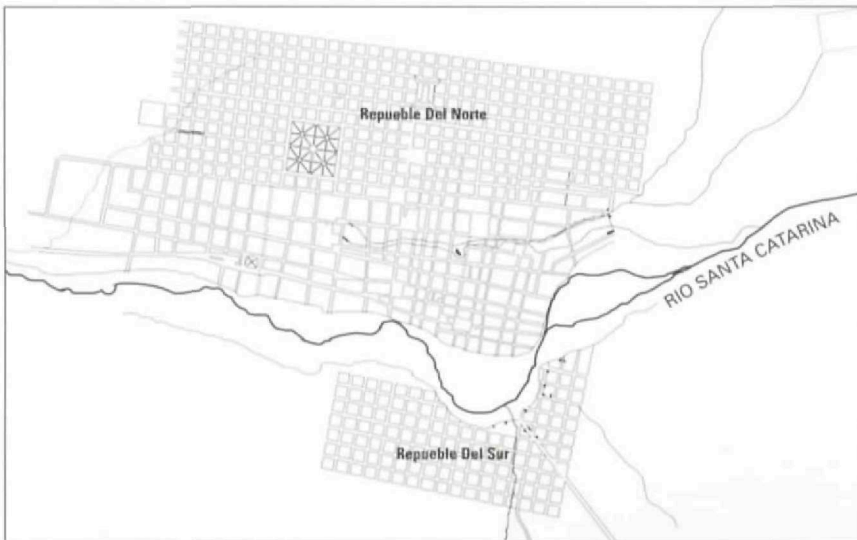
For the next 50 years, the city endured many bouts of military hostility: the struggle for independence (1810-1821), the U.S. invasion (1846-1848), the civil war over enactment of the Reform Laws (1858-1861), the French intervention (1863-1867), and other, localized episodes of civil disorder. But Monterrey did not cease to build. In 1816, Juan Crouset and the builder Carmen Meza completed the baldachin of the cathedral, which was dedicated in 1833. The Palacio del Ayuntamiento (the City Hall, now the Museo del Estado de Nuevo León) was rebuilt by the Greek immigrant architect Papias Anguiano in 1853, and the Plaza Zaragoza, the old Plaza de Armas, was outfitted with stone sidewalks and lanterns. The Teatro del Progreso was dedicated in 1857. In 1860 the Hospital Civil opened, and in 1861 the city government opened the Alameda Nueva, a landscaped pleasure garden.<sup>5</sup>

The physician Juan Sotero Noriega observed in 1856 that Monterrey had "its long, wide streets, even if not completely straight, paved, and provided with comfortable footpaths on either side; its houses of solid construction, almost all of stone, generally one story high; well painted and adorned they give the city the delightful aspect of an entirely new settlement."<sup>6</sup>

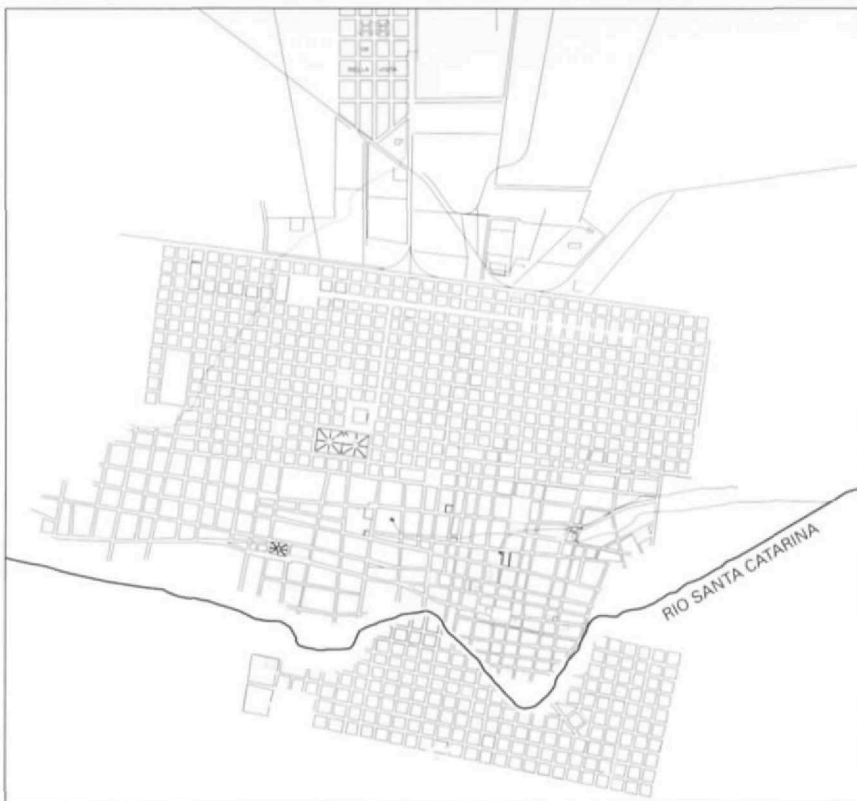




Juan Crouset's 1798 map of Monterrey.



Isidoro Epstein's 1865 map.



Florentino Arroyo and Ramón Díaz's 1894 map.

Isidoro Epstein, who was born in Germany, arrived in Monterrey in 1864 to serve as both professor of mathematics at the Colegio Civil and as Municipal Engineer, an office he held until 1868. In July 1865, he published the *Map of the City of Monterrey and Its Commons*.<sup>7</sup>

The map, scaled in meters, presents the existing street network, which in the nearly 70 years since Crouset's map had only grown three streets to the north of the Arroyo Santa Lucía. The future expansion of the city (additions to the north of Santa

Lucía, as well as to the south of the Río Santa Catarina) were indicated as *repueblos*. The *Repueblos del Norte* encompassed the 40-acre Alameda Nueva.

On the map, a box of text identifies by number 16 notable buildings. These included the cathedral, parish churches, chapels, the state and municipal government buildings, military installations, schools, and hospitals. The map also named public plazas, the Alameda and the nearby Ciudadela (the citadel, based on the foundations of a never completed

cathedral), waterways, mountains, and highways to outlying towns.

The Epstein map reflects the transformations the 19th century wrought on Monterrey. The separation of powers enshrined in the new Mexican Constitution is visible in the two government palaces, one belonging to the city, the other to the state. The Hospital Civil and the Colegio Civil are secular replacements for Catholic institutions. The cemetery, the Campo Santo, was a public site detached from churchyard burial grounds, as called for in the Reform Laws of 1857, which sought to secularize Mexican public life. The Ciudadela, the fort defending the city, and the Maestranza, a foundry for the manufacture of artillery, were built in answer to the military invasions Monterrey had endured. The extension of roads connecting Monterrey to other settlements reflected the movement of people and merchandise, just as the proposals for expanding the street network reflected Monterrey's increasing population.

### Act III: City of Business

At the end of the 19th century, Monterrey developed as a commercial and industrial powerhouse. Many factors contributed to the city's economic strength: proximity to the new international border to the north; the U.S. Civil War, which enormously stimulated trade throughout northeastern Mexico; the construction of railroads that linked Monterrey to Mexico City and the Gulf Coast port city of Tampico, as well as to Laredo and San Antonio in Texas; the "Union and Progress" policies of Mexican president Porfirio Díaz's 35-year administration; financial incentives for new construction; investment capital; and the entrepreneurial spirit of the Monterrey elite.

Two Monterrey residents, Florentino Arroyo and Ramón Díaz, published the *Map of the City of Monterrey, Nuevo León* in 1894. It followed the cartographic conventions of Epstein's map with its marginal technical data, a box identifying notable buildings, and images of some of these.<sup>8</sup>

The map, also scaled in meters, presents a street network that had been expanded in the four cardinal directions. To the north, the map shows the first industrial installations, two railroad stations, and a workers' residential district whose street layout was determined by highways and by railroad and streetcar tracks rather than an extension of the *repueblo* grid.

In contrast to the 1865 map, with its 16 notable buildings, the 1894 map identifies 68. The number of churches had increased from 5 to 14; among them a Baptist church. In 1891, the diocese of Monterrey had been elevated to an archdiocese. There were ten new plazas. The

Alameda Nueva, renamed for Porfirio Díaz, had been halved in order to construct the State Penitentiary on what had been its north half. The growth of the city and its socioeconomic activities were reflected in new institutions of higher education. In addition to the Colegio Civil and the seminary, these included new professional schools of law, medicine, pharmacy, and education. Manufacturing and commercial activity were supported by the Banco Nacional, the Banco de Nuevo León, and the private banking house of the Irish immigrant and financier Patricio Milmo. The map also identifies five hotels, four streetcar companies, two railroad stations, a theater, and an elite social club, the Casino Monterrey. There were corresponding increases in the number and degree of specialization of institutions of government, the military, and health care. An electric light company and a telegraph and telephone company operated in Monterrey. Huge buildings housed industries such as the Cervecería Cuauhtémoc and the Grand National Mexican Foundry. The consulates of the United States, Germany, Spain, and Italy reflected the city's international ties.

In September 1896, in one of the ceremonies celebrating the Tercentennial of Monterrey's founding, the orator Enrique Gorostieta said that the city "in a century has increased its population 100 times and its resources a thousand times."<sup>9</sup> The three maps discussed here show that his dramatic statement was more than hyperbole. ■

*Armando V. Flores Salazar is an architect and professor of architecture at the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, where he directed the architectural research department.*

*Translated from Spanish by Claudia Kolker.*

#### Notes:

1. Armando V. Flores Salazar. *Calicanto: Marcos culturales en la arquitectura regiomentana, Siglos XV a XX*. Monterrey: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 1998, p. 73.
2. José Eleuterio González. *Colección de noticias y documentos para la historia del estado de Nuevo León*. Monterrey: Editorial Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León, 1975, p. 97.
3. Crouset's map is deposited in the Archivo General de la Nación (Provincias Internas, volume 196). The facsimile copy belonging to the Instituto Nacional de Estadística, Geografía e Informática (INEGI) is deposited in the Capilla Alfonsina of the Universidad Autónoma de Nuevo León.
4. The three maps presented here are reproductions reformatted to the same scale to facilitate a comparative analysis of the growth and expansion of Monterrey. The maps were digitized by R. Covarrubias, J. Casas, J. Arizpe, and G. Cortés.
5. Isidro Vizcaya Canales. *Monterrey 1882: crónica de un año memorable*. México: 1991.
6. Alfonso Rangel Guerra, editor. *Una ciudad para vivir: Variaciones sobre un mismo tema*. Monterrey: Fondo editorial Nuevo León, 1991, p. 65.
7. The Epstein map in facsimile from INEGI; original deposited in the Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León.
8. The Arroyo and Díaz map in facsimile from INEGI; original deposited in the Archivo General del Estado de Nuevo León.
9. Alfonso Rangel Guerra, editor. *Una ciudad para vivir*, p. 91.