

August 10, 1935

Dear Brother Michael:

Have tried several times to reach you by phone for appointment, but you have been out. Perhaps after all can open the subject better by letter.

By way of introduction let me say that Father Rabe and Brother Black know me quite well; also Father Garriga, Mrs. Henry Drought, H.P. Drought and others of your Church. Brother Julius knows me slightly. Father Rabe, I know, is in Europe.

Want to discuss the possibility of using a room or two at old St. Mary's downtown for a Spanish history society headquarters. St. Edward's is doing that Texas-wide work in association with the K.G. Commission. In San Antonio and South Texas there is room for local research that will bring out the old Spanish history of this South Texas of which San Antonio is the heart. There should be prestige for St. Mary's university in being identified with this.

Individuals for years have pursued local research without cooperation and struggling with many handicaps. These people should be drawn together, their work pooled, their interest directed into specialized channels, a d files, data and maps collected at a headquarters to increase their efficiency. I have associates in history work; we have worked together loosely but have made headway.

I have good office furniture to set up such a headquarters. Am about as poor as the next fellow these days but believe we can sink roots into intensely interesting soil and build bit by bit and get somewhere. There would be no duplication of St. Edward's but healthful coordination. Their publications are now making local research possible that hitherto was impossible, and local publication material is now near-ready that will stimulate more local research.

San Antonio is not merely an isolated historic settlement; it was an integral part of empire-building plans that are reflected in many parts of South Texas and today essentially unknown. The San Antonio missions were built to greatness because great plans were in progress in this Spanish South Texas. Research respecting these missions must be handled locally, and carefully directed. St. Edward's work is wonderfully helpful. Men are still living who can give helpful information but are dying fast. Present generation knows little.

Bancroft, by organization, collected data and then gave to California the history foundation upon which classic history has been built. I know there are untouched mines in South Texas. Don't know right now how we can finance our way thru but do believe we have brains with which to start, then intelligently plan. For a long time have thought an independent headquarters best; now believe probably more substantial work is possible by coordination this way. Will phone again. Can drive out day or evening.

Sincerely,

Harold Ayres