

# PASSWORD



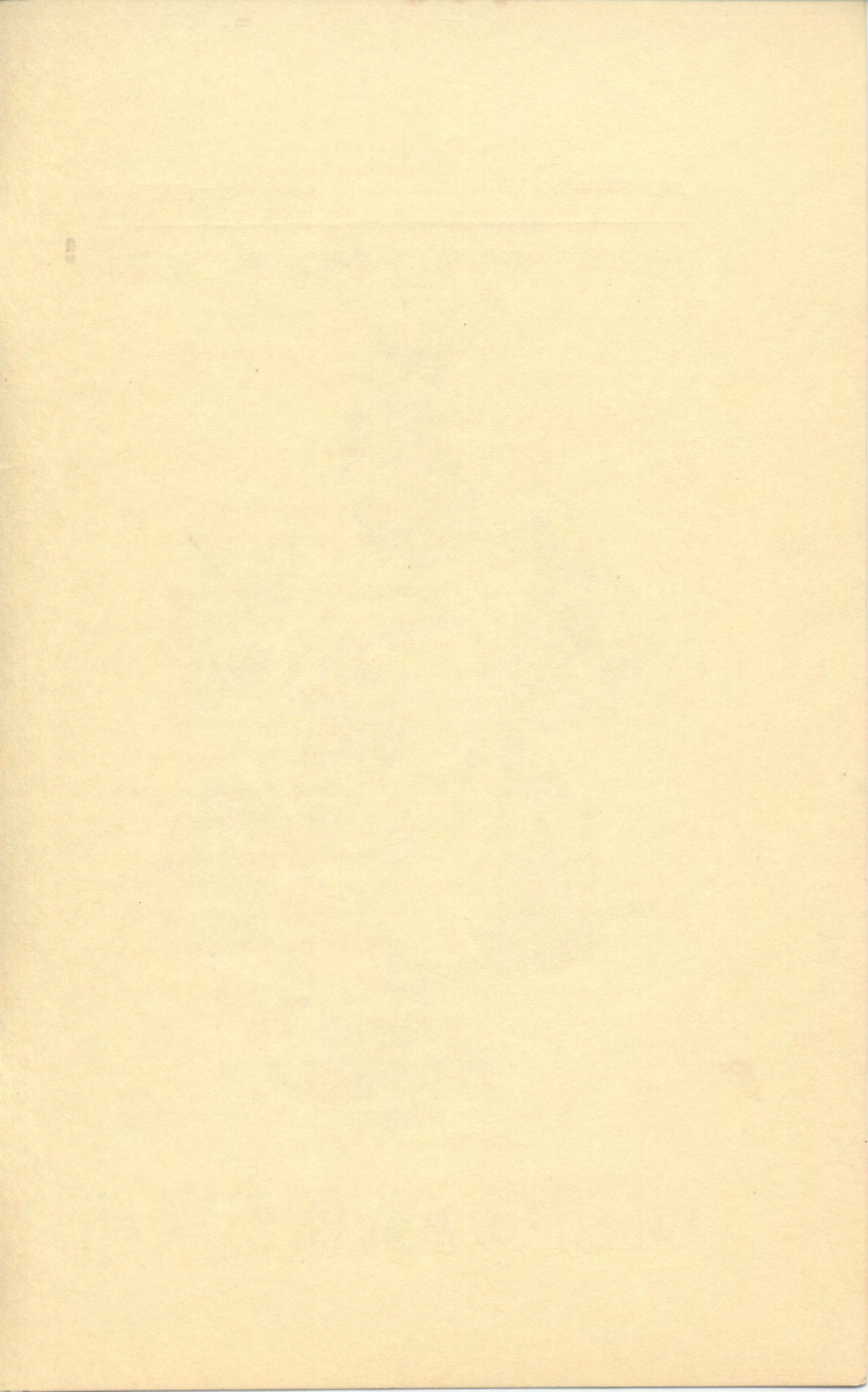
THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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VOL. XII—No. 4

WINTER, 1967





# P A S S W O R D

Published quarterly by THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

EUGENE O. PORTER, *Editor*

Vol. XII, No. 4

EL PASO, TEXAS

WINTER, 1967

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THE NAMING OF "NEW MEXICO" has been credited to Fray Rodriguez who led a small party north from Mexico City in 1580 and also to Don Antonio Espejo who went in search of Rodriguez in 1581. But, according to H. H. Bancroft, "the truth would seem to be, that the name was applied in Mexico under circumstances not finally recorded, . . . and during Espejo's absence."

*Published quarterly by THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY*

EUGENE O. PORTER, *Editor*

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## HALL OF HONOR BANQUET

THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY held its seventh annual Hall of Honor banquet at Hotel Paso del Norte on Sunday evening, November 19. More than three hundred members and guests were in attendance. Mrs. James R. Pierce was General Chairman of the Banquet Committee. She was ably assisted by Co-chairman Mrs. L. H. Hewitt. Others assisting Mrs. Pierce were Mrs. Robert F. Thompson, Decorations; Mrs. Paul Heisig, Mrs. W. W. Schuessler and Mrs. W. Franklin Eft, Reservations; Commander and Mrs. M. G. McKinney, Seating; and Mrs. Hobert R. Gay, Hospitality. Colonel William J. Wuest served as Chairman of the Selections Committee which nominated Mr. Chris P. Fox and Mr. Robert E. McKee, deceased. Guests were received by the President of the Society, Mr. Fred J. Morton, and Mrs. Morton; Honoree Mr. Fox and Mrs. Fox; and Mrs. Robert E. McKee, widow of the Honoree, and her daughter, Mrs. Francis McKee Hays.

Seated at the head table were the above-named members of the Reception Committee and in addition Colonel H. Crampton Jones, who gave the nominating address for Mr. Fox, and Mrs. Jones; Mr. Herman Leibreich, who gave the nominating address for Mr. McKee, and Mrs. Leibreich; the Reverend B. M. G. Williams and the Reverend Eugene Myrick. Arrangements of chrysanthemums in pink and strawberry-hued colors on pale pink linen decorated the head tables. The other tables, also covered with pale pink linen, were decorated with twisted pink tapers in silver candelabra swagged with ivy.

Among members of the McKee family present were Mr. and Mrs. Dave McKee and son; Mr. and Mrs. John McKee and Mr. and Mrs. Philip McKee and their families; and the three daughters of Mrs. Hays.

To witness the honor paid her father was Mrs. Nan Fox Peterson, accompanied by her husband Bill, Sr., and their son, Bill, Jr. Another daughter, Posey, was with her husband, Mr. Dan Smith, on a business trip to Puerto Rico and was unable to return in time for the banquet.



## HALL OF HONOR ADDRESS: THANKSGIVING, EL PASO

by FRED J. MORTON

TONIGHT WE AGAIN celebrate the glory of our past. For seven years now we have chosen this method of giving thanks and honor to the living and the dead who have contributed so much to the El Paso we enjoy today. Our Annual Hall of Honor Banquet has come to be something of a community Thanksgiving feast, at which we acknowledge that we are beneficiaries of a fine legacy of the past and count our blessings of the present.

We have enrolled the names of thirteen individuals and tonight add two more to the Hall of Honor. Actually, there is no tribute we can give them which they have not had; no honor which we can do more than repeat. What perhaps we can do is try to understand their message, the upshot of their lives. In this, we are apt to go astray; we have no right to impute the version we may carry off, for they lived and did without us in mind. Most of all I doubt my own role of interpreter. And yet, in one way or another, we all must assume that role; for we must not ignore what they did; we must try to recognize and appreciate the heritage they have given us. These lives viewed as a composite give us much of the character of El Paso itself—as unique and different as any in our land. Indeed, their lives have shaped El Paso and given it much of its character, which is a reflection of what they did.

We have had reviewed for us before the effect on the character of the individual El Pasoan of the remoteness and harshness of the El Paso frontier. As Conrey Bryson said in 1963: "We ask ourselves what kind of people came to El Paso, what they brought to the frontier, what the frontier did to them—and what kind of [individual] character emerged from this synthesis." Having examined this effect of place on person, let us see what effect such people, particularly our past honorees, have had on El Paso itself. For as was said by Ray Sherman in his priceless address, "My Home Town": "Cities, like individuals, build character through the years . . ." What about El Paso is different from so many other towns, villages, and cities in America? How can we say Main Street El Paso is not just like any other main street, U.S.A.? Like New Orleans, San Francisco and a few others, I feel we are distinctive.

What factors make us unique?

First of all, El Paso is multi-lingual and composed of people of many races. Not only do we have a large number of Spanish-speaking persons due to our location on the Mexican border, but one can easily come



across the other European and Far East languages. El Paso would probably be almost entirely Spanish-speaking if we were not truly a city of immigrants from all over the world. At least one of our past honorees is illustrative of this. Mrs. Eugenia Schuster, born in Budapest, Hungary, spoke five languages fluently, and came to us with Dr. Schuster from Vienna, Austria, where she was educated. Publicity men have recently come to call El Paso the International City and it truly is, but not only because we border on Mexico. The good climate, the college on the hill, and the presence of the military bases have no doubt contributed to this as well as to the fact that the English most of us speak is not tinged with the twang we find in East Texas, the drawl of the Southerner, or the clipped accent of the Easterner, or the language of the Brooklynese. We have been too much of a melting pot to retain any such linguistic peculiarities. This is unique in itself, for many people in the United States can be placed solely by the style of their talk.

Secondly, the fact is we are a much more friendly town than most. We have a reputation with the military, I believe, for being receptive to newcomers and being neighborly without being nosey to our oldtimers. Several factors have caused this and no doubt some of our honorees have contributed to it. First of all, despite the fact that El Paso is one of the oldest communities in Texas, we seem to have no "natives." As some evidence of this, not a single one of our past honorees was born in El Paso. Tonight, Chris Fox is the first of the home town boys to make good. For this reason, no one seems like an "outsider," there being no "insiders," so to speak. They used to say in Boston that the Cabots speak only to the Lodges and the Lodges only to God. No such attitude prevails here. Instead, we believe the only way to make a friend is to be one.

Another reason for our friendliness is that we are and always have been so remote from other regions of the English-speaking world that we have had of necessity perhaps to learn to get along in harmony with each other and with our neighbors to the South. Magoffin, L. M. Lawson, and Mrs. Schuster, with their noble efforts to solve mutual problems and create a hands-across-the-border attitude, have no doubt contributed to this facet of our community character. An integral part of this attribute of friendliness is that we measure a man not by his material wealth but by his worth as a person. El Paso is not a "rich" town in the financial sense and we undoubtedly have one of the lowest income per capita ratios in the United States. We are, nevertheless, "rich" in the things that make life's journey worth making. As Ray Sherman said:

"We are not ruled by the sordid aims of commerce or the sordid power of gold, but by those warmer impulses of the human



heart that cause one to hold out a welcome to the stranger and the friendless."

This friendliness exists not only with respect to newcomers, but affects our everyday lives in making our pace a little less hectic, our business and professional dealings a little more cordial, and our life in general a little more relaxed than is usually found in a city of our size. The warmth and friendliness our town exists in large measure because we have had among us for such wonderful humans as B. M. G. Williams, Mrs. W. D. Howe, R. E. Thomason, and until 1954, the late Maurice Schwartz.

I think you will find most El Pasoans are open-minded. By virtue of the great mixture of the backgrounds of our populace, we have learned not only to be tolerant of the views of others but we have acquired above and beyond a willingness to listen a keen desire to discover the truth, or to share common truths where differences still exist. To a great extent, we owe this faculty to the love of books and learning of such early-timers as Richard F. Burges and Maud Sullivan and the success of the educational systems built by Charles R. Morehead, A. H. Hughey and Dr. Templin. Due to this open-mindedness, I think it's safe to say we never ran a man out of town for what he believed or thought.

Another but less significant element of our community personality is the general feeling of optimism among the people. This exhibits itself in in greater measure in our honorees to the extent that they have each shown confidence in his or her ability to accomplish what others would have said were wild dreams. One might say that anyone who came here when Magoffin did and stayed had to be an optimist. Certainly the achievements of Mr. Krause and Charles Morehead in our early days were done with the same strength of spirit and confidence to overcome what to meeker spirits would have been insurmountable obstacles. Although there is much more here today to work with, many would still say that it takes an optimistic outlook to feel that much can be accomplished in this desert, many miles from the main stream of our nation. And yet, one need only look to the mountain, in all its splendor and majesty, to gain a feeling of confidence in oneself to accomplish any task. Great dreams are being fulfilled each day, and with continued blessings of God will continue to be fulfilled in the future.

As we live our daily lives, we are prone to take for granted and overlook the source of our blessings. We are prosperous, but we are complacent. Religion has become, for the most part, a social-convention-convenient in time of trouble but devoid of responsibility. Thought is under pressure to conform, security has replaced venture as a dominant aim, intellect is in the discard and politics are often dictated by the cult of mediocrity.



As we meet tonight, let us, in the spirit of Thanksgiving, express our gratitude to God for the preservation of our community and for the harvests brought forth by our predecessors in this land, and pledge ourselves to be worthy of the good character of our town.

Let us renew the spirit of the Pilgrims at the first Thanksgiving, lonely in the wilderness, facing the dark unknown with a faith borne of their dedication to God and a fortitude drawn from their sense that all men are brothers.

Let us renew the spirit and character given us by our honorees by expressing our acceptance of the limitations of human striving by affirming our duty to strive, nonetheless, as Providence may direct us, toward a better world for all mankind. For as was written long ago:

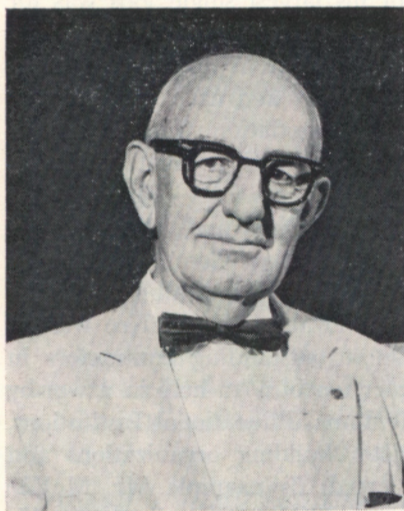
There is a destiny that makes us brothers,

None goes his way alone.

All that we send into the lives of others,

Comes back into our own.

As we enroll the names of R. E. McKee and Chris Fox to our Hall of Honor tonight, we shall see how they have added to the richness of our lives just as much as those we have honored before.



CHRISTIAAN PETRUS FOX



ROBERT E. MCKEE, SR.



## Mr. Robert E. McKee, Sr.

by HERMAN LEIBREICH

Mr. Morton —ladies and gentlemen— first let me thank the McKee family for affording me this distinct honor of presenting the biographical sketch of the late Mr. R. E. McKee, Sr.

Mr. McKee was born in Chicago in 1889. He moved to St. Louis with his parents where he attended public school and then Washington University. Upon completion of his education, he moved to Elk, New Mexico where his Uncle Bud Cleve had a general merchandise country store.

After a short stay with his Uncle Bud Cleve, he came to El Paso, worked for Madera Box and Lumber Co. A short while later, he worked in the city of El Paso Engineering Department. After two years he resigned and undertook his first private contract, remodeling the old Herald Building where the Plaza Theater now stands.

He married Gladys Evelyn Woods on September 20, 1911 and they had eight children —Robert, Jr., David, John, Margaret, Frances, James, Philip and Louis. Four of the sons are continuing in the management of the contracting business that Mr. McKee built. Philip is a rancher. James is in the investment business. Margaret and Frances, whose main interest is in rearing their families. Mr. McKee at the time of his death had 27 grandchildren and five great grandchildren.

Now returning to his business activities and his success in contracting: his first job was for \$1,039.00. One of his largest single jobs was for \$36,200,000.00 and there were many in between. His total building awards is an impressive \$1,460,714,000.00. It gains an average of 27 million dollars a year for a period of 54 years and each contract was obtained through competitive bidding or negotiation. This is an enviable record which we here in El Paso share with a great builder.

Mr. McKee's first office was in El Paso. Many cities—Phoenix, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, Detroit, New York and others—would liked to have had the R. E. McKee Contracting Company have its headquarters, but, no, he got his start in El Paso and El Paso is still the general office. We need this kind of loyalty. Mr. McKee was an international contractor—one of the most outstanding contractors in America. At the same time, he was never too busy to help in a worthy cause, such as Southwestern Childrens' Home, Educational Institutions, Churches of all denominations, character building organizations and all mankind regardless of race, color, creed. By example Mr. McKee taught those about him to be free of prejudices toward all people. He established a "Bill of Rights" within his own organization and recognized that the laborer as well as the president of a company had im-



portance. Men of every craft were inspired by him. Mr. McKee practiced this long before our government put it into law.

You judge an organization by its management and its employees. All of you have heard the expression: "One is judged by the company he keeps, and a company is judged by the employees it keeps." Most of the regular McKee employees have spent the greater part of their working lives with the company. Not only has the company had high standards of working policy but its safety record has been and still is outstanding.

Mr. McKee put his money to work not just to enlarge his holdings but to help others. He gave of his money. He gave of his time and he gave of himself.

I could go on and on but most of you present knew Mr. McKee and what has been said is just a reminder. Mr. McKee never sought honors. They sought him.

Mr. McKee told me one day, "Herman, the persistent person never recognizes failure. Many obstacles may stand in your way, impede your progress or make failures seem certain but, if you keep on working, success will be your reward."

Now, in closing, permit me to say a few words about my relations with Mr. McKee. To me he was a friend, an advisor and an inspiration. He was like a father. My respect and admiration for him is never ending.

On October 21, 1964, El Paso lost a dear friend but gained a memory that it shall cherish for many years ahead.

With this I will say goodnight, good health and may the good Lord bless you.

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To the average Britisher, western America represented something fresh and crisp, a place to rebuild shattered hopes, a land of opportunity for all, and above all, a place where individual effort was rewarded without regard to family origins or social status.

—ROBERT G. ATHEARM

All over the Mountain West, from Mexico to Canada, Englishmen covered the land searching for health and fortunes. Colorado was known as "England beyond the Missouri."

—ROBERT G. ATHEARM in *Westward the Britain*

*Mescal*, a small cactus (*lophophora williamsi*), is the source of *pulque*. The plant itself is used as a stimulant and antispasmodic by several tribes of Mexican Indians.



## Mr. Christiaan Petrus Fox

by H. CRAMPTON JONES

Ladies and Gentlemen—there has been extended to me the great privilege and high honor of rendering tribute this evening to our mutual friend Christiaan Petrus Fox. He was chosen by our Historical Society to stand in our Hall of Honor because of his singular achievements in bringing honor and recognition to our community.

Humbly I undertake this speech, realizing that there are many others of his friends who envy me this honor and who might make a better address. Some who are present here have known Chris Fox all of the seventy years of his life and have grown up with him here in El Paso. I have been associated with him for many years and long enough to appreciate his high character and to learn of his many accomplishments toward making El Paso and vicinity a better and happier place in which to live. I speak to you tonight from my heart and I pray that the words which I choose may properly convey my thoughts.

Christiaan Petrus Fox, affectionately known to all as Chris, was born in El Paso on the 5th of December 1896 at 1210 San Antonio Street. His mother was Dutch, born in Amsterdam, and came to the United States when she was 13 years old to live in Denver, Colorado, with her family, and then on to Raton, New Mexico, where she met her future husband, Charles Anthony Fox who was born in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. They were married in Raton but in the early '90s moved to El Paso where Chris's father engaged in the hardware business. Chris was born here soon after the move to El Paso, as was his sister Mrs. Harry P. Jones who is well known to many of you as Charline Fox Jones, and who now resides in California.

When Chris was born our town was one-tenth of its present size. There were no automobiles, no paved streets, and no street cars except the one pulled by Mandy, the mule. Chris grew up as would the average American boy in a small town when life was simple, attending various schools, including the old Lamar School out on Montana Avenue which has been torn down and where the new Y.W.C.A. will be built. He excelled in athletics at El Paso High and won many letters and was captain of the El Paso High School football team in his Junior year. He was also active in baseball and track. The El Paso "Tigers" played all forms of athletics against all Southwestern high schools of that time, as well as the present New Mexico State University, El Paso's School of Mines, New Mexico Military Institute and at times basketball against the University of Arizona.

I will quote from the El Paso High School *Tatler* which covers the 1916-1917 season: "And he was a General, too . . . a natural born



leader . . . doggedly determined . . . though battered and bruised fighting for the Orange and Black. Part of his character was to consider nothing as desperate . . . to surmount every difficulty by resolution and contrivance . . . steadfastly loyal above trivial bickering. The real big men are those who serve with unselfish merit and initiative . . . and Fox is a man with a capital 'M.'" That is how his contemporaries sized up Chris fifty years ago. That is how he has been ever since. One can judge a man well by the way he plays the game. Incidentally, the Tigers beat the Miners that year, 14 to 3.

During the Punitive Expedition under General Pershing in 1916, when we were trying to capture Pancho Villa, Chris, during his summer vacation drove in a truck train out of Columbus, New Mexico. The truck train was supplying us south of the Border and up in the mountains of Mexico. He drove as far south as Namiquipa which is about 200 miles south of the Border. You might call this a venturesome pursuit but young men then, as now, were always ready to go "where the action was." But the chase for Villa slowed down. After Christmas my regiment marched out of Mexico and when World War I started for us on April 6, 1917, we were camped at Fort Bliss.

Mr. Fox enlisted in the U .S. Marines during World War I and before starting his training at Mare Island, California, and Quantico, Virginia, he married his school sweetheart, Gladys Lundy, on July 17, 1918. They will celebrate their Golden Wedding Anniversary in a few months. Not long after the Armistice, the 49th Anniversary of which we have just celebrated, Chris returned to El Paso and to Gladys, following his demobilization. He was employed by the Popular Dry Goods Company and later started a messenger service which grew into a transfer business. I feel that the experience which he gained while driving for the Pershing Expedition may have served him well in his undertaking of heavy-duty transportation. The depression moved in and he turned the operation of his transfer business over to others and ran for the office of Sheriff of El Paso County and was elected in 1932. He served in that capacity for nine years, until 1941 which was the year that we entered World War II.

During the regime of Chris as sheriff my wife Harriot and I came to Fort Bliss with our three children for another tour with the 82d Horse Artillery, and I commanded the same battalion which I had commanded immediately after World War I. Chris was very well known then, thirty years ago, by all the military. It was the fourth time I had been in the same locality with him and I began to hear much good about him.



My regimental pistol team, which I coached, used to shoot in competition against the Sheriff's Department team and also, later on, against the team of the Sheriff's Posse which Chris organized and which carries on to this day. I remember one of the crack pistol shots of that time. He was Charlie Askins of the U.S. Border Patrol team and he could shoot as well, or better, than anyone in the world and he fired with his left hand!

Gladys and Chris were blessed with three children just as we were. They were Christiaan Petrus Fox, Jr.; Carolyn, known as "Posey" and who is Mrs. Daniel H. Smith; and Ellen Antoinette, known as "Nan" and who is Mrs. William H. Peterson, II. Fortunately for Gladys and Chris their daughters and their families live in El Paso and there are four chandchildren.

In the past fifty years Gladys and Chris have experienced life to the utmost as with us all there has been much joy and still there has been tragedy, so aptly described years ago by that heart warming statement: "And into each life some rain must fall." Their son, Chris, Jr., was commissioned in the Army and went overseas and into combat in the European Theater as a member of the 69th Division in World War II. While serving there in combat he was killed in action and thus he made the supreme sacrifice for his country. There is no deed nobler than that of giving one's life for his friends and his country. We pray that Chris and Gladys be consoled by the gratitude of our Nation and that prayer extends also to other couples here present who gave their only sons in the service of our country.

Chris resigned as Sheriff in order to accept the post of General Manager of the Chamber of Commerce in 1941, the year the War started, and he served in that capacity for almost ten years, until 1950, when he joined the State National Bank where he is now Vice President in charge of Public Relations. He likes this job for which he is eminently suited. He comes into contact with literally everyone in El Paso. They turn to him for help and advice. He greets everyone with a smile and a handshake and always has time to talk. Thousands know him. He has never put up any big structures or put together any works of art, except his terraced garden at home, but he has built good will and has been a motivating influence on others. He has been alert to the good things that this community represents and displays, and he is equally alert in wanting to correct those things that do not reflect creditably on his beloved home town in which there lives no stranger to him.

I have sketched for you some of the high spots in the career of this fine man whom we fondly call "Mr. El Paso." Now I desire to enumer-



ate some of the accomplishments of Chris Fox which have so greatly influenced the course of history in this region and in our Country.

During World War II, at the Chamber of Commerce, Chris started editing and sending to our men in service a paper called *Home Town News*. He and the State National Bank have continued this news sheet through the Korean War and the present war in Vietnam. About 800 copies go out to our service men so that they will know what is going on here in their home town. For this activity Chris and The State National Bank were recently honored by our Mayor Judson Williams and his City Council when presented with the City's Award of Honor. He also received letters of appreciation from our Retired Officers' Association and from Veterans' organizations. It was noted in these awards how eagerly the men awaited this news from home.

And Chris thought also of the military wives and children who were left behind. In 1942 he was inspired to start the "Newcomers Club" and it continues to operate. Chris is known as "Father of the Newcomers Club."

These activities are typical of the unselfish character of our Chris Fox. He is always thinking of ways to serve his fellow men.

Our honoree has served as Civilian Aide and Liaison Officer for the Secretary of the Army for several years. He is active in the Kiwanis Club and has been not only the El Paso President of Kiwanis but also Lieutenant Governor of the Southwest District of Kiwanis. He has been President of the Touchdown Club. He is on Governor Connally's Tourist Development Advisory Board. He has been on many Boards of Directors such as The Boys' Club, Family Welfare, Army Finance Association, and the American Ordnance Association. When he was the Executive Manager of the Chamber of Commerce he was the Executive Director of the Fort Bliss Centennial in 1948 when the Replica of Old Fort Bliss was constructed where it now stands. And Chris was the guiding spirit that brought about the depression of the railroad tracks through town so that we could all keep on the move!

And these are some of the activities of which Chris was either the Founder or the Co-Founder: The Sheriff's Posse; El Paso High School Student Council and Athletic Association; the Selective Service Commission for our County; the Law Enforcement Group for El Paso County; El Paso Chapter of the Defense Supply Association; the Southwestern Sun Carnival Association and he was the Grand Marshal of the first Sun Carnival Parade; the El Paso Athletes Hall of Fame, for Chris is an athlete himself; and our very own El Paso County Historical Society in which Chris has been continuously the Treasurer during the thirteen years since we organized.



And here are some of the awards which he has received for his outstanding service to our Community, to our Nation, and to all persons: Presidential Selective Service Medal and Certificate of Commendation following World War II; Patriotic Civilian Service Medal; Civilian Service Award and Medal; Citizen of the Year, El Paso Board of Realtors, 1961; First Annual Headliner of the Year, Press Club, 1962; Honorary Member of the 69th Division; Honorary Member of the 1st Cavalry Division; Distinguished Civilian Service Medal, 1965; Keystone Award from the Boys' Club of America; Gold Medal Service Award from the Association of the United States Army, 1965; and a foreign medal, The Order of the British Empire. This decoration, awarded by Great Britain, shows that he is recognized and admired by foreign nations as well as by us in the United States.

These are but a few of the honors that Chris has received. They show in what high esteem he is held and how many are his accomplishments. No wonder that we have chosen him for a place in our Hall of Honor!

I have studied the fine traits of character which are displayed in this man. I have tried to single out, if I could, the trait of character which is the most dominant and which makes him so outstanding. My conclusion is that it is his untiring and unselfish devotion to serving others. It is the same quality that was expressed about him in *The Tatler*, the magazine of El Paso High School, fifty years ago, when he was captain of the football team. He served the school then, but now we are on his team which is El Paso. He continues to display that tenacity of purpose which never admits defeat but continues the fight, clean and hard, to reach the goal, despite all obstacles.

We can always go to Chris for help. His office door is never closed. He greets us with a smile and a firm handshake. At his side for these fifty years has been his fine wife Gladys—a man cannot do these things alone. He is an inspiration to us all. He sets an example for us to follow in service to our families, our community, our state, and our country. His children and his grand children who are here this evening will follow in his footsteps. We are proud of him and proud to welcome him into our Hall of Honor. And to use an expression which he himself often uses, "That's for sure!"

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Cheyenne was the capital of the northern cattle industry.

History is past, present, and future; lasting, changing, and becoming.

—Traian Stoianovich



# THE BORDERER OF LAS CRUCES

by S. H. NEWMAN III

*The Borderer*, OF LAS CRUCES, New Mexico, is one of the most interesting newspapers ever published in the southeast portion of the state. Edited and published as a weekly by Nehemiah V. Bennett in both English and Spanish (this latter section was entitled *El Fronterizo*), its first issue appeared on March 16, 1871. From the salutatory one is able to gain some insight into the primitive condition of the country at the time:

*The Borderer* rises from his easychair—a box that was once used for the transportation of candles—places his left hand gently upon the empty barrel that forms his desk, scrapes his moccasin upon the adobe floor of his sanctum, and with a majestic inclination of the head, says to Mr. Public, Mrs. Public and Miss Public: Your most obedient! We wish for a long and happy acquaintance—a pleasant association with your family for a hundred years to come...

Physically, it was almost a standard size sheet, folded in half, forming four pages and with six columns to each page. The front page held items of general interest: territorial, national and international news. Local news, according to the custom of the era, usually was confined to the inside pages, as was the Spanish section. Advertising was spread throughout.

Yellow journalism was the order of the day and at this Bennett excelled. An example is drawn here from the "Letters to the Editor" section, in which the smouldering feud between the two politicians W. W. Mills and A. J. Fountain began to burst into public flame:

We have received a Printed Circular from one C. E. Baker. Dated New York, May 13, 1871 in which the said Baker expresses a great deal of anxiety lest some person should be swindled by Mr. W. W. Mills, formerly Collector of Customs at El Paso, Texas. And calling Mr. Mills several very hard names. We suppose from the way it came that the Author expected we would print the card. But we assure Mr. Baker that we have more important items to fill our columns.

What do we or the public care to know that Mr. Mills has got the best of Mr. Baker in a bargain in which Mr. Baker perhaps thought he had swindled Mr. Mills. Or what do we care if he groans and threatens a suit against [*sic*] Mills.

We have had some dealings with Mr. Mills and always found him to be a gentleman. So far as his dealings in the Custom House are concerned we know nothing and care less. If Mr. Mills appropriated money belonging to the government, why isn't that done by nearly all the Radical officials?

A week later, on June 15, 1871, there appeared the following reply:

Editor *Borderer*. Dear Sir: I have seen a malicious and slanderous printed circular purporting to be signed by one C. E. Baker, denouncing me as a "swindling Real Estate Agent," and claiming to be one of my "victims."

I do not know C. E. Baker, I never heard of him until I saw the circular. If there is such a person (which I very much doubt) he is some irresponsible man who has been induced to sign the circular by my enemies, who make up in malignity what they lack in numbers and respectability.



Upon this circular, the earmarks of A. J. Fountain, the infamous, are plainly visible to friend and foe. If he had signed his own name to it, he would have saved me the trouble of publishing this statement. Very Respectfully, W. W. Mills.

At that time—indeed, for the ensuing decade—southern New Mexico suffered much from the vicious attacks of roaming bands of savage Indians whom the government could not (or would not) control. From the beginning, Bennett took up his journalistic cudgels with the hope of remedying the situation:

Blood for blood! Scalp for scalp! If the government has decided to sacrifice us to the relentless fury of the demon Apaches, it is high time that it is made to understand that a fight can have two sides, and that Apache blood shall flow as freely as that of their murdered victims.

Go to the records of the Probate Court of Doña Ana County and you will find that nearly nine out of every ten whose estates have been administered upon in this county, have been ruthlessly murdered by these Indian savages.

Reservations in New Mexico have proved a failure, and if the government desires to continue the experiment, we beg of it to try it upon the Boston Common and in Philadelphia, where Boston philanthropy and Quaker fraternity may have full scope upon the devilish Apaches.<sup>1</sup>

A week later, at a mass meeting held at the courthouse in Mesilla, at which Bennett was the principal speaker, it was resolved to outfit a party of men to follow and punish the Indians. This proved a failure because, on April 20th, Captain John S. Crouch, a prominent Mesilla merchant in the party, was reported to have said that the Indians retreated to their reservation when pursued. Bennett complained:

We would wager our last cent that there is not a territorial official in New Mexico today, from the Governor down to Judge Waters, who would undertake and ride through from this point alone to Silver City or Ralston, for a life lease of his office. Yet what are they doing for our relief? Is anything heard from them on the subject? No! It is all politics! Republican politics!

It is possible that such taunts penetrated the executive chambers for, on May 1st, after a massacre by the Indians near Silver City, Governor William Pile left Santa Fe to visit the settlers there to prevent them from taking any unauthorized action.<sup>2</sup> Punitive measures were supposed to be the prerogative of the army.

Las Cruces, Mesilla and Doña Ana, comprising part of the Third Judicial District in 1871, were groaning with another misery which the strongly Democratic *Borderer* was to decry. On March 16th it reported that some two hundred untried cases were left standing in the docket while the District Judge grossly neglected his duty:

Judge B. J. Waters of the III district has held commission nearly a year. He arrived here so as to hold part of a term last June, and in July was here on his way to the States. He went to the States to effect Governor Pile's removal and to obtain the appointment of Governor for himself. Returned to Santa Fe to hold Supreme Court there in February in consequence of the sickness of the Judge for this (First) district, but after a week suddenly took stage for the States again.<sup>3</sup>



Such a state of affairs afforded Supreme Court Judge Joseph G. Palen and Attorney-General Thomas B. Catron an opportunity to visit the Third District, ostensibly to administer justice, but according to the cynical *Borderer* in reality to batten down the Republican hatches in view of the forthcoming Fall elections. In the issue of June 22nd, quoting from a statement made by John D. Bail, District Attorney of the Third District, Bennett proceeded to give his version of how this had been accomplished. Under the heading, "United States District Court—An Outrage Upon American Citizenship," he wrote:

As Judge Waters failed to appoint a commission to select a jury, it became by law the duty of the Judge, the Marshal and the Clerk to make this selection. That Judge Palen sent for the Marshal to come to his room, and when there handed the Marshal a list of names to examine and see if he had any objection to them. That the Marshal did so examine the list and said that he knew only a few of the men whose names were upon it. That Mr. T. B. Catron who was present stated that he knew the parties and that they were all good men—that Mr. Cronin the Marshal then made no objection. That the Clerk was afterwards handed the list for the same purpose and although he stated that the names were mostly of those who were strangers to him, still he made no objection.

It is a fact beyond dispute that the wire-pullers of the Radical (Republican) party were busy some time before court making promises to different parties to get them on the jury if they would vote the Radical ticket. Others were attempted to be bought by the promise of being deputy Marshal or bailiffs.

In an agricultural community such as the Mesilla valley, where work was seasonal and the days were often dull, jury duty was a coveted means of augmenting one's income, plus enjoying first-rate seats at court, hence its purported value as a bounty in the spoils system of political patronage as it existed at that time. Bennett, who was president of the Doña Ana Democratic Committee,<sup>4</sup> was magnifying this out of all proportion for the sake of propaganda, as the ready acquiescence of the clerk and marshal in accepting the judge's proposal clearly show. That his frequent editorial attacks upon the judge were inspired by other than purely political motives is shown by an article appearing on May 8, 1872, in which he wrote that he had been refused payment by Palen for forms printed for the court at the request of the clerk. He ended the diatribe by wishing the judge a warm chamber in the nether world. Oddly enough, these two men hailed from the same part of the country: Palen came from Hudson, New York<sup>5</sup> and Bennett grew up on a farm near West Point.<sup>6</sup>

On the 24th of June, 1871, Bennett attended the convention of the Democratic Central Committee in Santa Fe. José Manuel Gallegos was nominated as their candidate for Congressional Delegate as opposed to the Republican incumbent, José Francisco Chávez. *The Borderer* immediately announced special subscription "club rates" of only "one dollar



and a half for the next three months during the campaign until after the election," and jumped into the affray with all the weapons at its command. It reported that Padre Baca, parish priest of Mesilla, had written to the parishioners at the nearby towns of Amoles and Chamberino instructing them to vote the radical ticket because "if the Democrats won, the Texans would come up and then they would lose not only their religion but their property, too."<sup>7</sup> The priest was expressing a fear that was not uncommon to the New Mexican Roman Catholic clergy in those days. Bennett solemnly editorialized that he "was one of those that don't believe in dragging religion into the dirty cesspool of politics," but since success or failure at the polls depended on the vote of the Catholics, he felt that it was his duty to expose such nefarious activities.

The following week he gave front page coverage to the celebration of the Feast of Corpus Cristi in Las Cruces, taking pains to point out that although he was not a Catholic, he had attended Mass and the accompanying procession. He reported in glowing terms his favorable impressions of the ceremonies and of the great sacrifice priests were making by coming to the Territory.<sup>8</sup>

The campaign waxed hot with charges being hurled from both parties of bribery, coercion and even shootings. On Sunday afternoon, August 27th, two mass rallies were held at Mesilla: one by the Republicans and the other by the Democrats. At about three p. m. a parade was held by each group, starting at opposite ends of the plaza. When the two groups arrived at a point directly opposite to each other, one of the marchers (a Republican, according to *The Borderer*) fired a pistol into the air. Pandemonium broke loose and a terrible battle began. Men stationed themselves on rooftops and behind adobe pillars and shots were fired in all directions. Bennett, who was home sick in bed, missed all the excitement. He first learned of the trouble at about nine o'clock that evening when a man on horseback, brandishing a hatchet, pulled up in front of his house in Las Cruces shouting that "the Jew, Kelly, has been killed."<sup>9</sup> Riders were dispatched to Fort Selden, twenty miles away, to summon troops. These arrived at Mesilla about midnight and, although intermittent shooting was still in progress, quickly restored order. Twenty soldiers were left in town on the following day to keep the peace. *The Borderer* listed the names of six dead and eighteen wounded. Indeed, Mr. I. M. Kelly appeared among the defunct, but the reader is left to wonder about the denomination of the clergyman who conducted his funeral.

On September 6th, Bennett was able to write that there had been "Glory Enough For One Day" and that democracy was triumphant:



Gallegos had beat Chávez in the election by a total of 2,385 votes. In Doña Ana County alone there had been a Democratic majority of over two hundred and fifty votes. The paper was justifiably quick to take its share of credit for the victory and to make an appeal for more subscribers.

When Cochise and his band of Chiricahua Apaches decided to make peace in the autumn of that year, most people in southern New Mexico were inclined to believe that it was only a ruse of the wily Indian. Many even doubted the report that he had surrendered. Ever the good reporter, Bennett determined to visit the Cañada Alamosa Indian Agency to see for himself.

Mounting his Texas mustang and in company with Charley Coleman of Las Cruces, who had known Cochise ten years before, they traveled over the *Jornada del Muerto* to Fort McCrae.<sup>10</sup> There they were met by the Indian Agent, O. F. Piper, who led them the additional thirty miles to where Cochise was stationed. In the issue of November 1st, Bennett relates this meeting in great detail. He described the Apache Chief as "a tall, finely formed man with long furrows across his forehead . . . his mouth splendidly formed and flexible, his nose prominent and his eye expressing no ferocity."

Cochise protested that he had taken the warpath because it was the fault of the whites, that he desired only peace. Sitting at the campfire, Bennett asked if the young braves were ready to settle down to farming. The Chief replied that since it was almost winter it was not a suitable time to broach the subject, but that his warriors "had no head for farming."

When we asked him his age he smiled (we suppose at our simplicity) and said had he been a farmer and noticed the times of planting and harvesting, he should have known how many seasons he had lived, but an Apache never took notice of the seasons. Often during the conversation he would break off with oft-repeated assertion of his wish to be at peace, and affirm that God heard him; that the mountains, valleys, water, trees and all things heard him and witnessed the truth of his words.

The desired peace was not lasting, however, for the citizens of Grant County, long since fed up with Indian depredations and nervous about having them settle in the area, threatened to massacre the Apaches at Cañada Alamosa and "to regard as enemies anyone, whether Indian agents, army officers, or traders, who opposed their efforts to recover livestock stolen by the Indians."<sup>11</sup> Cochise and his band heard these rumors and fled again to the mountains and valleys to make an in-depth study of how to have their cake and eat it, too.

For several months thereafter the Indians continued their bloody warfare against the settlers. President "Useless" S. Grant (as *The Borderer*



was wont to refer to him), influenced by the bleeding hearts in Washington known as the "Indian Ring," wanted to negotiate peace. On March 6, 1872 Bennett wrote:

The following piece of buncombe has been sent by the president inviting Cochise to come and shake hands with Grant. Last summer we asked Cochise if he would not like to go to Washington and see the big father, but he said it made him sick to ride in the coaches. We, however, advised him to try to overcome the squeamishness of his stomach and take along one of the government horses he had taken from Major Moore's command (of which there were plenty about the camp) to present to his big dad, and he would make sure of a government contract. We expect the Chief is taking writing lessons in order to send his fist to Grant, and bet with a little practice he will beat Grant at letter writing, as he could do now at making a speech.

(Here followed a copy of Grant's letter to Cochise, inviting him, Victorio and Loco to a big pow-wow in Washington).

This constant yapping at the heels of authority by the democratic press, though exaggerated and often libellous, was to force a certain equilibrium into the post-Civil War, Republican-dominated politics of the territory. It is not to be thought that such small, distant newspapers as *The Borderer* were without influence upon government policy at the national level, as eastern papers had them on their exchange and often reprinted articles from them, or took up their crusade against, for example, the "Indian Ring."<sup>12</sup>

According to William Gillett Ritch, long-time Secretary of the Territory, *The Borderer* was to continue in operation until about the middle of September, 1875, at which time Bennett closed it down because of ill health.<sup>13</sup> The last consecutive issue available, dated December 28, 1872, is on file at the Zimmerman Library at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. A few scattered issues for 1873 and 1874 are held by Bancroft Library at the University of California in Berkeley.<sup>14</sup> The Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery in San Marino, California and the New Mexico State University Library at Las Cruces have one copy each of *El Fronterizo*, dated February 11 and April 29, 1875 respectively. Apparently, the newspaper was published entirely in Spanish at this time.

A few months later, on February 9, 1876, just twenty days before his fifty-second birthday, Bennett died. His obituary states that almost the entire town attended his funeral.<sup>15</sup> He was buried in the Masonic Cemetery of Las Cruces.

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1. *The Borderer*, March 30, 1871.
2. Calvin Horn, *New Mexico's Troubled Years* (Albuquerque, 1963), 144.
3. *The Borderer*, April 6, 1871.
4. *Ibid.*, May 4, 1871.



5. *Columbia Republican* quoted in the *Weekly New Mexican*, June 22, 1869.
6. *Eco Del Rio Grande*, February 12, 1876. *The Borderer*, March 16, 1871.
7. *Ibid.*, June 8, 1871.
8. *Ibid.*, June 15, 1871.
9. *Ibid.*, August 30, 1871.
10. Fort McCrae is now an adobe Atlantis at the bottom of Elephant Butte Lake.
11. Edward Everett Dale, *The Indians of the Southwest* (Norman, Okla., 1949), 98.
12. A specific example of the eastern press picking up stories from the New Mexico newspaper exchange may be found in the December 22, 1875 issue of the New York *Sun*, edited by Charles Dana.
13. Ritch Scrapbook Collection, Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery, San Marino, California.
14. Bancroft Library has the September 27th and December 27th issues for 1873 and the January 10th issue for 1874.
15. *Eco Del Rio Grande*, *loc. cit.*

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STAGE COACH ROUTES gave names to three El Paso streets: west bound coaches for San Francisco rumbled out of town on what came to be called San Francisco Avenue; San Antonio Avenue was so named because coaches from San Antonio, Texas entered El Paso on that street; and Santa Fe Street was so named because it was the highway to New Mexico's capital.

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THE CITY DIRECTORY for 1889 lists five newspapers and periodicals published in El Paso, as follows:

*El Paso Daily Times*, Juan S. Hart, editor, Democratic;

*El Paso Daily and Sunday Herald*, Brown and Rule, proprietor, Republican.

*The El Paso Daily Tribune*, E. P. Lowe, proprietor, Democratic;

*The Bullion*, Chas. Languemare, editor and proprietor, published weekly in the interest of mining;

*The El Paso Negro Journal*, The Rev. J. A. Viney, editor, published weekly in the interest of the colored race.

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Captain William French, cousin of the great General, ran his herds in the Mogollon Range in southern New Mexico before he moved up to the Maxwell Grant in the northern part of the state.

—Will C. Barnes

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Speaking [of the American West] there is, I suppose, no country in the world on which so much has been written, based on less personal experience.

—William Adolph Baillie-Grohman



## LIFE IN EL PASO IN THE 1890's

by NADINE HALE PRESTWOOD

EL PASO BEGAN to grow with the coming of the railroads in 1881. By 1890 the city could boast of one four-storied structure, the Sheldon Building. The Grand Central Hotel, located where the Mills Building now stands, and the Herald Building each had three stories. The court house which included the jail ranked among the finest of such buildings in the state. In addition there was an elegant opera house. Among the many businesses were three national banks, three daily and four weekly newspapers, two smelters, a gas works, an electric plant, an ice factory, an iron foundry, two cigar factories, two street railway lines, a union stock yard, a planing mill, and a telephone system. The city had also progressed with sewage, graded streets and paved sidewalks. Incidentally, four of the largest buildings had elevators.<sup>1</sup>

Other businesses listed in the 1892 City Directory included the following numbers and kinds: five bath houses, six blacksmith shops, four millinery shops, two piano and organ distributors, eleven restaurants, twenty-six saloons, thirty-four grocery stores, twelve hotels, two music studios, and two stores that handled "Chinese Goods."

With all of this growth, however, El Paso retained many of the characteristics and appearances of a frontier town. Gambling, for instance, was wide open as was prostitution, and monthly fines levied against these "businesses" supported the police force.<sup>2</sup> Also, downtown El Paso was not built up, so to speak. The present site of the Popular Store was a vacant lot; an old corrugated iron shack stood where the Union Clothing Company is now; and a one-story adobe residence occupied the present site of the Roberts-Banner Building.<sup>3</sup>

Culturally, too, El Paso began to grow. In 1889, for instance, Jim Hibbert started a dancing school. At the time he was driving a delivery wagon for the grocery firm of Stewart and McNair and he opened his school as a part-time venture. But the dearth of social life caused the school to become unusually popular and Hibbert decided, therefore, to devote all of his time and efforts to its success. Hibbert had learned dancing from his brother-in-law who had a similar school in Denver. The school was first opened in the Ullman Building on Stanton Street. Later it was moved to a large, old frame building on the corner of Stanton and San Francisco streets. A room occupying the back twenty-five feet of the hall was rented by the "Campbellites" for weekly prayer meetings. It was separated from the dancing school by a thin partition. Hibbert agreed that no music would be played until the weekly prayer service was over, but as soon as the religious rites were ended the music and dancing began.



The school was open to the public six nights a week, Tuesday evening being reserved for the old folks. The music generally consisted of a piano but sometimes a flute, cornet and a violin were included. All kinds of round and square dances were taught. The classes were decorous in every respect and no one ever touched liquor before attending. The sessions were always over by midnight. The custom was to dress formally for dances but not for classes. Only on Soiree night, Friday, did the gentlemen wear tails and top hat.<sup>4</sup> Whenever it was decided to give a masked ball the whole town erupted in a fever of excitement over the costumes to be worn. At one such dance Judge Neal went as Samuel Weller and Judge Wyndham went as Moses at the Fair. He wore knee pants and a false face.

The idea of a co-ed dance did not originate at the University of Texas at El Paso. As far back as 1892 the El Paso girls gave a Leap Year Dance. Miss Josie Magoffin was in charge of the arrangements that year. The group included some of the members of the Jolly Girls' Bachelor Club. This must have been one of their regular functions, although the newspapers did not so state. The girls bore all the expenses of the dance and the cost of the favors. Afterwards they treated their escorts at the English Kitchen.<sup>5</sup>

For many years the English Kitchen was the only proper place to go after a dance. This restaurant, operated by a Chinese, had a varied menu but the only thing ordered by the after-dancing crowd was oysters, fried or stewed. Since there was no dancing during the summer months, oysters and dancing seasons coincided. The crowd never failed to sing the following song while they were eating:

Don't tell them that you saw me  
For I would lose my job,  
Said the oyster as he wiped away a tear;  
For I've served in forty-seven stews  
Since nine o'clock today,  
For I'm the only oyster working here.

The favorite courting spot for the young twain of El Paso was the steps of the First Baptist Church, located between San Antonio and Magoffin streets, facing Florence Street. There were four sets of steps which gave four couples the opportunity to spoon. Although there was no formal agreement the understanding was that whoever got there first was to be left undisturbed. The church was close to the court house where most of the dances were then held.<sup>6</sup>

Social relations between the aristocratic families of Juárez and El Paso were close in those years. At important functions there were always guests



from both sides of the Río Grande. Among the favorites of the Americans were the dances given in the Juárez Custom House. Governor Ahumada, for instance, would bring the Chihuahua band and give a party of the most extravagant kind. During the dance which lasted until dawn, champagne flowed like water. Another popular gathering place was the home of the German Consul, Max Weber. There were many parties enjoyed in Juárez but lack of space precludes their being described.

Little has been said about the major role played in El Paso society by army officers from Fort Bliss. They were an integral part of all social life. The natural result was that many El Paso girls married into the army.<sup>7</sup>

Formal dinners were frequent and invariably proved to be elegant. For instance, a dinner in the W. H. Austin home, later the Mexican Consulate, would start with soup followed by a fish course served with white wine. The main course might be peas, potatoes, squab served with claret and an ice which today is called sherbert. Salad always followed the meat course, then came dessert and coffee. On special occasions a pony of brandy was served with the coffee. No one drank whiskey or cocktails before dinner.<sup>8</sup>

On New Year's Day it was the custom of many families to hold open house. Some of these in the 1890's were the W. H. Austins, the Joseph Magoffins and the Misses Lucille Davis and Ada Dean. Later the W. W. Turneys made their open house an annual affair. Mrs. J. Dean and Mrs. A. P. Cole held open house together. In fact, there were so many such affairs that some of the younger men rented the carry-all from the Texas and Pacific Railroad to make the rounds of the parties.<sup>9</sup>

Society weddings were always important social events and the way the society editors described them was remarkable indeed. Their flow of adjectives was unceasing, and they told all, including the list of wedding presents and the entire menu of the wedding dinner. The marriage of Richard F. Burgess and Ethel Shelton was described as follows:

The nuptials were characteristic of both bride and groom—devoid of display, free from pomp, true to the sweetest sentiments that characterized pure and loving hearts.

Of the bride it may be said that she is a pure, sweet girl, just blooming into womanhood, possessed of a sweet disposition and endowed with nature's greatest gifts, the richest of southern blood flowing through her veins and inheriting all the womanly graces and noble traits characteristic of southern womanhood.<sup>10</sup>

The wedding of J. H. Russell and Ellen Gist took place in the Presbyterian Church which was decorated with geraniums, mistletoe, smilax, and orange blossoms. This in itself was unusual because flowers had to be shipped to El Paso and were very expensive. Mrs. J. F. Williams in an interview informed this writer that brides had greasewood weddings,



greasewood being the only green thing available in these parts. Be that as it may, the social editor, after describing the Russell-Gist wedding, listed the gifts along with the names of their donors, as follows:

Handsome chamber suit, Mr. and Mrs. Gist.  
Silver set, 85 pieces, intimate gentlemen friends.  
Silver tea service, Judge and Mrs. Magoffin.  
Silver salad, C. R. Moorhead.  
Wine set, Miss J. Crosby.  
Silver basket, P. E. Kern.  
Plush jewel case, Mrs. P. E. Kern.  
Handsome chair, Emerson and Berrien.  
Silver soup tureen, Messrs. Howell and Browne.  
Gold thimble, Mrs. Boggess.  
Long-handled broom, B. Roberts.<sup>11</sup>

When Eugene B. Fatman married Cora Williams, the presents were not listed but the paper did print the fact that more than one hundred presents, valued at \$10,000 were received, which is quite a haul even with inflated prices. The banquet menu, however was given, as follows:

Raw Oysters, Celery, Pickles, Cold Relishes,  
Roast Turkey, Boned Turkey, Roast Duck, Roast Goose,  
Decorated Ham, Decorated Tongue,  
Cranberry Jelly, Mayonnaise of Lobster,  
Mayonnaise of Shrimp, Chicken Salad,  
Claret, Port Wine Jelly, Lemon Jelly,  
Parisian Cream, Delmonico's Ice Cream, Lady Fingers,  
Oranges, Apples, Raisins, Figs, Cheese,  
Date Bread, Ribbon sandwiches,  
Coffee, Champagne, Cigars.<sup>12</sup>

In the gay nineties in El Paso even the birthday parties were exceptional, especially for the presents given. At a party for seven-year-old Edna McLean, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. M. F. McLean, lemonade and games were enjoyed until the guests were called to an elaborate supper at six o'clock. Some of the gifts listed were:

From Uncle James, a silver knife and spoon; Maud Austin, a gold ring; Grace Bronson, souvenir spoon; Della Fewel, flowers and a souvenir spoon; Madeline Kern, gold pin, a violet set with pearls; Juanita Johnson, gold ring, pearl setting; Annie Nations, silver shoe buttoner; Della Eggers, silver perfume stand.<sup>13</sup>

One of the favorite past-times in the '90's was the surprise party. Today such parties are held to celebrate birthdays, anniversaries, or housewarmings. Back then, however, no excuse at all was needed for throwing a surprise party. An example was the party given in the Judge A. M. Loomis home. The family was sitting around the hearth when a servant announced visitors. According to the *Times* society editor: "Soon the interior of the hospitable Loomis Mansion presented a panoramic view



of humanity that was novel, interesting, and at the same time ludicrous."<sup>14</sup> The visitors were a "surprise tacky party," one of society's latest fads. All were masked and costumed and they had a wonderful time guessing who was who. They brought refreshments and a band for dancing. Who wouldn't enjoy being a host to such a group! Below the published account of the party was an expression of thanks from the Loomis family.

Sundays were days of formality. The gentlemen wore stripped trousers, cutaway coats, and high beaver hats, whether they attended church or not. Some of the men who arrayed themselves in such style were Judge Wyndham Kemp, Judge T. A. Falvey, Leigh Clark, Judge Edwards, and Jay Good. Around the turn of the century the style changed to a Prince Albert with a big black Stetson.

Band concerts which were given in the Plaza by the McGinty Club were a favorite attraction of the younger set. In those days there were two walks circling the park and people strolled around seeing who was there, discussing each other, and courting. Sometimes the people would sit on the edge of the watering holes dug around the trees and listen to the music. Occasionally the people would indulge in burro riding. The animals, laden and well padded with mesquite brush, would be rented for a ride. The girl would sit on the cushioned burro and her escort would secure a barrel stave to drive the balky animal onward.

Golfing was another sport that provided entertainment. Prior to the establishment of the Country Club there was a nine-hole course on Austin Street just off Montana. There the men and a few women would drive a golf ball around the sand hills. It was then that the predecessor of "falsies" was invented, according to a story E. F. Neff tells on himself. Mr. Neff had been the recipient of an elegant outfit of golfing clothes—knickers, loud striped blazer, and knee-length hose. This particular day he was asked to take golfing a young visitor from the East. Neff was quite a man-about-town and a very eligible young bachelor, but he felt that the development of the calves of his legs was not in keeping with his standing in the community, so a relative knitted him some pads to make up for the deficiencies of nature. These he placed in his stockings. After playing a few holes, he noticed that his calves were slipping in a most unseemingly manner towards the front of his legs; so at the first opportunity he rearranged them as unobstructively as possible. Let it be known from this that the female was not the first to deceive, at least not in this manner.

It was E. F. Neff, along with J. C. Bushong, the photographer, Winchester Cooley, and Harry Carpenter, who serenaded the young girls of the town. They would start out at around nine thirty or ten in the even-



ing, and usually they would be given refreshments in the homes they serened.

Pranks were the order of the day with the young unmarried set. One day Mrs. Sue Ball Harper and Mrs. Lillian Hague Corcoran dressed up as a country man and his wife and went calling on all their friends. Another time, Mrs. J. F. Williams was giving the rehearsal dinner for the daughter of the Walter Davises. The groom was a very proper Bostonian who had brought his groomsmen with him. Mrs. Neff and Mrs. Harper dressed as Negroes, wigs and all, served the dinner. They fooled everyone, and at the end of the dinner when they sat down with the other guests, everyone was aghast.<sup>15</sup>

From the foregoing it may be seen that through necessity the people of El Paso provided most of their own entertainment. While no one was a musical virtuoso or could be classified as a professional comedian, each enjoyed his own and each other's ingenious efforts to provide amusement. Today when the great talents may be enjoyed in the movies, on television or the radio, and when a flick of the dial will reduce the world's greatest music, the incentive of the average person to create his own diversions is weakened if not entirely removed.

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3. *El Paso Times*, September 3, 1890.
4. Interview with Mr. Jim Hibbert, July 4, 1949.
5. *El Paso Times*, January 28, 1892.  
The English Kitchen was a Chinese restaurant located at 106 East San Antonio Street. Mr. Yee Num was the proprietor.
6. Interview with Mrs. J. F. Williams and Mrs. E. F. Neff, July 7, 1949.
7. For the names of some of the many El Paso girls who married into the army, see Richard K. McMaster, "Army Town," *PASSWORD*, Vol. XI, No. 3 (Fall, 1966), 132-34.
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10. *The Daily Graphic*, 1898.
11. *Idem*.
12. *El Paso Times*, March 27, 1890.
13. *Ibid.*, April 28, 1892.
14. *Ibid.*, March 25, 1891.
15. Interview with Mrs. J. F. Williams and Mr. E. F. Neff, July 7, 1949.



## BOOK REVIEWS

## ELROY BODE'S TEXAS SKETCHBOOK

by *Elroy Bode*

(El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1967, \$5.00)

Dr. Milton Leech, in his introduction, has definitely discovered the key-note to the charm of this little book. Quoting Marcel Proust, he writes of catching the "tune of the song beneath the words" of Mr. Bode's "sheaf of prose poems."

It is seldom that one is privileged to read such a study as Mr. Bode's *Sketchbook*. With rare sensitivity to his surroundings and with an amazingly heightened perception, Mr. Bode makes word music on every subject imaginable. Nothing, apparently, escapes his attention—a young girl tending a lonely stall in Juárez and reading by candlelight, the sights and sounds and smells of the old ranch, a faithful dog, the sound of twilight, a Mexican barkeep, the innermost thoughts of Mrs. Bergman as she lay for hours under the sun with an injured back, a train at night, old men in the library.

Mr. Bode has arranged the stories of the *Sketchbook* geographically, as "On the Border," "Hill Country," "At the Ranch," "Along the Coast," "Over the State," etc. To this reviewer the Border vignettes of El Paso and Juárez are the most enjoyable, no doubt because of familiarity. Of particular poignancy, however, are "Enselmo and the Triplets" from the Ranch Section and "Mrs. Bergman's Interlude" from Along the Coast.

The book need not be read from beginning to end to be enjoyed. It is a perfect "pick up" type of volume with tales to match one's mood. There is, however, much to be learned between its covers—not solely for the beauty of presentation but for the lessons taught, lessons of faith and humility and sacrifice and the intense joy to be gained in the learning.

Elroy Bode, born and reared in Kerrville, Texas, is a *summa cum laude* graduate of the University of Texas at Austin. His sketches and stories have been widely published in *Redbook*, *Southwest Review*, *Texas Quarterly* and a group of sketches about El Paso appeared in *Best Magazine Articles* in 1967. He is at present teaching at Austin High School in El Paso.

*El Paso, Texas*

—MARY ELLEN B. PORTER

## BARONIAL FORTS OF THE BIG BEND:

BEN LEATON, MILTON FAVER AND THEIR  
PRIVATE FORTS IN PRESIDIO COUNTYby *Leavitt Corning, Jr.*

(San Antonio: Trinity University Press, 1967, \$4.00)

Mountains in the Big Bend region of Texas are tall, rugged, and often-times surrounded by a hazy mist which makes them mysterious. The author of this book has reached into these forbidding ranges to select persons with the same characteristics as the physical geography. Ben Leaton and Milton Faver were both giants in their contribution to the development of Trans-Pecos Texas.

Leaton's biography is incomplete, and probably it will remain that way. Speculation provides the premise that he was born either in Kentucky or Virginia and that he was one of Doniphan's soldiers during the Mexican War of 1846-48; also, that he served as a freighter and trader on the trail



that served Chihuahua and Santa Fe. By August of 1848 Leaton resided "Baronially" on his land and minded his accumulation of worldly goods. He had to labor hard for his wealth, periodically living in violence to protect his life and property. His home, which came to be known as Fort Leaton (often Fort Ben Leaton), was a place of significance and a haven of rest for soldiers and explorers and wanderers who happened by. Even though Leaton died in 1851 in unknown and perhaps mysterious circumstances, his fort lived on to become a phantom among many shadows, having as many unanswered queries concerning it as exist about its founder.

Every bit as colorful and more lasting in duration was Don Milton Faver, who established haciendas at Big Springs Cíbolo, Cienaga, and La Morita. From 1857, when he arrived in the Big Bend, to 1889, when he died, Faver reigned supreme in every enterprise he undertook. His land and cattle holdings increased to significant proportions and his influence extended from the peaks to the valley streams. Faver held a distrust for banks and he did not like even to hold paper money; to him gold and silver were all that were financially precious. Because of this, no one has been able to establish the amount of his fortune, which was sizeable.

Corning's history of these two Big Bend giants is told adequately. It is decorated with an introductory chapter on the nature of the country and a concluding section on the "Baronial" pattern. Included in the appendices are documents covering the land transactions and estates of the two subjects. The bibliography is impressive, and the illustrations by Syl Caylor are satisfactory. The book is indexed for ready reference.

*The University of Texas at El Paso*

—JAMES M. DAY

## THE STORY OF THE MEXICAN WAR

by Colonel Red Reeder

(New York: Meredith Press, \$4.95)

This book is the eighth in the author's American Military History series. The first was *The Story of the American Revolution*. Of that book the American Library Association noted in its *Booklist*: "The author chronicles simply and clearly the events of the American Revolution. His objective approach, incorporation of human-interest details, and use of original sources and quotations make a vivid historical narrative." Change the name of the war and this evaluation can be used for every book in this series.

The author writes exceptionally well. He is adept at turning out and selecting succinct phrases that stick in the reader's memory and thereby give a better appreciation of the characters involved in the story. For instance, he writes of President Polk that politics guided him "as if he were a sea captain and political leadership a compass." Writing of General Taylor's limitations the author quotes General Scott to the effect that old Zach "was quite ignorant for his rank and bigoted in his ignorance."

General Scott, on the other hand, is pictured as a great soldier. He had emerged from the War of 1812 as *the* hero. Soldiers and civilians alike never tired of talking about this six-foot four-inch 200-pound giant. One favorite story was of a cholera-ridden ship crossing Lake Erie in 1812. "Scott," the soldiers claimed, "commanded the cholera to stop—and it did." Scott is more popularly known by his nickname of "Old Fuss and Feathers," hardly



complimentary. But, the author insists, Scott came out of the War with Mexico "the greatest military leader of American history."

For more than a century writers and other public personages have pictured the United States as a great big giant bullying a little Mexico. Some writers have gone so far as to claim the Mexican war the only unfair one the United States ever engaged in. This is just not true, as Colonel Reeder correctly points out. In 1846 Mexico was the fourth largest country in the world, only Russia, Imperial China and Brazil exceeded her in area. Too, Colonel Reeder notes, the advantages were all with Mexico. The war was fought on her soil. Her generals knew the terrain. They had few problems of supply and transportation while the Americans had almost unsolvable problems of logistics. Also, due to her constant civil wars, Mexico's army, four times larger than America's, was composed of seasoned veterans.

In closing, it should be noted that Colonel Reeder's military training and service along with his facility in the use of words and phrases give him a great advantage over most writers of military history. His descriptions of battles not only hold the reader's interest, but also give the reader a better understanding of strategy and tactics. In addition, the nine excellent maps, some never before published, the extensive bibliography and a complete index add further to the book's value.

*The University of Texas at El Paso*

—EUGENE O. PORTER

#### CHARLES A. SIRINGO: A TEXAS PICARO

*by Charles D. Peavy*

(Austin, Texas: Steck-Vaughn Co., Southwestern Writers Series, No. 3, 1967, \$1.00)

Charles D. Peavy's account of Charles A. Siringo is the third pamphlet of the Southwestern Writers Series published by the Steck-Vaughn Company of Austin, Texas. The publishers intend to provide a complete survey of the field of Southwestern literature by means of a paperback anthology edited by Dr. Martin S. Shockley and a continuing series of supplemental pamphlets under the general editorship of James W. Lee of North Texas State University. To date, the anthology and twelve of the monographs are in print while more than two dozen others are slated for future publication.

Dr. Peavy's work utilizes a loose chronological approach to Siringo's life and works from the latter's birth on the Matagorda Peninsula in 1885 to his death in Hollywood in 1928. Using Siringo's own writings, contemporary interviews with him, and other documentary sources, the author sketches the major outlines of Siringo's life. He recounts Siringo's careers as a drover, a Pinkerton National Detective Agency spy, and the author of cowboy sagas. For most men one such career would have been plenty, but Siringo seems to have had more than enough time for them all.

Readers interested in frontier Texas, the Lincoln County War, Billy the Kid, or trail driving will enjoy this pamphlet, for it touches all these subjects. Siringo's experiences as drover and Pinkerton agent brought him into contact with all facets of the frontier and provided him with a wealth of material for his books. Dr. Peavy has assembled and explained this material in a way that makes it an interesting and exciting look at the life, times, and works of Charlie Siringo.



El Pasoans will also be interested to learn that two local scholars have monographs in this series—Dr. James M. Day, associate professor of English at the University of Texas at El Paso, and Dr. John O. West, head of the Department of English at the same institution. Dr. Day's pamphlet surveys and evaluates the writings of Paul Horgan, author of *Great River: the Rio Grande in North American History* and many other book and short stories. Dr. West's work is a study of Tom Lea as both author and artist. This latter work should be of special interest to El Paso readers since both author and subject are natives of the area.

*The University of Texas at El Paso*

—KENNETH A. GOLDBLATT

[EDITOR'S NOTE: Dr. Peavy, the author of this excellent study, is a nephew of our Society's corresponding secretary, Mrs. Paul A. Heisig.]

## BOOK NOTICES

### RECENTLY PUBLISHED BOOKS OF INTEREST TO SOCIETY MEMBERS

*Rocky Mountain Mining Camps: The Urban Frontier* (Indiana University Press, Bloomington, \$6.95). By Duana A. Smith.

*A Room For The Night: Hotels of the Old West* (Indiana University Press, \$4.95). By Richard A. Van Orman.

*The Bonanza Trail: Ghost Towns and Mining Camps of the West* (Indiana University Press, \$10.00). By Muriel Sibell Wolle.

*The Cattle Kings* (Indiana University Press, \$6.95). By Lewis Atherton.

*Cowboys and the Songs They Sang* (W. R. Scott, New York, \$5.95). By S. J. Sackett.

*Doctors of the Old West* (Superior Publishing Co., Seattle, \$12.95). By Robert Karolevitz.

*Gold Rush Diary: Being the Journal of Elisha Douglass Perkins on the Overland Trail in the Spring and Summer of 1849* (University of Kentucky Press, Lexington, \$8.75). Edited by Thomas D. Clark.

*John O. Meusebach: German Colonizer in Texas* (University of Texas, Austin, \$5.00). By Irene Marschall King.

*M. K. Kellogg's Texas Journal, 1872* (University of Texas, Austin, \$5.00). Edited by Llerena Friend.

*Mexican Rebel: Pascual Orozco and the Mexican Revolution, 1910-1915* (University of Nebraska, Lincoln, \$5.00). By Michael C. Meyer.

*Prospector, Cowhand, and Sodbuster: Historic Places Associated with the Mining, Ranching, and Farming Frontiers in the Trans-Mississippi West* (U.S. Dept. of Interior, Natl. Park Service, U.S. Govt. Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 1967. The National Survey of Historic Sites and Bldgs., \$3.00). Edited by Robert G. Ferris.

*Ranald S. Mackenzie's Official Correspondence Relating to Texas, 1871-1873* (West Texas Museum Association, Lubbock). Edited by Ernest Wallace.

*The Rediscovery of New Mexico, 1580-1594* (University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, \$12.50). By George P. Hammond and Agapito Rey.

*Soldiers on Horseback: the Story of the United States Cavalry* (W.W. Norton & Co., N.Y., \$3.75). By William E. Butterworth.



## CONTRIBUTORS to this ISSUE

FRED J. MORTON, the 1967 president of our Society, is a native El Pasoan. He is presently serving as United States Commissioner for the Western Judicial District. For further information see page 32 of this volume (XII) of *PASSWORD*.

HERMAN LIEBREICH is a native of Monroe, Louisiana where he was born on January 1, 1894. He attended public school in Monroe and in Tyler, Texas and then served in the army in World War I. At present he is general manager of Southwest Portland Cement Company, Southwest Division, for which he has worked since 1920. He is married and has two daughters.

Mr. Liebreich's relationship with Mr. McKee dates back to 1923. The two men have served almost continuously together since then on the boards of a rather large number of community projects including that for the Southwestern Children's Home.

COLONEL H. CRAMPTON JONES, U.S.A. (Ret.), is an ex-president of our Society. For a photograph and biographical data see *PASSWORD*, Vol. XI, No. 1 (Spring, 1966), 3, 43.

SIMEON HARRISON NEWMAN III, a native El Pasoan, attended the local public schools and the University of Texas at El Paso, then called the College of Mines, where he majored in art. For many years he has been an *aficionado* of Southwest History and of old newspapers, particularly *Thirty-Four* and *Lone Star* which were edited and published in the 1870's and '80's in Las Cruces, New Mexico and in El Paso, respectively, by his grandfather and namesake. For the past year he has been working on a biography of his grandfather. His present article is a by-product of that project.

For a biographical sketch of the grandfather see John J. Middagh, "Siméon Harrison Newman—the Fighting Editor of the *Lone Star*," *PASSWORD*, Vol. II, No. 4 (November, 1959), 115-124.

NADINE HALE PRESTWOOD will be remembered for her interesting article, "Life in the 1880's in El Paso," published in the Winter, 1966, issue of *PASSWORD*. This article like her previous one was taken from her Master's thesis at the University of Texas at El Paso. For further biographical data and a photograph see page 175 of the issue cited above.

JAMES M. DAY joined the faculty of The University of Texas at El Paso this past September as Associate Professor of English. He was formerly Director of the Archives Divisions, Texas State Library.

KENNETH A. GOLDBLATT is a graduate teaching assistant in English at the University of Texas at El Paso. This is his second contribution to *PASSWORD*.



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