

As part of my interdisciplinary dissertation project, I traveled to the Palacio de Lecumberri, a former prison decommissioned in 1976, houses Mexican colonial documents about *The Land of Fresh Water* (TLOFW).<sup>1</sup> This Palacio, which became the home of the Archivo General de la Nación (AGN) in 1980, was my second home this 2024 summer as I furthered my indexing of colonial documents about TLOFW in order to gain insight about maize and land tenure histories of this rural village where I also conduct ethnographic research. With support of the CLAS Tinker Grant, I was able to catalog almost 40 colonial documents about TLOFW that will be used for my historiography of TLOFW and other parts of my dissertation.

Perhaps the most important document I found, and certainly the most visually captivating, is a 1718 map of the Alto Balsas River Valley which specifically outlined the Alto Balsas Nahua villages in the municipalities of “Yguala, Cocula, and Tepequaquilco.” The map does not have an author credit attached to it, and measures 106 centimeters by 92.5 centimeters. At the time of consultation, the map was unavailable for in-person physical consultation; fortunately, I was able to find a copy of the map, with help from AGN archivists such as Alejandra Alfaro, found in the AGN digital archive.

The black and white photo of the map is missing a key but it is clear that the four cardinal directions are written on the borders of the map, as well as rivers and trade routes present at the time. The mountains and vegetation are represented as jade-colored trees with cloudy borders. Each village is represented by an oval and has their name inscribed within the oval. My hope is to return to the AGN and review it in person in order to better analyze the map and get an official copy of it for my community archive that I am building for *The Land of Fresh Water*. This map serves as a foundational text that legitimizes the existence of the village and its location with other still-standing villages that have varying political relationships with one another.

The archival research I conducted is critical to my interdisciplinary project which seeks to trace the deep historical and contemporary relations Nahua maize farmers from TLOFW are still cultivating their Indigenous maize varieties despite a changing climate and economic conditions. The data gathered will serve at least two chapters of my doctoral dissertation: the literature review and historiography of TLOFW, which will be a mix of origin stories from Nahua elders and colonial documents gathered detailing the origin of the village. I am deeply grateful to the CLAS and the Tinker Foundation for the support and belief in my doctoral project.

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<sup>1</sup> *The Land of Fresh Water* is a Nahua village in the Mexican state of Guerrero where I have researched since 2018, working with maize farmers who practice food sovereignty by growing Indigenous staple foods, primarily maize, beans, and squash. This village of about 500 people is also my ancestral hometown where both of my parents are from.

Source:

AGN document. Tierras vol. 3514/exp.1/f.254. Map.