



# Amada's Blessings from the Peyote Gardens of South Texas

*Stacy B. Schaefer*

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Amada Cardenas, a Mexican American woman from the borderlands of South Texas, played a pivotal role in the little-known history of the peyote trade. She and her husband were the first federally licensed peyote dealers. They began harvesting and selling the sacramental plant to followers of the Native American Church (NAC) in the 1930s, and after her husband's death in the late 1960s Mrs. Cardenas continued to befriend and help generations of NAC members until her death in 2005, just short of her 101st birthday. Author Stacy B. Schaefer, a close friend of Amada, spent thirteen years doing fieldwork with this remarkable woman. Her book weaves together the geography, biology, history, cultures, and religions that created the unique life of Mrs. Cardenas and the people she knew. Schaefer includes their words to help tell the story of how Mexican Americans, Tejanos, gringos, Native Americans, and others were touched and inspired by Amada Cardenas's embodiment of the core NAC values: faith, hope, love, and charity.

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