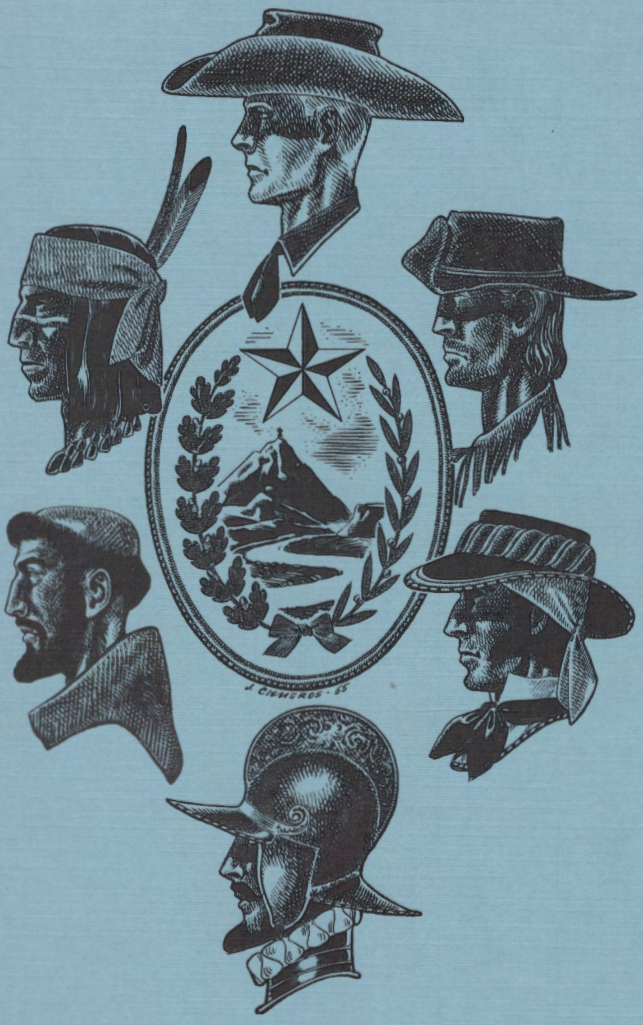
# PASSWORD



THE EL PASO COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

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# PASSWORD

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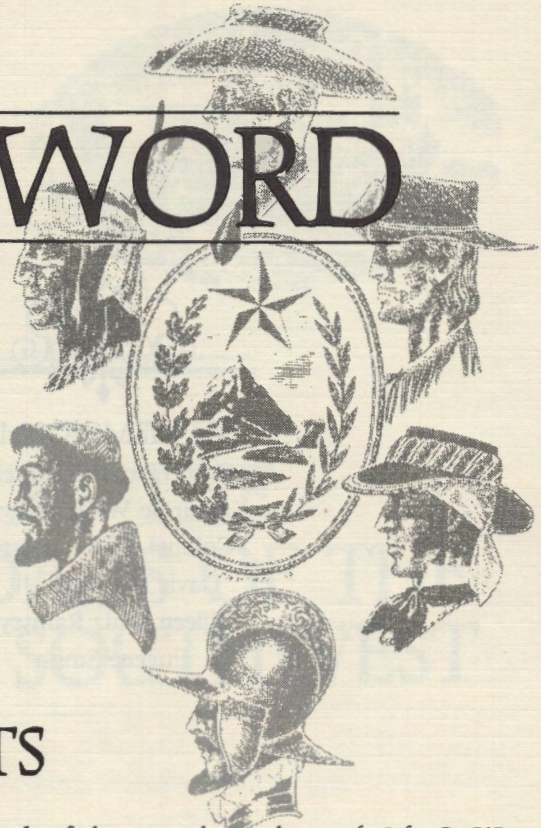

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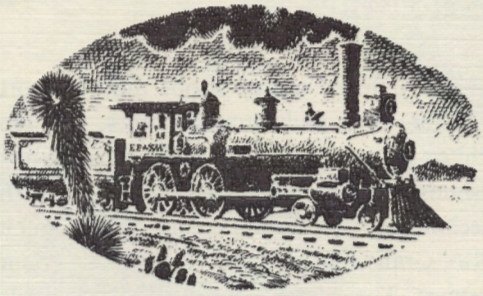

# GRUTAS AT THE CROSSROADS OF THE SPANISH SOUTHWEST

## *by John O. West*

THE ENTRANCE OF THE SPANISH *conquistadores* into the Western Hemisphere brought about a significant number of changes in the ways of both Indians and Spaniards. A mixture of cultures was inevitable over the many years that the two groups lived and worked side by side. In New Mexico, for example, Spanish settlements were generally established adjoining the pueblos of the Indians (provided that enough water and arable land were available).[1] Local agricultural practices developed over the years by the Indians were adopted by the invading Spaniards; water law in the desert Southwest is peculiar to that area,[2] and even today local officials (in Spanish-speaking communities) retain the titles and authority involved in governing irrigation rights and practices.[3] Indian corn or *maís* became a staple food in many variations, from *atole* [corn gruel] to *tamales,* throughout the Hispanic areas.[4]

*This issue's title-page insignia, by José Cisneros, depicts the first locomotive of the El Paso & Southwestern Railroad. On June 15, 1960, the locomotive was presented to the Centennial Museum at Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso).*

The Indians' use of adobe mud as mortar, holding stones together in building their multi-storied homes, was rapidly blended with Spanish architectural practices. The adobe building block was brought into the Iberian peninsula by the Moors, then merged in the New World with the Indian techniques to produce a unique style of architecture to be found all along the Rio Grande in missions, presidios, commercial buildings, and private homes. The energy conservation potential of adobe has even become a prime focus in modern home construction in the desert Southwest.[5]

European customs involving paying reverence to the dead on All Saints and All Souls Days (November 1 and 2) merged in central Mexico with the Aztec use of flowers to honor the dead—white for children, yellow for adults; the altered custom soon pervaded all areas colonized during the Spanish domination of the Western Hemisphere. In addition, feasts prepared for the dead members of the family by Aztecs were copied by the Spanish; current customs reflect both cultures even today, four centuries after the Conquest.[6] Religion, vital as it is to most civilizations worldwide, provided a natural potential for merging of traditions. Both the Aztecs and the invading Spanish Catholics, for instance, used statues and images in their religions. That the Spanish called the natives' images "idols" simply reflected cultural bias—and influenced some of the results. Bernardo de Sahagún, Spanish friar and historian, wrote at length of efforts to replace the "idols" with proper Christian symbols, often with disappointing results.

One case is particularly revealing: the location of the shrine of the cult of Tonantzín, the Mother Goddess of the Aztecs, was the site of the occurrence of a widely accepted miracle. Atop the hill of Tepeyac outside Mexico City the Virgin of Guadalupe appeared in 1531 and sent word to Bishop Zumárraga to build a shrine in her honor on that spot. The "Dark Virgin" has, over the years, been officially recognized by several popes as the Mother of Mexico; Sahagún, however, noted that the Indians frequently confused La Guadalupana and Tonantzín.[7]

Whether in central Mexico or along the Rio Grande, missionary techniques were quite simple:

> To ensure the process of conversion, the missionaries tried to check pagan practices that were in direct conflict with their teachings, but whenever they discovered similarities in deities and ritual, the padres found it advantageous to substitute the name of a saint or church holiday to implement an already established custom.[8]

That the transfer of loyalties was not always completely successful is the main theme of Anita Brenner's *Idols Behind Altars,* where she cites Spanish

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**Dr. John O. West,** Professor of English at The University of Texas at El Paso, is the author of several published works on the history and folklore of the El Paso Southwest.

*"Susana's **grutita**" (little grotto), as it is known to the residents of Presidio, Texas, is located across the Rio Grande in Ojinaga, Chihuahua. Day and night its statue of Jesus is illuminated by a votive candle, removed (together with the glass door), for photographing. (Photo courtesy Dr. John O. West)*

colonial writers to the effect that often natives appeared to be worshipping at Christian holy places, but they well knew that images of their "outlawed" gods often formed the foundations of many of the newer churches and holy statues forced upon them by the intruders from across the ocean. Thus the apparent worship of things Catholic was deliberately deceiving.[9] Still, the established use of statues, images, and totemic symbols worked in quite well with the new ways—and such aids to worship are still common throughout the Spanish/Indian Southwest.

For over two hundred years the Spanish used the Rio Grande as a river highway to upper New Mexico, where *conquistadores* and *padres* carried out their efforts at colonizing the Southwest and Christianizing the native Americans. All along its entire two thousand mile length, the Hispanic influence still lingers. The Spanish language, often with local or regional mutations at work, continues to be heard on every hand.[10] The bells in towers or spires of Catholic churches still call the faithful to mass, and from Brownsville, Texas, on the Gulf of Mexico, to the source of the Rio Grande in Colorado, the custom of having folk shrines—called *grutas* [grottoes] or *nichos* [niches], as well as several other names—still flourishes. Along the

lower river, downstream from the El Paso, Texas/Juárez, Chihuahua, area, the influence of the Anglo-American has had more overall influence in things cultural than in the up-river country. Despite being directly on the Mexican border, Texas generally is less Hispanic than is the state of New Mexico. Yet throughout the region many residents speak Spanish as readily as they do English, regardless of their cultural backgrounds; and the pace of life tends to be slower, as is likely true of all small towns—but the Spanish/Mexican atmosphere is definitely at work.

The El Paso/Juárez area, situated roughly in the middle of the length of the Rio Grande's course, holds a unique position both geographically and culturally. Despite the size of the combined population of the two cities—well over a million in the 1980s—the strength of religious customs reminds one of these smaller towns. Since 1598, when Juan de Oñate crossed the Rio Grande and named the area *Paso del Norte* [Pass of the North], the area has been an important crossroads for a blend of cultures. Caravans of merchants, groups of settlers from the Mexican interior, and *padres* intent upon Christianizing Southwestern natives came up the desert trail from Parral and Chihuahua and crossed the ford upstream from the settlement at the Pass, circling the foot of Mule Driver Mountain on their way north. Paso del Norte became the capital-in-exile of the New Mexican colonies when the Pueblo revolt of the upper Rio Grande drove out *padres* and converted Indians—Tiguas and Piros—as well. It was here they retreated in 1680, and along the river below the Pass they built a succession of missions and settlements—Ysleta del Sur, Senecu, Socorro, San Elizario—to join Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe, which had been founded at the Pass in 1659.[11] Descendants of many of these refugees still live in the region. As recently as 1968 the existence of the Tigua tribe at Ysleta was recognized by the United States government, and responsibility for tribal welfare was transferred to the state of Texas.[12]

Downstream from El Paso, the United States is just across the river from Mexico, and the Mexican culture is strong on the left bank, as has been noted. Indeed, Américo Paredes makes a good case for the essential cultural unity of the two sides of the lower river, artificially separated following the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo that ended the Mexican War in 1848.[13] From Paso del Norte upriver, throughout the Spanish and Mexican periods of control, caravans of *carretas* [carts] brought settlers, goods, priests, and religious articles up from the interior of Mexico, along with reinforcement of the Hispanic culture.[14] Even following the takeover by the United States, the upper river continued to be closely linked culturally and commercially with the Pass of the North, through which recurrent waves of migrants from

*A quiet garden surrounds this free-standing statue of the Virgin located upriver from the Pass of the North. (Photo courtesy Dr. John O. West)*

Mexico continue to flow to some degree even today, while families cross the border in both directions to keep in touch with kinfolks in the neighboring country. Thus a repeated refreshing of things cultural and religious keeps the old ways alive all along the Rio Grande, but especially at the Pass of the North.

Mule Driver Mountain still looms over the Pass, where four centuries of history have left their mark. But it has borne a new name, Mount Cristo Rey, since 1949, and a fifty-three-foot statue of Christ the King looks eastward from its crest toward the settlements founded by missionaries centuries before.[15] It is little wonder that, with such a towering reminder, Southwestern families in the El Paso area keep up the traditions of their heritage even more strongly than in some other settlements along the river. Among the most distinctive of these traditions is the family *gruta* or *nicho.* In the area around these settlements one is struck by the frequency of these shrines. Materials and artistry may vary with the financial status of the family, but evidence of living tradition and devotion to the Catholic saints and the Virgin shows no class level. *Grutas* are often adorned with plastic flowers, broken bits of colored glass or tile, seashells, or even kewpie dolls or dime store figures of no particular religious significance, side by side with a rosary draped about the neck of the statue. Living greenery and flowers are also to be found about the *gruta,* and sometimes the setting (in the homes of the more affluent) may be a carefully tended arbor or garden. But

*A gruta containing a statue of the Sacred Heart of Jesus marks the grave of a believer in the camposanto (graveyard) at the Socorro Mission, founded in 1682 after the Pueblo Revolt upriver in New Mexico. (Photo courtesy Dr. John O. West)*

even a coffee can containing a bedraggled geranium reflects the love that finds expression despite limited means.

The widespread custom of home shrines or *grutas* in the Spanish Southwest has a number of explanations, varying greatly in individual cases. Generally, of course, the presence of a *gruta* says to the passerby, "Christians live here"—especially with *grutas* located in the front yards of homes and facing the street. Such a situation, on the surface, seems to serve the same purpose as the notice, posted on the front doors of many homes and often adorned with the picture of the Virgin of Guadalupe, saying in both English and Spanish "This a Catholic home; we do not want any Protestant propaganda here." Having thus given fair warning to non-Catholics, the family would seem to be unfriendly to Protestants—but such has not been the case in the experience of this collector. In well over a hundred homes where he went inquiring about *grutas* in general or about a specific one seen or reported to be in that family's yard, invariably he pointed out early in the visit that although he was Protestant, he was seriously interested in the *gruta* custom and wanted to learn more about it. Repeatedly he was invited in, offered refreshment, and showed the family album with its pictures of the building or the blessing of the *gruta*. Often he was asked to share a meal, or even to come back and spend the night when a church fiesta would be held. Questions were freely answered, often with quite intimate details of family hopes, trials, and tragedies being shared with the collector—a stranger as well as one not entirely at home with the Spanish language. Never was he refused permission to photograph a home shrine, indoors or out.

The choice of subject for the *gruta* often reveals something about the reason a particular family has erected a family shrine. In one case, the

memory of a son killed in Vietnam was associated with a front yard *gruta* containing a large statue—five feet or so in height—of San Martín de Porres. "He was our son's favorite saint," the mother said.[16] Other shrines grew out of memberships in altar societies or confraternities. For many people, devotion to a certain saint or a particular representation of the Virgin Mary seems to demand public acknowledgement in the form of a *gruta.* Of course, *grutas* are often erected in hidden spots, too, or in back yards, or in nooks not easily seen from the street. These would seem to be more personal and private—and worn doormats in front of such shrines often bear mute testimony to the fact that these are sacred places, regularly resorted to for kneeling in prayer.

Another motive for the erection of *grutas* was expressed by an immigrant from Mexico who had lived in a small Texas town for almost a decade. In essence, his view was that Mexico, being a Catholic country with churches on every hand, had repeated reminders of God's presence and His importance in people's lives. In the United States, however, he felt it was necessary to put up crosses and shrines and pictures of holy figures to remind people about God. The informant was quite articulate for a laboring man, and he was thoroughly convinced of the truth of his statements. In a form of corroboration of what he believed, it is almost impossible to find *grutas*—or even to find people knowledgeable enough to discuss them—on the right bank of the Rio Grande. The researcher drives or walks through many a Mexican town or village looking in vain for these signs of religious devotion. Even the general shabbiness of homes in these Mexican communities seems to show a lack of concern or self-esteem. By contrast, in the yards of homes on the left bank where there are *grutas,* things are more often neat and tidy, giving the viewer the impression that those who show religious values also care more about their homes and neighborhoods, however humble the surroundings may be.

Along the entire length of the Rio Grande, the most frequent reason people give for building *grutas* is to pay a *manda* [offering] or *promesa* [promise] to a saint or to the Virgin for help received or prayers answered. Not always, of course, is the *manda* to build a *gruta.* More often the promise is to visit a saint's shrine, or to say publicly a certain number of prayers of thanksgiving. Saint's corners in Catholic churches are literally overwhelmed with pictures of babies brought into the world through the saint's help, or notes of gratitude, or tiny *milagros* [literally, "miracles"] of silver- or gold-colored metal arms, legs, heads—whatever the ailing portion of the anatomy was that needed help and received it. Formally called *ex votos,* these physical evidences of gratitude reflect the same concept that produces

the construction of a *gruta:* public acknowledgement of the generosity of the Virgin or the saint in helping those in need.

On occasion the *promesa* or vow is not for a specific event but a general feeling of thankfulness. One divorced mother, having raised and educated four children alone, finally was able to buy a home for herself. She pointed out that if she hadn't had the help of St. Jude, often called the Saint of the Impossible, she couldn't have achieved her goals. "I always said, if I ever had a home of my own, then St. Jude would have a home as well." And now he does—a lovely backyard *gruta* with a trickling water fountain, and an electric pump to keep the water flowing.

Most often found in *grutas* along the two thousand mile length of the Rio Grande is the Virgin Mary, in one manifestation or another—especially the Virgin of Guadalupe, and *La Purísima* [Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception]. Our Lady of Lourdes, who appeared to the peasant girl Bernadette in a cave in France in 1858,[17] is frequently found, and less often, Our Lady of Fatima, who appeared to three shepherd children in the Portuguese village of Fatima in 1917.[18] Second in frequency to the variety of statues of the Virgin is that of Jesus, in the form of the Sacred Heart, followed by the statue of San Martín de Porres, a saint born of a Spanish grandee and a freed slave woman.[19] Perhaps he is so popular because he was born of mixed ancestry like the Mexican nation itself, and therefore he can best understand the concerns of the people of Mexican origin. Quite naturally, individuals have their special *santos* [saints] who are especially important to them—Saint Anthony, Saint Francis of Assisi, and a host of others.

*Grutas* are also found frequently in graveyards, adorning graves of the faithful. Significantly, they are as often to be found on the Mexican side of the border as on the American side—a situation which recalls official Mexican strictures on public displays of religious forms,[20] but apparently does not prohibit cemetery adornment. One woman interviewed in Ojinaga, Chihuahua (across the river from Presidio, Texas), has a small *gruta* containing a Sacred Heart in her yard with a candle always lit, day or night, before the statue. Another, larger statue of the Sacred Heart within her house had been *una herencia* [an inheritance] from her mother. She told the collector that the statue would be incorporated into her own gravestone—thus keeping even after death the beloved statue her mother had left her. And as might be expected, the *grutas* on area graves follow the same pattern of frequency as those in home gardens, with the Virgin of Guadalupe most popular of all.

A study of the indoor shrines found in Hispanic homes would likely reflect the same popularity of La Guadalupana, the Sacred Heart of Jesus,

and San Martín de Porras; certainly in this collector's experience this pattern is borne out. The indoor shrines are not as visible, of course, as the outdoor ones that appear throughout the Spanish Southwest. Even so, they both speak clearly if silently of the veneration of the saints which *conquistadores* and *padres* brought to the Pass of the North with them over four centuries ago as they explored and settled the region. ★

**FOOTNOTES**

1. Arthur L. Campa, *Hispanic Culture in the Southwest* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1979), p. 37.
2. Betty Eakle Dobkins, *The Spanish Element in Texas Water Law* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1959), p.144, cites an 1888 decision of the Territorial Supreme Court of Arizona (Clough v. Wing, 2 Ariz. 371):
   The right to appropriate and use water for irrigation has been recognized longer than history....Evidences of it are to be found all over Arizona and New Mexico in the ancient canals of the prehistoric people, who once composed a dense and highly civilized population....The native tribes,...now as they for generations have done, appropriate and use the waters of these streams, in husbandry, and sacredly recognize the rights acquired by law and use, and no right of a riparian is thought of. The only right in water is found in the right to conduct the same through their canals to their fields, there to use the same in irrigation. The same was found to prevail in Mexico...at the time of the conquest, and remained undisturbed in the jurisprudence of that country until now....The Spanish conquerors brought the same idea with them from Spain, where they prevailed then as now.
3. Campa, pp. 189-190. The term *alcalde,* for example, usually is equivalent to *mayor,* but in an irrigation district even today in the Southwest he is the person in charge of allocating and supervising water distribution for farmers.
4. Campa, pp. 27-29.
5. John O. West and Roberto González, "Adobe: Earth, Straw, and Water," *Built in Texas,* ed. Francis E. Abernethy, Publications of the Texas Folklore Society (Waco, Texas: E-Heart Press, 1979), vol. 42, pp. 61-77.
6. Frances Toor, *A Treasury of Mexican Folkways* (New York: Crown Publishers, 1947)), pp. 236-244.
7. Bernardo de Sahagún, *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España,* Miguel Acosta Saignes ed. (Mexico, 1946), vol. 2, p. 81.
8. Campa, p. 37.
9. Anita Brenner, *Idols Behind Altars* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1929), pp. 137-147, 149-153. Aurelio M. Espinosa, *The Folklore of Spain in the American Southwest,* J. Manuel Espinosa ed. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1985), pp. 244-246, comments on the incomplete fusion of native and Catholic religions in New Mexico.
10. Espinosa, pp. 240-244.
11. C. L. Sonnichsen, *Pass of the North: Four Centuries on the Rio Grande* (El Paso: Texas Western Press, 1980), vol. 1, pp. 19-23; Cleofas Calleros, *El Paso's Missions and Indians* (El Paso: McMath, 1953), pp. 17-19. Paso del Norte (present day Juarez, Chihuahua) had its name changed in 1888 to honor revolutionary leader Benito Juarez. Present day El Paso was initially a cluster of settlements including Magoffinsville, Franklin, Concordia, and Hart's Mill.
12. Joseph Leach, "Of Time and the Tiguas," *Password,* 30, no. 4 (Winter, 1985), 174.
13. Americo Paredes, *"With His Pistol in His Hand"* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1958), pp. 9-15.
14. Campa, pp. 49-51.
15. Sonnichsen, vol. 2, p. 74.
16. The writer has traveled the entire length of the Rio Grande, from Colorado to Boca Chica, where the river empties into the Gulf of Mexico, photographing substantially over 400 *grutas* and grave markers, as well as talking with *(interviewing* is too formal a word) dozens of residents, many of whom owned or had built *grutas,* or who had grown up in families where the tradition was strong. This particular *gruta* is in the front yard of an El Paso home in a Hispanic neighborhood.
17. Donald Attwater, *The Avenel Dictionary of Saints* (New York: Avenel Books, 1979), pp. 65-66.
18. Keith Crim ed., *Abingdon Dictionary of Living Religion* (Nashville: Abingdon, 1981), p. 254.

19. Richard Cardinal Cushing, *San Martin de Porres* (Boston: Daughters of St. Paul, 1962), pp. 14-15, 56-61.
20. Henry S. Parkes, *A History of Mexico,* 3rd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1960), p. 363, notes that the Constitution of 1917 outlawed the holding of religious ceremonies outside of churches, a reflection of the anticlerical spirit of the Mexican Revolution. This writer has attended a number of funerals in Mexico, and never did a priest accompany the body to the cemetery, since appearing in public in clerical garb is punishable by fine. The monuments themselves, whether on church or municipal property, apparently are permissible.

NOTE: The combination of quotation marks and underlining in footnote 13 is correct. The title came from a ballad, and appears thus on title page, bastard title, and throughout.

Also there is no accent on *Martin* in footnote 19, although it is incorrect Spanish. That's the way the book's title page has it.



# THE EUGENE O. PORTER MEMORIAL AWARD

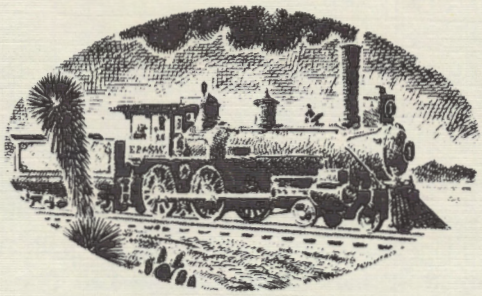
The 1986 Eugene O. Porter Memorial Award has been presented to **Mary A. Sarber** for her article "W. H. Horne and the Mexican War Photo Postcard Company," which appeared in the Spring issue of *Password.* This $100 award, established in memory of Dr. Eugene O. Porter, the founding editor of *Password,* is given annually to the author of the year's best *Password* article, as determined by the journal's editorial board.

Several other 1986 articles were named by the board as significant contributions to the record of the El Paso region's history: "*The Bullion* of Charles Longuemare" by **Dorothy Durham Hale** (Fall); "Liberty Hall: A Saga of Triumph and Tribulation" by **Rosemary Fryer** (Winter); "Heralding the Union Depot" by **Clarke H. Garnsey** (Summer); "Tarahumara Uprising, 1918" by **Eugene H. Boudreau** (Winter); "El Paso—Where Texas History Begins" by **W. H. Timmons** (Summer); and "Hueco Tanks—A Vital Resource in Southwestern History" by **Dixie L. Dominguez** (Fall).

The Eugene O. Porter Memorial Award is financed by gifts to the Society. Contributions may be sent to the Porter Award Fund, c/o El Paso County Historical Society, Box 28, El Paso, TX 79940.

HALL OF HONOR

• 1986 •



# TRIBUTE TO MRS. GUY HALLETT JOHNSON

## *by Hallett Mengel Luscombe*

NO ONE YOU MIGHT HAVE HONORED would have been more proud nor could you have made anyone happier than she whom you honor tonight. How she would have gloried in your approval of her contribution to our community.

My grandmother, Mrs. Guy Hallett Johnson, died on November 17, 1958. It has been written that her influence was felt from New York to Los Angeles. At her death, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* described her as "a woman who contributed as much as any other person in this century toward music in North America. No concert artist of any consequence at all did not know and love 'Mom' Johnson, and she had kept for the past 25 years a screen autographed by all the great and near great who came her way." Ruby Burns, a longtime editor of the woman's page of an El Paso newspaper, includes in her book *Josephine Clardy Fox* a quotation from a letter to Mrs. Fox written by Carleton Smith, Director (at the time) of the National Arts Foundation. The letter reads in part: "Word has just reached me that 'Mom Johnson' has died. I'll always be grateful that she brought me

to El Paso.... It is not good to lose contact, for we are on this earth all too short a time."

During her "short time" on this earth, my grandmother was pleased to serve the cause of music. Her work began when she moved to California as a young woman. Along with others, she nurtured music on the west coast, including the Los Angeles Symphony Orchestra. Also, the Hollywood Bowl would not have become a reality had it not been for Mrs. Johnson and a group of friends who worked untiringly for it.

When her husband's work took him to the border town of El Paso, she went along and soon determined that, for all its cultural past, El Paso "was just an overgrown cow town and needed culture."

The cultural programs that Grandmother brought to her beloved city provided an exciting and happy life for her at times; but at other times the effort cost her enormous heartache and disillusionment. She had no compromise with art. She brought to El Paso the kinds of programs she thought the people should have and not necessarily the programs that were popular, or that El Pasoans might have wanted. Many times she lost large sums of money; nonetheless, in her commitment to the highest artistic standards, she refused to make concessions. When she booked the Boston Symphony Orchestra, she knew very well she would not break even. She booked it anyway. In the spring of 1953, following that concert, she wrote to her good friend Josephine Fox: "Josie, you missed the concert of ALL concerts and the very sweetest conductor on the market. Charles [Munch] was a dear. Your party was a great success and they all missed you. As for my part of it...well, it was not so good, and just as I said before, EL PASO CAN GET THEIR GREAT MUSIC WHERE THEY MAY AFTER THIS....I AM GOING TO BRING CIRCUSES WHICH I CAN SELL FOR $2.00. THAT'S ABOUT THEIR STRIDE FOR MUSIC."

This was an expression of her momentary anger and her profound regret that so many El Pasoans had missed "the concert of ALL concerts." She went right on working—bringing the finest artists to El Paso. She would not lower her standards. She had been brought up on great music, was an organist herself, and she was determined that El Paso would have the best.

A true giant standing almost five feet tall, her great presence made her seem much taller. Sometimes she was flamboyant in her attire, wearing bright red rebosos which swept across her shoulder and down her back. The

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**Hallett Mengel Luscombe,** a native El Pasoan, is the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Sherod Lawrence Mengel and the granddaughter of Dr. and Mrs. George Henry Mengel and Mr. and Mrs. Guy Hallett Johnson.

Mrs. Guy Hallett Johnson (1877-1958) ►

jewelry she wore (most of it acquired during her many travels to Mexico, where she established Community Concerts in twelve cities) was also large and spectacular.

It was not only in Mexico, of course, that she established Community Concerts, but also in El Paso. In the spring of 1958, seven months before her death, Mrs. Johnson managed and celebrated the 27th annual drive of the El Paso Community Concerts. In her own words, spoken during that drive, this is how Community Concerts formed in El Paso: "...some twenty-seven years ago, after four unsuccessful tries had been made by others, to form Community Concerts in El Paso, I met with Mr. Arthur Wisner on the mezzanine of the Hotel Hilton here. We made a verbal agreement which gave me authority to form Community Concerts. I called together all the top business people at that time and by the end of that same week, the organization was in existence."

The Pan-American Round Table said of her that she manifested the "ideals of their organization by cementing friendship and understanding between the United States and Mexico through her international influence in founding the Community Concert Association both in El Paso and in Ciudad Juárez; and therefore she exerted a warm, everlasting effect upon the culture and civic amity of the two nations."

Her affection for her community was matched only by her love of country. During the Second World War, she was deeply involved with the war effort. In 1946, her services to the Allied Cause were recognized: she was awarded the King George VI Medal for Service in the Cause of Freedom. Also, she received a citation by the United States Treasury Finance Committee for rendering, in a time of national crisis, outstanding service to the United States of America. This "Certificate," reads the citation, "is presented in appreciation and recognition of an unselfish and patriotic volunteer participation in the nation's war program."

When I was a little girl, I spent many weekends at the Cortez Hotel in Grandmother's small suite of rooms, and learned a great deal about life from her. She was exciting and interesting and full of fun as well. One evening, just at dusk, I looked out of the eighth-floor window in time to witness my laughing grandmother and Nelson Eddy, hand in hand racing across Mills Street in a heavy rain, their shoes held high above their heads. That night she cooked dinner for us in her room. She was a wonderful cook; on a single burner she made the best green bean-potato-and bacon dish I ever tasted. I also remember her making clabber in a sunny window. She consistently practiced her frequent statement to me: "Make do the best you can with what you have, and do not allow anything to stand in your way." She

was an artist at "making do." When she didn't have the money to entertain the Helen Traubles and Paderewskis of the world with caviar, she served tea and crackers, and they loved it. I also remember her saying to me, "You do not need great wealth to have great thoughtfulness and graciousness, and if you find yourself having to shell peas, and you are thinking about shelling peas, that is your problem." I suppose she learned these lessons from her mother, who kept the family together caring for boarders while her wagon-master husband went from St. Louis to Wyoming and back. Grandmother's parents had few material things, but they instilled in their seven children gentleness and strength of character.

Grandmother was christened Nellie Olds. The youngest girl, and next to the youngest of the seven children, she was born on May 19, 1877, in Nebraska, where, as a child, she had music lessons, perhaps the beginning of her musical career. She married a young doctor when she was eighteen years old, but lost him to tuberculosis during their first year together. On November 5, 1901, she married Guy Hallett Johnson with whom she had two children, Hubert Herndon and Helen Hallett.

I close this address with a quotation from a letter written about her by Ben Lobdill, who worked with Grandmother in establishing Community Concerts:

> Dear 'Mom' lived a long, rich, full and active life, encompassing quite an era. She was one of the last of the fabulous, colorful school of impresarios—and perhaps the most selfless and most self-effacing in all the great span of her work and service. She was deservedly beloved and respected in the artist and managerial world—and thousands have had their lives enriched through association with her. I am at once filled with the vast sadness that a truly great friend has gone...and a great sense of gratitude that it was given to me to have long known and been close to her. She will be truly missed. She is a landmark to all El Paso. The stamp of her enthusiasm and vitality is so indelibly etched on the life of this community that we can never deal casually with artistic expression and never complacently forget our responsibility to its support.

My mother, my family, and I are honored to receive your tribute to my greatly beloved and highly esteemed grandmother. Your tribute has given her adult family quiet joy and consolation, and it will be preserved for the future appreciation of her now thirteen great-great-grandchildren and their families. ★

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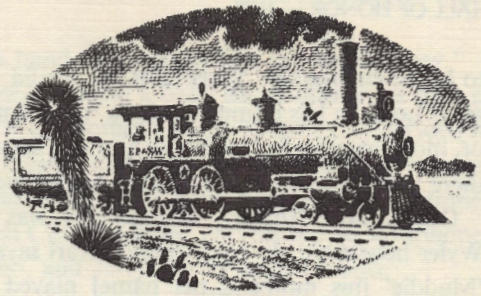
THE EL PASO CHARACTER insists upon new frontiers and thrives upon their discovery and conquest.

—Conrey Bryson
Hall of Honor Address, 1963

HALL OF HONOR

• 1986 •



# TRIBUTE TO KARL OTTO WYLER

*by John Phelan*

THE SCENARIO IN EL PASO on April 5, 1906, was something like this: Dawn broke at its usual time, weather was fresh and somewhat cool as the town's 29,930 citizens began to stir. You could hear the clickety-clack of the horses' hooves as milkmen made their early-morning deliveries by wagon. The Otto and Jennie Wyler household, at the corner of Oregon and Missouri, was not business as usual. Jennie was expecting their third child. And it came to pass that on that April afternoon Karl Otto Wyler made his entrance on the World stage, attended by Dr. C. P. Brown, whose office was "just down the street."

Karl Wyler was on the scene, and the rapidly growing El Paso would never be quite the same again.

Otto and Jennie had come to El Paso in 1895 from Kansas City, Missouri, joining his brother, John Otto Wyler and their mother, Grandma Wyler. John is credited with founding the present-day Wyler Industrial Works. Otto was a boiler-shop foreman for the Darbyshire-Harvie Iron and Machine Co.

As Karl began to grow, it became rather apparent that he had a penchant

to be an entertainer. Years later, he would write: "Somehow I believe the good Lord, in His infinite wisdom, 'programmed' me for 'show business'—or, more specifically, for Radio and TV, because as I look back over my life, there were many things that have helped me in my broadcasting career."

One of those "things," undoubtedly, was the big presence of music in the Wyler household. In his memoirs, Karl says, "Ours was a musical family. 'Muddie' [his mother's pet name] played piano; Dad could yodel; my brother Roy had a fine bass voice; and I sang the usual children's songs." (In later life, Karl would be very active with the Barber Shoppers.) "I did like music," he adds, "and we had frequent 'song fests' at our home or at the home of friends." His mother urged him to learn to play the piano. He picked up the scale and the names of individual notes, but he never learned to play the piano well because "to practice was boring." And now, laments Karl, "Oh, how I regret it."

Hold in mind that this was early-day El Paso and there was no hint at the time of radio being on the horizon.

Dad Wyler was also a strong influence on his son. To this day, Karl quotes words of wisdom attributed to his father. Karl's walks to town with his father are especially vivid in his memory: "I was amazed at how many people he knew and how many knew him." A genuine friendliness toward others (inspired, it would seem, by his father) has played an important role in Karl's career.

His older brother also contributed to the direction that Karl's life would take. "Roy was big and strong, a good athlete at El Paso High," Karl recalls. "Me, I was an Ichabod Crane when it came to athletics. I was better on stage."

Tragedy touched young Karl's life for the first time in the summer of 1920 when Roy was accidentally drowned in Smelter Lake.

Life has its own way of going on. Young Karl began taking parts in school plays at San Jacinto Grade School and enjoyed being called on by his teacher to recite or read before class. And music continued to be a big part of his life. "It was about this time," he recalls, "that I learned to 'jig,' with 'Muddie' playing 'Red Wing' on the piano. It didn't take much urging for me to perform at gatherings of family and friends. I often danced on the table—so I could be seen, I guess." And he adds: "In my memory, the most enjoyable times were when we went to the band concerts at Fort Bliss each Sunday afternoon. I liked band music then, and I like it now. Fact is, one of

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**John Phelan,** Vice President and General Sales Manager of KTSM AM FM, and Television Channel Nine, has been a resident of El Paso since 1945, when he arrived on an army hospital train as a patient bound for William Beaumont General Hospital.

my secret desires was to lead a band, but I never had the opportunity."

However, he would come close to being a band leader during his days at El Paso High. Seems an uncle on his mother's side in Kansas City decided to send Karl a complete set of drums, including the whistles that were so popular during that period in musical history. Soon Karl became a member of a musical group that included Charles Gilbert and his purple saxaphone, Josephine Boynton on the piano, and Jerry Pearce on the banjo.

"I always regretted the drums," he told me. "They were cumbersome, while Charley and Jerry could carry their instruments easily, and Josephine had a piano wherever we played, such as at the Woman's Club for dances."

Ironically, it was this band that would lead him to radio in its infant form. In the winter of 1921-22, an experimental broadcasting station was constructed at the Mine and Smelter Supply Company on San Francisco Street. The studio was a small room on the second floor in the back, and it was in this room that Karl Otto Wyler, age 16, entered the broadcast field as a drummer in that little four-piece band. "I remember," he says, "that they wanted some music and asked us to play." He put a microphone on his drum-set so it could be heard.

A broadcasting career was still several years away for young Karl. Meanwhile, after graduating from El Paso High in 1923, he sought his niche in life, working briefly for the YMCA, then for A. P. Coles and Brothers, and (in 1924) for Buchanan Motor Company, a Ford dealership in Fabens, where he bought his first car, a Model T. Then for a while Karl ran his mother's service station (at Stanton and Missouri), which she had bought after Dad Wyler's death in 1925.

All this time, Karl kept looking over his shoulder at radio, and he was spending a lot of time in Little Theater work. He began singing, for nothing, over the Bledsoe station in Five Points as "The Happiness Boy." Yes, by then radio was becoming a reality in El Paso, fostered by such people as W. S. Bledsoe, who had a radio store in Five Points, and W. T. Blackwell, who owned Tri-State Music Company. Crystal sets and ear phones had progressed to radios with speakers.

On August 22, 1929, Tri-State Broadcasting Company's KTSM (for Tri-State Music) went on the air. This was it! Karl Wyler chucked his job as a car-insurance salesman and applied for a job as announcer. After hanging around and working for nothing for a couple of weeks, Karl got his break: the owners, Bledsoe and Blackwell, gave him his first paid job in radio. He sold time on a straight commission basis, and at night he became "Karl the Kowhand." He's remembered for such songs as "Who's gonna Wash Your Laundry When the Chinamen go to War" (circa '29 or '30), "Eleven-Cent

Cotton and Forty-Cent Meat," "The Armenians and the Greeks," "The Three Trees," and the most requested "The Liron Song." In 1932, Karl got a singing partner, Jack Cole, known as "The Admiral."

W. G. Walz, the RCA Victor distributor, bought the station in the fall of 1932, and in 1933 he asked Karl to run it. They had moved from the basement of the Tri-State Music Company at 103 South El Paso to the top floor of the Del Norte Hotel.

While others sort of dabbled in radio, not realizing its significant value in the future, Karl Wyler dedicated himself to its success. He was a visionary. And he actively supported the growth of radio not only in El Paso, but also nationally. He sat on the Code of Ethics Committee of the National Association of Broadcasters and helped draw up the guidelines by which broadcasters govern themselves today.

Meanwhile, the El Paso business community began paying more attention to the young cowboy singer who was successfully running a radio station. In 1934, at the tender age of 28, he was invited to join the Rotary Club. And it was thus that his civic career was launched. He became Rotary's president in 1942. Three years later he became president of the Chamber of Commerce. During his term, he helped initiate negotiations with the Southern Pacific Railroad to depress the tracks through downtown El Paso, and also he helped start what is now our Industrial Development Council.

While serving as Mayor Pro-tem with the Dan Ponder Mayor-and-Council team, he helped pave the way for the construction of Paisano over the protests of many influential citizens who argued that this action would cause grass to grow on Texas Street.

Other organizations that he headed included the Sun Carnival Association, American Red Cross, Yucca Council, Boy Scouts of America, the Better Business Bureau, Sheriff's Posse, Goodwill Industries, and the forerunner of the El Paso Advertising Federation.

Karl Wyler also served El Paso's academic community: during the World War II years, he convinced his friend Dr. D. M. Wiggins, president of Texas College of Mines and Metallurgy, to institute radio-broadcasting courses. KTSM contributed the equipment and paid the salary of the first instructor, Virgil Hicks. In 1948, this fully-accredited academic program graduated its first class.

To add to his civic-career list, Karl Wyler is Past Regional Vice President of Freedoms Foundation—Valley Forge, Pennsylvania; and he is a past Regional Vice President of the Texas Tourist Council.

Now you might think that Karl had forsaken the broadcast industry for a career in civic work.

Not so!

In 1938, Karl brought the world *live* to El Pasoans when KTSM became an affiliate of the NBC radio network. In 1940, recognizing the need for transmission over a wider geographical area, he moved the KTSM transmitter to Ascarate, having earlier moved it from the El Paso National Bank Building to the Mills Building. In 1946, he and his colleagues began planning for their new studios at 801 N. Oregon, where the old Schwartz home had once stood. In 1953, with the help and advice of his friend George Matkin, and the State National Bank, Karl Wyler took a bold step forward into the world of television—his organization later becoming the first to transmit in color, the first with an aerial tramway serving a television transmitter on Ranger Peak, and the first in stereo. In 1962, he put KTSM-FM on the air.

All this since he first played the drums on an experimental radio station at the age of sixteen.

Karl Wyler, a thirty-third degree Mason, a member of Scottish Rite and York Rite, and a past Potentate of El Maida Shrine, did not go unnoticed as he went about his work. Here is a list of the many awards he has received: Boy Scouts Silver Beaver Award; Freedom Foundation-George Washington Honor Medal; Kiwanis Club Outstanding Citizen Award; Citation for Meritorious service to Radio from Texas Western College (now The University of Texas at El Paso); Advertising Club-Ad Man of the Year 1960; Good Citizenship Award of El Paso Chapter, Military Order of World Wars; Pioneer Broadcaster of the Year (1977) from the Texas Association of Broadcasters; the Dorrance D. Roderick Distinguished Service Award in Mass Communications, 1977; Boss of the Year (1976-1977) from American Business Women's Association; and El Gran Paseño Award from The University of Texas at El Paso, 1983.

Karl Wyler's name and his sincere thanks to his native city and to those who held out a hand as he pursued and pioneered his career will live forever here in El Paso in the form of the Karl and Glyn Wyler Foundation in support of the El Paso Community Foundation. In fact, its spirit is already being felt.

Appropriately it's only two blocks from Missouri and Oregon where Karl Wyler first saw the light of day, to the corner of Yandell and Oregon, where he still makes his regular work-day appearances at KTSM. While making that two-block journey which spans eighty years, he has touched and influenced many lives and careers. And he continues to do so to this day.

Karl the Kowhand, "Boss," we're glad you made the trip! ★

# TRACINGS

On Mesa Street, where the 7-11
stands next to the shiny new
Burger King, there used to be
a desert. When I was a boy,
that side of the road was all
mesquite bushes and cactuses, and right
in the middle stood five boulders
in a rough semi-circle, guarding
the approaches from all sides.

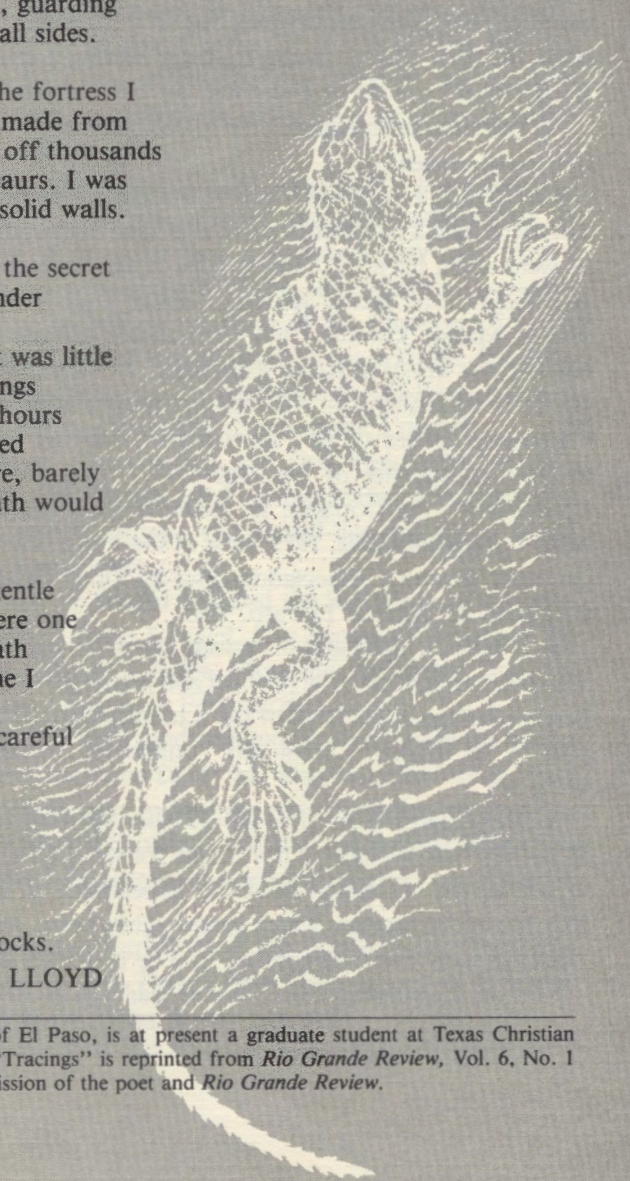
These rocks formed the fortress I
defended with spears made from
yucca poles. I fought off thousands
of warriors and dinosaurs. I was
invincible behind my solid walls.

One day I discovered the secret
my fort protected. Under
a small rock I found
a lizard, long dead. It was little
more than white tracings
in the sand. I sat for hours
in the hot sun, hunched
over the delicate figure, barely
breathing, so my breath would
not disturb it.

The back still had a gentle
curve. I could see where one
foot was folded beneath
the rib cage. Each time I
left, I put the rock
back over the lizard, careful
not to disturb it.

Sometimes at night,
I still dream I live
forever the same;
white tracings
beneath five, strong rocks.

—DONALD LLOYD



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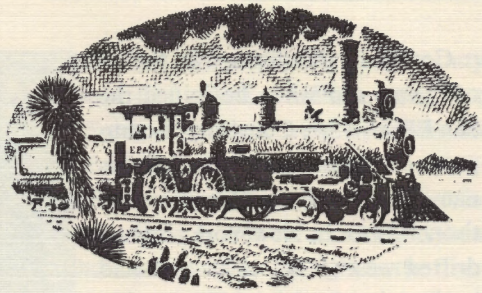
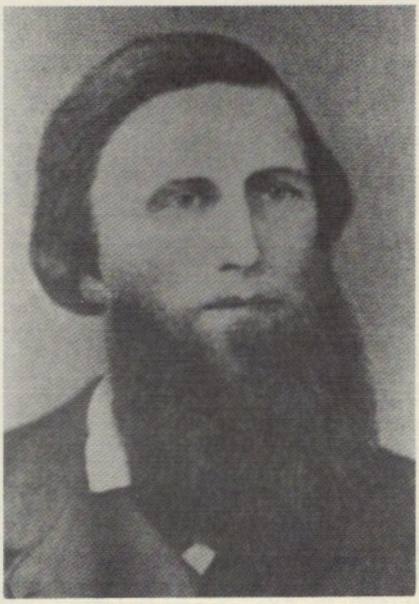
**Donald Lloyd,** a resident of El Paso, is at present a graduate student at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth. "Tracings" is reprinted from *Rio Grande Review,* Vol. 6, No. 1 (Summer, 1986), with permission of the poet and *Rio Grande Review.*



# CAPTAIN MADISON AND "THE BRIGANDS"

## *by Wayne R. Austerman*

IN THE SUMMER OF 1861 the settlements of El Paso del Norte were alive with the excitement of the newly declared war between the North and South. Lieutenant Colonel John R. Baylor and elements of the 2nd Texas Mounted Rifles had lately arrived at Fort Bliss to secure the infant Confederacy's far western flank, and Southern sympathizers from all over the Southwest were rallying to the cause in El Paso. Since April of that year, Captain Bethel Coopwood had been leading a local volunteer company on minor forays against the Union garrison upriver at Fort Fillmore, New Mexico.[1] On July 11 his unit, the San Elizario Spy Company, was officially mustered into Baylor's command. Sometime soon afterward, the company gained another recruit when a man who had already braved a journey of several hundred miles through Apacheria enlisted in Coopwood's scouts. An obscure and elusive figure today, this man was destined to carry the war for Southern independence farther north than any other El Paso Confederate and to serve as far afield as Colorado and Louisiana in a career that was both daring and secretive.[2]



*George T. Madison, Confederate soldier and guerrilla chieftain. (Photo courtesy Dr. Wayne R. Austerman)*

George T. Madison was thirty-one years old when he joined the San Elizario Spy Company, a company clerk carelessly entering his name on the rolls as "George Mattison." Born in New York, he had drifted west in the 1850s and had become involved in a filibustering expedition led by Henry A. Crabb, who had visions of carving out a private empire in Sonora. In April, 1857, Crabb and his followers had been overwhelmed by Mexican forces after a bitter fight in the village of Caborca. Madison had luckily remained behind in Tucson with a reinforcing party led by two local adventurers, R. N. Wood and Granville H. Oury. Dubbed the Tucson Valley Company, the thirty men marched from that Arizona settlement toward Caborca, intending to rendezvous with Crabb's party. Fifteen miles short of the village, they rode into an ambush laid by 500 Mexicans. Oury refused to surrender, and the freebooters waged a fighting retreat back to the border, losing four men en route, while claiming forty Mexicans with their rifles.[3]

Following that dangerous episode, Madison settled at San Pedro, a hamlet near Fort Buchanan. By 1860 he was listed on the census rolls as a bachelor merchant, with personal property valued at $1,000. Nothing else is known of him until the day he appeared in the Pass to join Coopwood's cavalry company.[4]

Private Madison had probably joined the Confederates by the time Baylor struck northward in late July to fight a skirmish at Mesilla and force Fort Fillmore's fleeing garrison to surrender in the desert northeast of town. Following that victory, Coopwood's men scouted westward along the Gila and Mimbres rivers in search of Federal troops marching to defend New

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**Dr. Wayne R. Austerman,** a frequent contributor to *Password* and other historical journals, is also the author of *Sharps Rifles and Spanish Mules: The San Antonio-El Paso Mail, 1851-1881.* He is employed by the Office of History, United States Air Force Space Command, and also teaches a course on American military history at the University of Southern Colorado.

Mexico. By August they were back on the Rio Grande, riding outpost duty from Camp Robledo, twelve miles above Doña Ana. Madison stood fire once again on August 21, when the Spies skirmished with New Mexico Unionists below the enemy bastion of Fort Craig.[5]

A little more than a month later the Texans fought two spirited actions in the same vicinity, overrunning a Yankee outpost in a dawn attack, and then forcing a relief column to give up the chase after a bitter firefight in the river bottoms. Minor clashes also found time for some of the traditional, if less savory, diversions of military camp life. On October 22-23, Trooper Madison was confined to the field hospital in Doña Ana for treatment of venereal disease. That embarrassing affliction was one of the lesser dangers facing a bachelor in the Southwest during those times.[6]

In December, Brigadier General Henry H. Sibley arrived in El Paso to assume command of the theater of operations from Baylor. Sibley had assembled a 2,300-man army in San Antonio that autumn and had marched it west to stage an invasion of New Mexico. As the Rebels prepared to march northward, Coopwood's company was attached to Major Charles L. Pyron's battalion of the 2nd Texas. Either by personal choice or official order, Private Madison was reassigned on February 10, 1862 to a unique unit of Sibley's army. Called "The Brigands," Madison's new company was led by an Irish emigrant firebrand named John G. Phillips. By turns a Santa Fe hotel owner and duellist, the Irishman had led a small band of like-minded secessionists south to Doña Ana late in 1861 to join the Confederates.[7]

The Brigands (or "Company of Santa Fe Gamblers," as one wag christened them) were not regularly enlisted in the Confederate service, but were employed by Sibley's quartermaster department under very generous terms of pay and discipline. The unit was organized at the abandoned pre-war post of Fort Thorn on February 10 as Sibley prepared to head upriver for Albuquerque. The thirty-odd officers and men of the Brigands were willing fighters, but they soon acquired a reputation for the ready acquisition of civilian food and property along their line of march. A Unionist New Mexico newspaper editor subsequently complained that Phillips' company "was composed of men who had resided in New Mexico, many of whom were desperate characters and all of whom made themselves notorious for the free and easy manner in which they appropriated the property of others to their own use. In their acts they well filled the name they bore." Even allowing for the editor's blatant Northern sympathies, it is apparent that Phillips' men had a very liberal interpretation of what constituted spoils of war.[8]

The Brigands served as the army's advanced guard as Sibley moved up the

Rio Grande. On March 10, the unit rode into Santa Fe to claim the territorial capital for the Confederacy. The private from Arizona must have distinguished himself during the march upriver, for eleven days later he was commissioned a lieutenant and made Phillips' second-in-command.

The day after Madison celebrated his promotion in a local *cantina,* a force of 1,342 Yankee troops set out from Fort Union to recapture Santa Fe from the graycoats. Major Pyron advanced to bar their path through the narrow passage of Apache Canyon, but Major John Chivington's Colorado volunteers had already laid an ambush for the Rebels, and Madison's men lost a comrade in the vicious skirmish that erupted in the bleak defile.[9]

Sibley had already dispatched heavy reinforcements northward from his Albuquerque headquarters, and they arrived in time to bolster the Santa Fe garrison for another thrust through the canyon to strike the Federals at Glorieta Pass. Once again the Brigands rode in the van against the Unionists, and the Confederates met with disaster when a raiding party led by Chivington slipped past them to strike and destroy their supply wagons while the men battled the main Federal force several miles to the east. One of Phillips' men died in combat, and another lost a leg to the surgeon's knife. Madison and several others were taken prisoner as the command retreated before the exultant Yankees.[10]

While Sibley's beaten and starving army fell back down the Rio Grande, Madison and his fellow prisoners were marched to Fort Union and held under guard as the Coloradoans liberated Santa Fe. Madison was released on April 5, having sworn not to bear arms against the United States again. He had no intention of honoring such a pledge given under duress, and he rejoined Sibley's forces as they marched back to Texas.[11] Madison was rewarded again for his faithful service. On April 21 Captain Phillips was discharged from the army for some undisclosed reason, and Madison was promoted to captain in his place.

By May the ragged troopers were back in El Paso and preparing to continue the retreat eastward to San Antonio as the resurgent Union forces prepared to take the border town. On the 21st the Brigands were paid off and discharged. They immediately reorganized themselves and elected Madison as their commander. Now known as Captain Madison's Company, Mounted Spies and Guides, the unit resolved to remain behind as the army abandoned El Paso and to wage a guerrilla campaign against the Federals.[12]

Madison led his company northward into New Mexico, easily eluding enemy patrols as he bypassed the larger settlements and kept to the brush, adding recruits from released prisoners and from the sick men Sibley had

left behind during the retreat. The captain hoped to raid government supply trains along the Santa Fe Trail in northern New Mexico and southern Colorado while spreading alarm and confusion among the Union garrisons in those regions.

Early in August the commander at Fort Garland in Colorado's San Luis Valley reported that he had heard rumors of a Rebel guerrilla band operating in the country near the headwaters of the Huerfano River and the San Carlos Mountains, east of the Sangre de Cristo range. The officer estimated their strength at fifty to seventy-five men. In Denver the *Rocky Mountain News* published a warning of the invaders' strength and intentions. Within a short time the press and military were variously identifying the guerrillas' leader as Captain Matheson, Mathison, or Madison; and rumors circulated that he had received a "roving commission" from Sibley to plague the Unionists in Colorado.[13]

Madison and his men were remarkably well-behaved. They did not harass local farmers and ranchers, and they even refrained from attacking a wagon train owned by the post sutler at Fort Garland. Madison must have instilled some true discipline in his troops by then, and he took pains to inform the settlers that he was there solely to wage war on enemy troops and property.

Large patrols of Union troops radiated from Fort Garland in search of the Rebels, but Madison eluded them, by means of his own skills and also with the help of the scattering of pro-Southern settlements in the area, which willingly sheltered the guerrillas. In mid-August the Confederates waylaid the overland mail coach near a settlement on the Cucharas River and confiscated dispatches bound for Fort Wise. Rumors followed that Madison had ambushed and burned two supply trains on the Santa Fe Trail. Even more alarming to the Unionists was the report that several Denver residents had joined the guerrillas, along with at least one prominent settler on the Huerfano.[14]

Operating close to the New Mexico border again, Madison had a definite objective in mind: a mission of revenge. When word had reached him that the newly-promoted Colonel Chivington was en route back to Denver from Fort Craig, the Confederate saw an opportunity to avenge his comrades who had fallen at Apache Canyon and Glorieta Pass. The guerrillas established a camp near the base of the Spanish Peaks and planned to ambush Chivington's party as it came up the road from Trinidad. However, the Yankee colonel eluded the trap and reached Denver safely despite Madison's patrols. A settler named Cutter later claimed that he had stumbled on the guerrillas' camp and had convinced them that their quarry had already passed by to the north, when in reality the Chivington party was but a few miles down the

road to the south. Cutter also claimed that Madison's men had boasted of plans to raid Denver and kidnap the mayor, the territorial governor, and the judges of the United States Court.[15]

If Madison did not succeed in his plan to kill or kidnap Chivington, he did manage to keep the Colorado authorities on edge. Throughout the area—in Santa Fe as well as at Forts Lyon, Garland, and Union—hefty rewards were posted for his band's capture. Major Mayer sent a warning to the commander at Fort Lyon, advising him that Madison's men were heading down the Arkansas River in his direction. A few days later two herders from the post were hunting strayed stock when they met twenty-five well-armed riders who questioned them in detail about the fort's strength. Soon afterward the guerrillas were seen scouting the country farther west in the vicinity of Bent's Fort, a private trading post. Captain Scott J. Anthony led Company E of the 1st Colorado Cavalry out from Fort Lyon in a vain pursuit of the Confederates. He probed the country along the Purgatoire River, but found only alarming rumors among the settlers that Madison's band was the vanguard of an 8,000-man force marching north from Texas to seize New Mexico and Colorado.[16]

Other rumors reached Fort Garland to the effect that Madison had already returned to Texas, but before the end of August Major Mayer learned that the Rebels were still haunting the hills around the upper Purgatoire. In the San Luis Valley, Union troops kept watch on the ranch of a known Southern sympathizer, eventually capturing three of the raider's men. It was a hollow victory, however, for the *Rocky Mountain News* subsequently complained that the "notorious Madison" had been seen scouting the trail west of Fort Lyon again.

That newspaper article was the last reference made to Madison's activities in Colorado, and eventually the military authorities felt safe in assuming that he had gone back to Texas. The Mounted Spies and Guides had not won any decisive victories in the shadow of the Rockies, but they had succeeded in keeping the Union forces off balance and apprehensive of a possible Confederate fifth-column movement springing up in their midst.[17]

Captain Madison's greatest impact on the war's course was indirect. Fear of a resurgence in guerrilla activity and a suspected alliance between Confederate agents and the hostile plains Indians led to the formation of the 3rd Colorado Volunteer Cavalry in August, 1864. Its commander, Colonel Chivington, lusted to lead Colorado troops in the big war to the east, but the new regiment was kept at home. The following November the Indian-hating Chivington vented his frustration by leading a brutal attack on a peaceful Cheyenne camp at Sand Creek. The butchery of helpless men, women, and

children in Chief Black Kettle's camp ignited the most vicious Indian war yet seen on the frontier as the Cheyennes, Arapahoes, Comanches, and Kiowas attacked settlements and travelers from Kansas north to the Dakotas. Scores of whites died, and the Lincoln administration faced a major distraction in the west as the final struggle of the Civil War was played out in Georgia and Virginia. The Sand Creek Massacre determined the course of white-Indian relations on the plains for a decade afterward. Had Madison's bullet found Chivington that summer day on the road near Spanish Peaks, the frontier might have been spared a hideous season of bloodshed.[18]

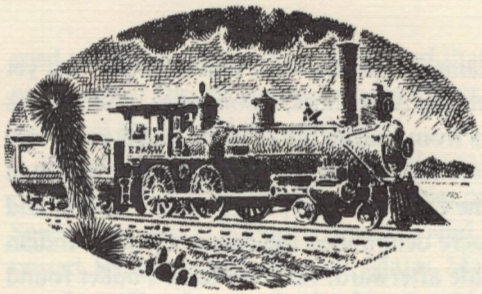
George Madison became an even more elusive figure in the wake of his brief Colorado foray. He apparently reported to the Confederate authorities in Texas and was promoted to lieutenant colonel in recognition of his services. His old company was expanded into an independent battalion in the Arizona Brigade, a unit composed partly of the remnants of Sibley's army. Madison's battalion was subsequently merged with Colonel Joseph Phillips' 3rd Cavalry Regiment. On June 28, 1863, it was serving in General Richard Taylor's command as it battled the Yankees in Louisiana. Colonel Phillips died during a futile assault on Fort Butler near Donaldsonville, and Madison succeeded him as regimental commander. Two more years of bitter fighting followed before the 3rd Texas was mustered out after the final Confederate defeat. George Madison vanished into civilian life, if he was still alive by then.[19]

The guerrilla chieftain's association with the Pass of the North had been brief but fateful. As the leader of a miniscule band of partisans, Madison had kept two Union territorial governments in a state of alarm and had diverted their volunteer regiments from more important service in the main theaters of the conflict. Madison may not have seen El Paso again after the war, but in his energy and daring he reflected the traits common to so many of its people. Few who made their homes where the river parted the rock ever paused to tally risks or measure odds. ★

**NOTES**

1. Wayne R. Austerman, "'Old Nighthawk' and the Pass of the North," *Password*, XXVII, No. 3 (Fall, 1982), 115-118.
2. Martin H. Hall, *The Confederate Army of New Mexico* (Austin: Presidial Press, 1978), 345-49, 373-76.
3. *Ibid.*; Joseph A. Stout, Jr., *The Liberators* (Los Angeles: Westernlore Press, 1973), 143-68.
4. Austerman, "'Old Nighthawk'," 118-22.
5. *Ibid.*, 122-25; Hall, *Army of New Mexico*, 349.
6. Hall, *Army of New Mexico*, 349, 374-76.
7. *Ibid.*
8. *Ibid.*
9. *Ibid.*

*(Notes continued on page 46.)*



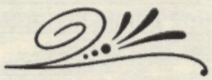
# A PHYSICIAN DESCRIBES EL PASO

*IN 1884, THERE APPEARED AN ATTRACTIVE sixteen-page pamphlet entitled EL PASO AS A HEALTH RESORT and authored by an El Paso physician of the time, Dr. Charles T. Race. The pamphlet, which was printed in St. Louis by Geo. D. Barnard & Co., Stationers and Printers, apparently enjoyed wide distribution throughout the United States, and it may have drawn health-seekers to El Paso, which was already enjoying a reputation as a health resort.*

*Dr. Race's pamphlet was reproduced in the April, 1959, issue of PASSWORD (Vol. IV, No. 2) as the substance of Dr. Eugene O. Porter's article "No Dark and Cold and Dreary Days—El Paso as a Health Resort." In that article, Dr. Porter told his readers that a copy of the pamphlet had been donated to the El Paso County Historical Society by Mrs. Nancy Lackland Chamberlin, a granddaughter of Dr. Race, and also that Dr. Race was a graduate of Tulane Medical College, that he lived in El Paso continuously from 1884 until his death in 1913, and that at one time he was the city health officer.*

*Recently another copy of the pamphlet was found in the Library of Southern Methodist University by Dallas resident Emilia Gay Griffith Means, who is a frequent contributor to PASSWORD and who forwarded a xerox of the publication to your editor.*

*Dr. Race's pamphlet is interesting as a historical document, offering not only factual information on the El Paso of 1884, but also an insight into the "magic" El Paso exerted upon many of its settlers who arrived during the momentous decade of the 1880s. The pamphlet also seems typical of the way those pioneers went about the business of trumpeting to the world the charm and the potential of their new-found home, an emerging city at the Pass of the North. For these reasons, several excerpts from Dr. Race's pamphlet are reprinted—again.*



EL PASO COUNTY, of which the city of El Paso is the county seat, lies between latitude 31° and 32° North, and longitude 27° and 29° West. The elevation of the city of El Paso is 3,800 feet. The mountains near by, and extending in all directions, present altitudes varying to several hundreds of feet above that of the city, affording choice of elevation commensurate with the requirements in a vast number of cases of disease. A writer recently said: "El Paso is truly a great big little city. It is far ahead of any in Texas for its size, and not to be beaten by any town in the country. It is the terminus of three of the principal railway systems on the continent, and the half-way station of another. It has more first-class business and dwelling houses to the general aggregate than any other town, and more city ways and customs than any town of its size on the continent. It enjoys the fullest confidence of its inhabitants, who prove their faith by the substantial character of their investments."

El Paso has municipal government, has water works, gas works, street railways, electric light and telephone exchanges, a population of 4,000, and is altogether a prodigy of quick, solid growth and firm establishment. The El Paso of today, though pre-eminently creditable for its age, is but the nucleus of one of the most important large cities of the Union in commercial, manufacturing, mining and professional pursuits. Nearly equidistant from San Francisco on the west, New Orleans on the east, St. Louis on the north and the City of Mexico on the south, with direct trunk line railroad connection with all of them, as well as many other large cities intervening and beyond them, promises to make it a city great in resources and advantages of every nature. The city affords comfortable, healthful and pleasurable surroundings, whatever may be desired or necessity demand, and the adjacent

region affords every facility for drives over splendid roads, every turn of which presents new views of mountain and valley scenery of absorbing grandeur and beauty, while the sportsman, be he hunter or angler, can, with little trouble, find game for gun or hook.

Situated as El Paso is, on the Rio Grande, the boundary of the United States and Mexico, opportunity is afforded to visit the Mexican people in their own homes and native country.

Paso del Norte, the town in Mexico opposite El Paso, Texas, is a settlement of great antiquity, said to have been first settled in 1620, and presents the interesting features of agricultural pursuits by irrigation; Mexican architecture in dwellings, public buildings and churches, the cathedral there being 240 years old; and the habits and customs, both social and sportive, of that nation so rapidly approaching complete intimacy of commercial relations with the United States.

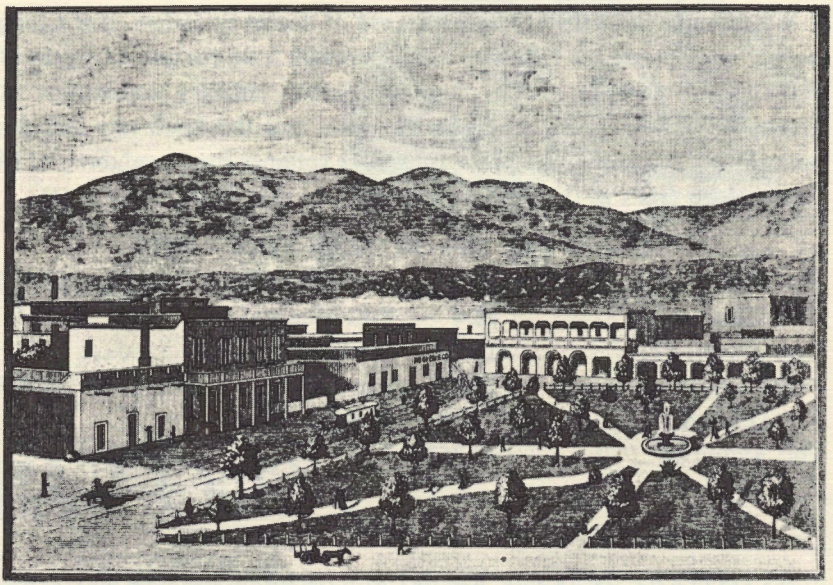
The business man, capitalist, tourist, pleasure-seeker and invalid finds at El Paso and vicinity everything to charm him to an enjoyment of advantages unexcelled anywhere.

THE WATER SUPPLY of the city is derived from the Rio Grande, whence it is pumped into one of two large reservoirs on the *mesa,* where it remains until all suspended matter, being free from any organic elements, falls from it, whence it is conveyed to the other reservoir at a point affording 200 feet pressure over the city, thus giving the city an abundant supply of water pure and wholesome for every use.

Distant from the city water works system surface wells supply wholly unobjectionable water, while from the river many have their supply of water by the same process, in miniature, pursued by the city water works.

THE ATMOSPHERE cannot be other than as pure and uncontaminated as any under the sun—having none of the factors producing a pernicious condition of air anywhere within distance possible to bring such conditions about. The locality affords a purity of atmosphere truly vivifying and healing in its effects.

A fact of especial value relating to the atmosphere here is its aseptic and non-putrefactive power. Lacking the factor, moisture of the heat and moisture necessary to promote putrefaction, it is notable that animal matter does not undergo putrefactive changes, but simply exsiccates and never becomes putrid. The same condition found all along the eastern side of the Rocky Mountains, is here found exerting its power in an unparalleled manner and to an unequaled degree.



*Labeled "PUBLIC SQUARE, EL PASO, TEXAS," this is one of four sketches published in Dr. Race's 1884 pamphlet, each sketch depicting a scene of the El Paso and Paso del Norte area.*

IN POINT OF CLIMATE..., an examination of the tables [recorded for the years 1881-1883 by the observer at El Paso U.S. Signal Station] develops the following facts: That the average mean temperature for the five months, May 1st to September 30th, for the entire period of three years, is 76.5° F.; that the same for the remainder of the year for that period is 53.8° F.; that the same for the entire year for that period is 63.2° F. That the mean humidity is a truly remarkable one, i.e. 45.3°. The average annual precipitation of moisture for the period was 13.11 inches. That of the aggregate precipitation 39.35° inches during the period, 27.41 inches, or nine-thirteenths, was during the months June 30th to September 30th. The general course of the wind for each year and for the period was northwest, with west wind prevailing next in frequency. The average velocity of the wind for each hour of the entire period was 5.31 miles, with March and April as the most windy months. That the highest temperature is during the latter third of June and the lowest about New Year. Sunshine prevails almost constantly, and there are none of the distressing fogs elsewhere encountered. Nowhere on the continent are witnessed such magnificent and varied sunsets, which can be seen almost the entire year. Days "dark and cold and dreary" are seldom seen.

WE HAVE ACCESS to but one record of deaths extending over a long period, and append the following table compiled from the annual report of JOSEPH K. SMITH, M.D., medical director, military department of Texas, and though qualified by his comment that the death rate includes homicides, suicides and fatal injuries, speaks volumes for the salubrity of El Paso, which ranks as the most healthy military post in the department.

**DEATHS PER 1000 OF MEAN STRENGTH**

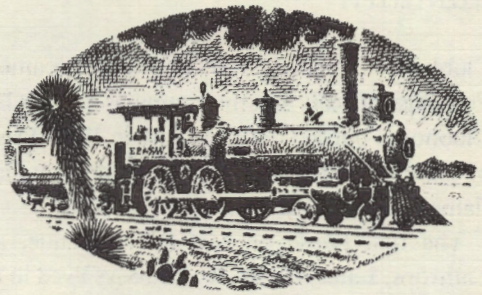
| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Fort Brown | 20.528 | Fort McKavitt | 8.734 |
| Fort Clark | 12.4 | Fort Ringgold | 7.57 |
| Fort Concho | 13.736 | Fort Stockton | 5.7 |
| Fort Davis | 15.565 | San Antonio | 36.806 |
| Fort Duncan | 7.236 | El Paso | 5.2 |
| Fort McIntosh | 10.753 | | |

AS TO FOOD, the locality, together with the means of quick and preservative transportation, places at command everything from the local abundant supply of fresh vegetables and fruits, including the famous grapes of the section, with the grape wines equaling those anywhere in the world, to the northern products of the United States and the tropical productions of Mexico.

TO SUMMARIZE the foregoing in a general way for the use of all, it may be truthfully said that El Paso offers the following advantages:

Intermediate geographical location and elevation above sea level. An abundant supply of pure water. A perfect drainage. A temperature without fault; the heat of summer moderated by frequent showers and cooling breezes, with the nights always cool and refreshing, and an autumn, winter and spring with invigorating temperature. An atmosphere wholly free from deleterious elements and of medium humidity. Wholesome food in variety and quality to meet every desire or necessity....Hotels and dwellings designed tastefully and possessed of apartments and surroundings with view to every hygienic requirement....Society of the best, with churches, schools, good government, adequate commercial facilities to meet every requirement. A refined people. A city possessed of all that adds to public or private comfort and convenience....

We therefore promulgate that El Paso is equaled by few places in the world for healthful features.... ★





# FAR OUT

## *by Helen Gillett*

YES, THE STREET WHERE I LIVED during my childhood and youth, McKinley Avenue, was far out, with nothing beyond but wilderness desert, the craggy Franklins, and the native fauna (rattlesnakes, tarantulas, coyotes, and such). It was, I believe, an unusual street—not so much because of its isolated and remote location, but because of its residents: many young couples who were natives of El Paso or who in time would become highly respected "old" El Pasoans started out there, some remaining through the years.

The construction of houses on McKinley Avenue, the first street in a new addition called Morning Side Heights, began about 1911, and all six blocks of the street filled up in the next seven or eight years. Builders were J. W. Kirkpatrick and Gordon Perry, who built their own homes on McKinley, and R. D. Lowman, who built our house. The houses are mostly California bungalows in style, though with a variety of exterior design and also larger and more carefully built than most such homes.

One attraction that may have drawn so many prominent El Pasoans to far-out McKinley Avenue was the building of the El Paso Country Club on the Newman Road (now Dyer) just across from the eastern terminus of McKinley. Designed by the architectural firm of Trost and Trost, the new

Clubhouse opened in 1909 and soon became a popular gathering place for Fort Bliss officers and their families and for El Pasoans. Unfortunately, that Clubhouse burned to the ground in 1916. I remember standing in the middle of the street in the middle of the night watching the merrymakers flee as the flames consumed the beautiful building.

The first house on McKinley Avenue, at 3901, was built by the Al Lathrops. Later, the W. K. Ramseys lived in that attractive home. One summer during their residence, I had a play school for some of the young children. Bill Ramsey attended the school, which I'm sure was more play than school. It was free, not a money-making proposition like the usual lemonade stand. After the Ramseys moved away from McKinley Avenue, Don and Helen Thompson lived at 3901 with Don, Jr., a four-year-old, and Lassiter, a baby. A very exciting event took place in that house during the residence of the Thompsons: a stag dinner party held in honor of Charles Lindberg when he visited El Paso in 1927, the guests being eighteen or twenty aviators who had served in World War I. The next residents of that original McKinley Avenue home were the E. P. Fullers, who had fled from their ranch in Mexico during the time of Pancho Villa. In later years "Skeet" and Dora Williams, a ranching family, bought the house.

Next to the Lathrop house was the beautiful and spacious home of the Porter Thedes, built probably in 1912. They had been living in Mexico, where Porter was the general manager of the world's largest saw mill, the Madera Company, Limited. Sometime after taking up residence on McKinley Avenue, the Thedes went to New York for three years, and while they were away the Charles Bassetts occupied their house. The Bassetts' daughter Myra (Mrs. Hal Daugherty) was born during that time.

My parents, Louis and Louise Robinson, built their house at 3831 McKinley in 1913. My father, a graduate of the University of Michigan Law School, had been practicing with his cousin in Cincinnati. He decided to "go West" and chose El Paso.

The street car, dubbed the "Toonerville Trolley" by the McKinley Avenue residents, was my family's main method of transportation in those earliest years. From the baby book which my father dotingly kept (I was an only child), I have learned that my mother took me on the street car to Lamar School (the original Lamar on Montana Street) to enter kindergarten. She left me with tears in my eyes, though one of the teachers,

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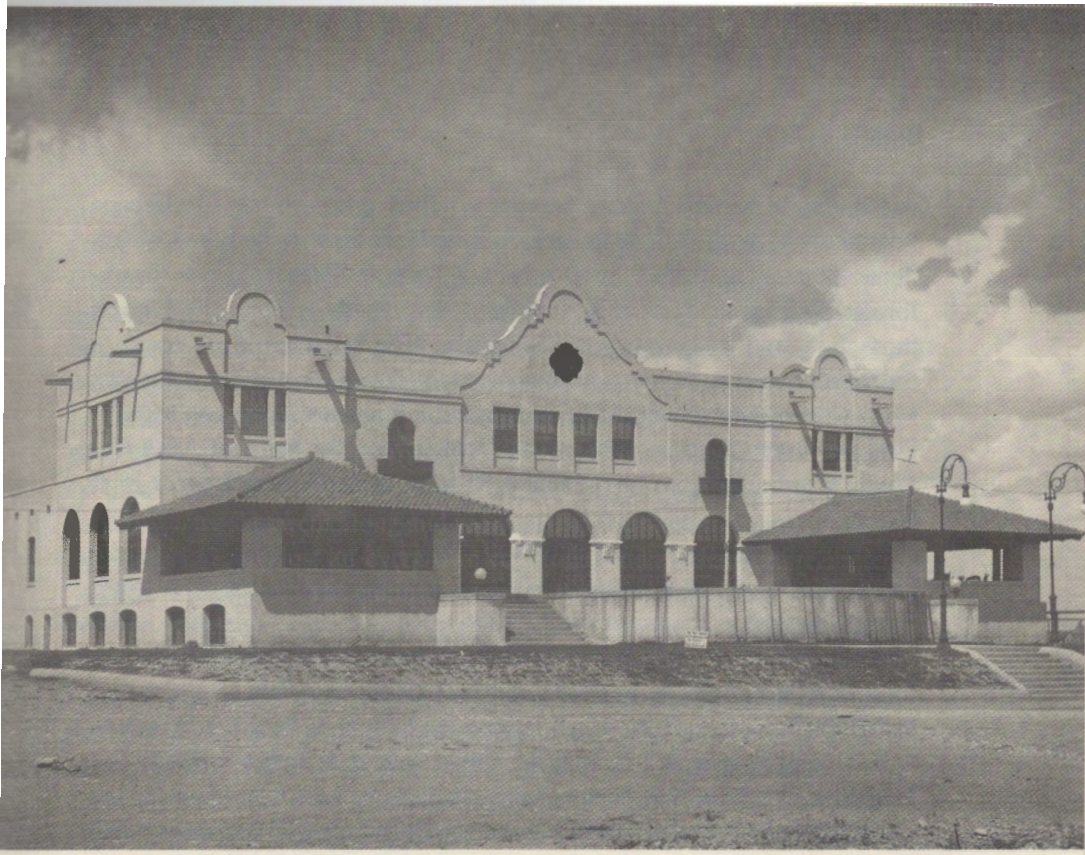
**Helen Gillett** is well known in El Paso for her civic contributions. To name a few of these, she sat on the first Board of Planned Parenthood, was the first president of the Board of the El Paso Guidance Center, served as president of El Paso County Mental Health Association, and (together with her husband, I. W. Gillett) chaired the Host Family Program for Foreign Students at The University of Texas at El Paso.



*The El Paso Country Club, designed by architects Trost and Trost, shortly after it opened in 1909. Located on the Newman Road (now Dyer) across from McKinley Avenue, the building was destroyed by fire in 1916. (Photo courtesy Southwest Collection, El Paso Public Library)*

Miss Anna Washburn, reported that I was soon at home with friends, probably from the First Presbyterian Church, where my parents were active members. I returned home that day on the street car, supervised in getting on the right car by my mother's friend Mrs. Kilgore. Later, I had a companion from Lamar in going to and from, a little girl, Loraine Moore (the late Mrs. Tim Williams), who lived near us. Riding the street car, later from El Paso High, to distant McKinley Avenue never seemed to be a hardship. Indeed, it was a pleasant interlude before the required practicing of music and the doing of homework.

Across the street from us lived the Norman Fergusons, he an engineer at the Smelter (now ASARCO) and a champion tennis player. His youngest son, Louis, distinguished himself in tennis at the University of Texas and nationally. The older son, Norman, was my age, and Mr. Ferguson took us to El Paso High School each morning.

There were many children and teenagers living on McKinley Avenue in those years. We all enjoyed skating and bicycling on the sidewalks and playing games such as Kick the Can and Run, Sheepie, Run. On Saturday after-

noons the McKinley Avenue teenagers joined other young El Pasoans "down town" to attend the movies, followed by a visit to the Elite Confectionary (located on the northwest corner of Texas and Mesa) to savor the unforgettable chocolate-covered "baseball." Everybody went to the Elite in those days, and we even heard that Pancho Villa had eaten there once.

One of my playmates who has remained my friend through the years was Mary Curtiss (Mrs. Curtis Morris). She and her parents (John and Maude) lived two doors from us. Next to the Curtisses was the home of Allen and Louise Rhodes, he a brother of Waller Rhodes, she a tall blonde and a great beauty.

Mrs. R. R. Mason lived at 3801 McKinley and was frequently visited by her nieces Dorothy Covington (Mrs. John Morrison) and sister June (Mrs. Don Edmunds).

In the 3600 block lived Hanna and Tom Newman. They built their house following their marriage in 1915; and their three sons (Tom, Jr., Charles, and Bill) all grew up there. Next door to the Newmans lived the Mapels—Queenie and Dexter and Dexter, Jr.—who built their house in 1917. The Mapels were among the "permanent" residents of McKinley Avenue, the widowed Queenie continuing to live there until her death in February, 1986. On the other side of the Mapels lived Mr. Nebeker, Mrs. Mapel's brother, with his wife and their daughter, Victoria. Across from the Mapels lived Hilliard Bryan, who still resides there.

At 3501 McKinley the J. W. Kirkpatricks and their children—Noble, Virginia (Mrs. V. K. Jones), Lila (Mrs. F. H. Niehaus), Dena (Mrs. Raymond Dwigans) and Annie Laurie (Mrs. Harvey Wallender of Tyler) were among the early residents. In the same block lived Henry and Sue Clifton and Joe and Minnie Clifton. In 1915 Rusk School was built on a side street just off McKinley Avenue, and Minnie became the principal there, a position she was to hold for many years.

In the 3400 block the Gordon Perrys and children, Gordon, Jr. and Vandalia (Mrs. Marvin Hinchleff of Dallas), lived on the southeast corner. Mason Pollard's house was located across the street; his aunt, Miss Nell Pollard, lived there in later years.

When it rained, generally in July or August, the mountain came down to the avenue and filled it with rocks and a rushing torrent of water. When the wind blew, the desert sand swirled relentlessly through the avenue and seeped into the houses. If you were unfortunate enough to be outside, small pebbles pelted your face. One of the spring windstorms, I remember, was so bad that it snapped the telephone poles in two along McKinley Avenue and partially lifted the roofs from several houses. I was walking home from the

street car that day, carrying my books and music roll. Just as I reached our front door, the porch roof and the pillars supporting it rose skyward. I instinctively jumped off the porch, as the whole structure crashed down. In another minute or two, the wind viciously attacked the Thede house too, blowing part of their roof away. I walked with Mrs. Thede to the nearest working telephone so that she could tell her husband she was safe. She knew he would be concerned about her because they were expecting their first child just about then. And sure enough, like the U. S. mail which is delivered on time in spite of inclement weather, the Thedes' daughter Betty (now Mrs. Jack Despins) was born that night. Jean (now Mrs. Fred McKinstry) was a later addition to the family.

There were no supermarkets at that time—and not even any neighborhood grocery stores anywhere close to McKinley Avenue in its earliest years. The housewives must have depended on the Chinese peddler who brought fresh vegetables and fruit and on the El Paso grocery stores, which delivered in those days. Another resource was Mrs. Paul's Chicken Farm. Her son delivered beautifully dressed chicken and squab as well as fresh eggs.

During the 1920s and '30s a new crop of El Pasoans came to McKinley. Harvey and Mary Wilcox lived there following their marriage in 1923. Two of their daughters, Mary Ann (Mrs. John Christie) and Nancy (Mrs. Blaine Qualls) were born during this time at Masonic Hospital, which was located in the busy shopping center at Five Points on the site where now stands the abandoned Sears store. Buck and Mary Ellen Casner and their three boys (Norman, Ed, and Jim) lived in the same block as the Wilcoxes. Mary Ellen recalled not long ago that Ed disappeared one day. The neighbors were helping to search for him when the conductor of the Toonerville Trolley asked if they were looking for a little boy. Ed, it seems, had taken a nice ride on the trolley. But he was perfectly safe in that "frontier" neighborhood where the trolley conductor...and the postman...and the man who delivered ice every day were always ready to guide stray children homeward.

The Ernest Sauers bought the Nebeker house during the '20s; their children are Marjorie (Mrs. Post Loiselle) and son Bill of California. The Charlie Grahams with children Charles, Jr. and Betty (Mrs. Ben Mason) bought a house in the same block. Betty recalls with pleasure riding the Toonerville Trolley with Marge Sauer. The Grahams sold their house to Dr. and Mrs. C. M. Hendricks, who lived there with their daughters—Louise (the late Mrs. James Campbell), Marjorie (Mrs. George Broderson), Mary Elizabeth (Mrs. Don Thurman of Anthony), and Charlee (Mrs. Charles Coldwell of Dallas).

The George Millars with her daughters, Martha Fall (Mrs. Philip

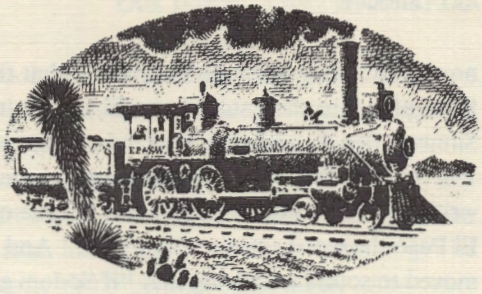
Bethune) and Jackie Fall (the late Mrs. E. A. Hase), moved to 3600 McKinley during the late '20s. Another daughter, Anna Millar (Mrs. James Skipworth) was born later. Their house was a spacious red brick with a porch all around. Most of the McKinley Avenue houses had porches, which were important in those pre-air conditioning days. On summer evenings families and their friends gathered on the porch for conversation...and maybe some homemade ice cream—provided we children were willing to help turn the crank on the ice-cream freezer.

I also remember several other "pioneers" on McKinley Avenue: the Curtis Tullers and daughter, Patty (Mrs. George Janzen), who lived in the 3700 block; Paul and Elizabeth Kerr and children—Jane (Mrs. Bill Meyers of Amarillo), Ann (Mrs. Bill Smith of Houston), Nancy (Mrs. Robert Florence of El Paso), and John, now living in England; the W. H. Brennands and their grandsons Bob and Jim Brennand, who lived at 3800; Mrs. Elizabeth Kerr and her daughter, Ruth (Mrs. Henry Osthues); and the David Coles, who lived next door to us for a time and whose talented son Jack used to entertain us with marvelous singing and dancing—so marvelous, in fact, that he later traveled with the Stanford University Glee Club on a round-the-world concert tour before settling in El Paso, first at the new KTSM radio station in a singing duo with Karl (the Kowhand) Wyler, and then into the career of mining engineering.

Yes, McKinley Avenue was Far Out, but in the quality of its people it was very "In." An unusual street, as I have said. And one that remains unusual. It is an old street now and located in central El Paso. But it has aged gracefully—its modernized, well-kept homes indicating that its "newcomers" are the same kind of "In" people as those pioneer residents I so admired and respected when I was growing up on McKinley Avenue. ★

## CELEBRATION ON CAMPUS

*PASSWORD* CONGRATULATES the Black Coalition of The University of Texas at El Paso on its excellent program presented in observance of Black History Week '87. Held on the University campus during the week February 8-14 and built around the theme "The Afro-American and the Constitution: Colonial Times to the Present," the program consisted of exhibitions, symposia, lectures, and awards ceremonies which celebrated the 200th anniversary of the signing of the United States Constitution and also the 32nd anniversary of the admission of the first Black students to The University of Texas at El Paso.



# OUR TOWN— ONE CENTURY AGO *(January-March, 1887)*

*by Art Leibson*

DESPITE THE HALF-HEARTED EFFORTS of reformers to change the face that El Paso held out to the nation, the city's reputation for wickedness and sin was spreading to all parts of the world. Lawlessness was riding high in the saddle. The coming of the railroad had proven a mixed blessing, giving El Paso a lifeline to all America but also bringing in an undesirable element that included some of the nation's deadliest gunfighters. The city's location, a few steps away from the border, also drew numbers of fugitives from the law in other parts of the country; and there was a noticeable increase in local crime, particularly burglaries.

Owen P. White, a chronicler of early-day frontier life in El Paso, and an eye-witness to what he wrote about, said that "By 1887 whenever a cattleman, a cowboy, a miner, a prospector, a merchant, a lawyer, or even a thief anywhere in Arizona, New Mexico or West Texas found an extra dollar in his pocket he headed hell-bent to El Paso to get rid of it. The town's Christians, who peddled groceries, hardware, mowers, plows, coffins and mining machinery, took unto themselves much credit for this, but deserved

none of it. They knew it. They knew that the thing that brought customers from afar into their stores was El Paso's invitation to step right up to the Sinners' Bench, and they took advantage of it. They even encouraged it."

It was dealing with this same outrageous period that Robert J. Casey, writing in *The Texas Border,* said: "Some of the best authorities considered El Paso the worst town in the world." And in Dallas a noted evangelist was moved to sound a warning that "if Sodom and Gomorrah (meaning El Paso and Paso del Norte) did not mend their ways they might expect an immediate judgment of fire and brimstone." It must have exasperated him the way Sodom—or was it Gomorrah?—went on prospering mightily, untouched by the prophetic hellfire and brimstone. Saloons, gambling parlors, and houses of prostitution continued to flourish in Sin City. Three of El Paso's most widely known madams—"Big Alice" Abbott, Etta Clark, and Gypsy Davenport—all had their elaborate mansions. They would be followed soon by May Palmer and Tillie Howard, equally renowned in their day. The seeds of reform were being planted, but it would be some years before they began sprouting.

Reading *The El Paso Times* issued in those sinful early months of 1887, you would never suspect there was any vice at all in this progressive little city, clearly a case of hear no evil, see no evil, and speak no evil. All was sweetness and light in the *Times'* columns where there was not a single Page-One local story during the entire first quarter of the year. The *Times* had moved its offices to Oregon Street (later occupied by the *Labor Advocate*), conveniently next to the telegraph office.

When Dr. Alfred S. Houghton, a noted Chicago physician, announced that San Diego and El Paso were the two most healthful cities in the nation for persons suffering from pulmonary diseases, the *Times* was so happy about the news that it ran an article quoting the doctor every day for weeks. And victims of such diseases continued to arrive in El Paso.

The *Times* warned that if something was not done about putting up street signs, and numbering houses, a pending visit by a postal inspector might well result in continued refusal to provide free home mail delivery. The fear was groundless; the inspector came and said he would recommend a start to such service.

The city made a great civic advance when the town council voted in favor of a sewer system for the central area, ending a long-festering problem. With that matter disposed of, there next was a demand to provide lighting for the same streets.

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**Art Leibson,** an attorney-turned-journalist and now retired from the staff of *The El Paso Times,* is the author of this regular *Password* feature.

A trial of great local interest took place when Commissioners Court tried to have one of its duly elected members forced out of office because he couldn't read or speak English. The *Times* took three columns to report testimony in the case; and the controversial commissioner, 28-year-old Beniglio Alderete took the stand himself to prove his literacy. He had been born and reared in El Paso, he said, and while his ability to read might be hesitant he could make it out, as he demonstrated when given some court documents to decipher. The jury took just twenty minutes to decide the case in his favor, and the unhappy Commissioners Court resigned itself to putting up with him, at least until the next election.

Echoes were heard of the great courthouse scandal that had rocked El Paso when the building was being erected. After skipping out on his bond and hiding out in Mexico, John T. Long returned to the city to face the legal music. He was rearrested on the old indictment charging him with swindling, and again released after friends posted an additional bond. The *Times* reported that he and another defendant in the case were expected to ask, through his attorney, for a change of venue because of strong local sentiment against the pair.*

Also during the first quarter of 1887, it was announced that El Paso might be getting a smelting works that would bring in ore from a wide area of the southwest—on the condition that the city would provide a free site for the plant and free water power, the plant to be built by the Granada Smelting, Milling and Refining Company. Signs of vigorous growth and expansion were everywhere. There were no rental houses available, and newcomers had to settle for hotels or other rooms until they could find better accommodations. Hotels were often crowded with tourists who came to see what the Sin City was like. One excursion train came from Chicago, and three others headed here from California.

The El Paso National Bank opened for business on January 18, started by a group of New York directors. But the Mint Saloon went broke, and its fixtures were auctioned off. An advertisement offered Dr. Alexander's Native Wine, available in Paso del Norte, at one dollar a gallon if bought in five-gallon lots.

Culturally, the Bijou Opera Company presented three nights of opera in El Paso, at the National Theater, and it was agreed that it was two nights too many to satisfy the local demand. However, George E. King remained steadfast in his determination to build the Myar Opera House as soon as title to the property could be cleared. The Methodist Episcopal Society pur-

*EDITOR'S NOTE: See Mr. Leibson's "Our Town" articles in *Password,* XXX, 2 (Summer, 1985), and XXX, 3 (Fall, 1985).

chased three tracts on the corner of Campbell and Myrtle, where it planned to build a handsome new church. The site cost the Society $2,500, and the proposed building was to cost another $4,000. El Paso was even getting a new publication started, to serve ranchers in the area and to be known as the *Cattle Grower and Flockmaster.*

The city was sorry to lose the 10th infantry, the popular military organization stationed at Fort Bliss, but was prepared to welcome its successor, the 16th Infantry, including a complete regimental band that would provide concerts for the civilian population.

San Elizario decided it had made a mistake when it voted to disincorporate in 1885 and now petitioned Commissioners Court to allow another election to decide the issue for its more than 2,000 residents.

A headline in the *Times* announced: "Reagan Elected." The man (no first name given) was elected by the Texas legislature to the United States Senate on the 31st ballot after a hard-fought political battle. (It would be another 25 years before the 17th Amendment to the Constitution gave the people the right to elect their representatives to Congress directly.)

The *Times*, noting the anniversary of the Battle of Brazitos, a short distance up the river in New Mexico, tracked down the commander of the United States forces, Colonel Doniphan, and learned that he was still very vigorous, retired as a general, and living in Liberty, Missouri.

Another sign of the city's rapid growth: "Three and a half miles of new street railway lines are being laid down."★

**CAPTAIN MADISON**...*from page 31.*

10. *Ibid.*
11. *Ibid.*
12. Morris F. Taylor, "Confederate Guerrillas in Southern Colorado," *The Colorado Magazine,* XLVI, No. 4 (Fall, 1969), 309-10.
13. *Ibid.; Daily Rocky Mountain News,* August 11, 18, 1862.
14. Taylor, 311-13, *Daily Rocky Mountain News,* August 11, 21-22, 1862.
15. Taylor, 314.
16. *Ibid.,* 315-316; Billie B. Jensen, "Confederate Sentiment in Colorado," *1957 Brand Book of the Denver Westerners* (Boulder: Johnson Publishing Company, 1958), 110-111.
17. *Weekly Rocky Mountain News,* September 18, 1862; Taylor, 317; Daniel Ellis Conner, *A Confederate in the Colorado Gold Fields* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1970), 144-45, 150, 163.
18. Taylor, 322-23; Stan Hoig, *The Sand Creek Massacre* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1974), 145-62; Robert M. Utley, *Frontiersmen in Blue* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1973), 294-97, 300-16.
19. Robert L. Kerby, *Kirby Smith's Confederacy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1972), 116-20; Clayton W. Williams, *Texas' Last Frontier* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 1972), 97; Hall, *Army of New Mexico,* 374-76; Stephen B. Oates, *Confederate Cavalry West of the River* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1961), 173; Harry McCorry Henderson, *Texas in The Confederacy* (San Antonio: The Naylor Company, 1955), 125-26, 135; Marcus J. Wright (comp.), *Texas in the War 1861-1865* (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1965), 30-31.

# BOOK REVIEWS

**PAPER MEDICINE MAN:**
**JOHN GREGORY BOURKE AND HIS AMERICAN WEST**
**by Joseph C. Porter**
**Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, $29.95**

The name John Gregory Bourke is familiar to students of Southwestern history and ethnology, but until now the man has remained little known.

Here, Captain Bourke's story is admirably told, the author tracing the man's life and offering explanations for the turns it took. Born of Irish immigrant parents in Philadelphia, Bourke grew up with both Catholic and Victorian ideas. Following his graduation from West Point, he was assigned to the Third Cavalry at Fort Craig, New Mexico. As a religious, deeply moral man, he shunned the baser forms of pastimes available to the frontier soldier and spent his spare time studying the people of the Southwest and keeping extensive diaries. It was this habit of constantly writing in his diary that led to his being called a "paper medicine man" by some of the Apaches. His studies soon developed into a deep interest in ethnology.

In 1871, Bourke became aide-de-camp to General George Crook, an association which would prove both beneficial and detrimental to the "paper medicine man." Bourke was an avid supporter of the general and his policies, which were often unpopular with Southwestern settlers. General Crook believed in treating the Apaches fairly, as long as they remained at peace; and this attitude was not to the liking of the Indian rings who profited from supplying the military and the corrupt Indian agents and to those who coveted Indian lands.

Bourke saw a great deal of action in the campaigns against the Apache, Sioux, and Cheyenne, as well as in the more damaging campaigns with the bureaucracy and military. He sought promotion, which he did not receive (he attained only the rank of captain during his more than twenty-six years

of military service); and he sought recognition as a serious scientist, which he did receive. As a soldier, he was unique for the times in that he knew his foes as people and even became close friends with many of them.

Bourke also served several tours of duty in Texas, both at Camp Rice (present Fort Hancock) and in the Lower Rio Grande Valley, where he was actively involved in the battles with Mexican bandits and revolutionaries.

This is a readable portrait of a man who played an important role in the dramatic development of the American West.

BOB MILES
Park Superintendent, Hueco Tanks State Historical Park

**THE WIND**
**by Dorothy Scarborough**
**Austin: University of Texas Press, $10.95**

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Although PASSWORD does not ordinarily publish reviews of fictional works, the following review appears because of the light which the novel sheds on the history of the West Texas region.*

The story of the publication and reception of *The Wind* in 1925 is as interesting as the novel itself. In her foreword to the University of Texas Press edition in the Barker Texas History Center series (the first release since the novel slipped into obscurity in the 1930s), Sylvia Ann Grider recounts the uproar the book precipitated among West Texas readers, who considered it a brutal and unwarranted attack on the land they loved.

*The Wind* is set around Sweetwater during the devastating drought of the 1880s, and its realistic portrayal of harsh conditions was seen as "a slam on West Texas in the making"; it did not accord with the romantic view contemporary readers wanted to have about their area's history. That the novel was published anonymously (an advertising ploy) added to the presumed insult. After the authorship was made public, including the fact that Scarborough had spent part of her childhood in Sweetwater, Texans relented in their attacks on the book, and the Sweetwater Chamber of Commerce in 1928 invited Scarborough for a visit. Her depiction of the relentless winds was vindicated when her chief local critic took her for a drive in the countryside to show her how inaccurate her descriptions had been: a vicious norther swept in and they were barely able to return to town.

"The wind was the cause of it all," announces the first sentence of the novel, though the cause exists too in economic systems and in the society that produced the popular image of the helpless southern belle. Letty

Mason, the novel's central character, is barely eighteen when she is forced by the loss of family to go to a tiny ranch near Sweetwater to live with an unfamiliar cousin and his wife. On the train she meets an unscrupulous womanizer who plants in her head a horror of the pounding winds. The cousin's wife is competent and hardy, but she is both jealous and contemptuous of Letty's frail beauty and makes it known that Letty is a burden in their cramped household.

Unable to imagine other options, Letty marries a local cowhand and finds herself even more desperate and isolated. The continuing drought kills the cattle and kills hope. One day when her husband is away from home, the man from the train appears—during a horrific sandstorm. The conclusion of the story is vivid and dramatic, and its impact is in no way lessened by the predictability of the final outcome.

The wind is presented as an inexorable force, an even more powerful contributor to human emotion than the wild heaths of Thomas Hardy's novels. The lyric passages in which Letty recalls the lush beauty of Virginia only emphasize the contrast with her present reality. "Life, she discovered, differed from romance," but the discovery does not provide the means to prevail, or even to endure. The wind wins.

LOIS MARCHINO
Department of English
The University of Texas at El Paso

**RAILROADS AND REVOLUTIONS: THE STORY OF ROY HOARD**
**by J. F. Hulse**
**El Paso: Mangan Books, $19.95**

As the title implies, this is more than just another typical biography of a successful businessman. It is also the story of how a large event, the Mexican Revolution, affected that man as he and his associates attempted to operate a railroad and a lumber business.

Roy Hoard arrived in El Paso in 1910, having left his native East Texas when he contracted tuberculosis in his mid-twenties. He obtained a position with the Nor-Oeste de Mexico Railroad and was immediately assigned to supervise the lumber operations of the Madera Company, one of the subsidiary companies owned by the Canadian business group which controlled the Nor-Oeste de Mexico Railroad. It was at Madera, located on a site along the 500-mile Nor-Oeste de Mexico route from Juarez to Chihuahua City that Hoard came face to face with the complications of the Mexican Revolution.

"Pancho" Villa's activities along the route of the railroad were

numerous, as he forced officials of the railroad to provide transportation for his troops. In June, 1913, for example, Villa occupied Madera, but moved north by rail with his army to fight Federal forces at Casas Grandes, leaving Hoard and his associates cut off from all outside communication. By August, Hoard received instructions to close the Madera plant and take all employees to Juarez. Before he could comply, however, the Federal troops laid siege to the city.

Various factions of the revolution were responsible for killing employees, burning bridges, and destroying tracks and trains. But "The Kid," as Villa called Hoard because of Hoard's physical appearance, provided the leadership to keep the business functioning. In the long run, it was diplomacy, honesty, imagination, and stamina that enabled Hoard to succeed and that eventually earned him the presidency of the Nor-Oeste de Mexico Railroad.

The product of extensive research, this work by El Paso attorney J. F. Hulse is a fascinating story of the interaction between a revolution and a railroad executive of unusual ability. Furthermore, and as we have come to expect from Mangan Books, it is a masterpiece of design and typography. The book is available from the publishers, 6245 Snowheights Court, El Paso, Texas 79912.

J. MORGAN BROADDUS
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**THE SPANISH MUSTANG**
**by Don Worcester**
**El Paso: Texas Western Press, $12.00**

Subtitled "From the Plains of Andalusia to the Prairies of Texas," this attractive volume begins with the familiar story of the introduction into Mexico by Cortez of horses of Arabian and North African blood. It goes on to relate the history of their many thousands of descendants that swarmed over the plains and mountains of the West. In their wild state they roamed in great bands of mares and colts led by a stallion of superior strength and courage and also in smaller bands of outcast bachelors.

Many mustangs became the Indian's ponies, the measure of his wealth and of his skills as a horse thief. Others became the cowboy's cutting horses, agile, intelligent and tireless: "To the cowboy nothing was smarter than a cutting horse. A sheep dog was second and a college graduate third." And some became legendary as superior over other breeds in quarter-mile races and in long, endurance races.

During the Boer War the British bought thousands of range horses (both mustangs and horses of mixed breed) for use as cavalry mounts and as pack animals. Cross-breeding of mustang mares with blooded English stallions had begun in the American colonies in the 1750s. In the 1850s ranchers were breeding mustang mares to Morgan and Thoroughbred stallions to produce larger and heavier cowponies,

Many of these noble animals were slaughtered in order to open rangeland to cattle and sheep; but the author, in an epilogue, tells of the efforts being made to preserve the mustang from extinction.

Awarded the C. L. Sonnichsen Book Award for 1985, this is enjoyable cover-to-cover reading, thanks in part to the fact that much of its content is anecdotal with no loss of authenticity.

ROBERT BRUCE CRIPPEN
Chairman, Docents Committee
El Paso Museum of History

**LOS TUCSONENSES:**
**THE MEXICAN COMMUNITY IN TUCSON, 1854-1941**
**by Thomas E. Sheridan**
**Tucson: University of Arizona Press, $22.50**

In his Introduction, the author points out that although "Mexican American social history has suddenly come into its own," one major region—Arizona—continues to be overlooked. He offers this study of one Arizona city as a beginning toward filling that gap.

In some ways, Mr. Sheridan avers, history in Tucson differs from the rest of the Southwest: "Unlike the *Tejanos* or the *Californios, Tucsonenses* were not immediately overwhelmed by the Anglo tide of immigration sweeping across the Southwest. On the contrary, they continued to exercise considerable economic and political power long after the presidial soldiers rode out of town for the last time in 1856. Mexicans in Tucson became merchants, politicians, artists, and intellectuals, transforming an isolated Sonoran outpost into an oasis of middle-class Mexican society in the United States. They also shaped Tucson's destiny to a greater extent than Mexicans did in cities like El Paso, Phoenix, or Los Angeles."

However, their power and their culture were ultimately to be swept aside in the Anglo flood. The book is a chronicle of how their "institutionalized subordination" came about.

The argument proceeds through biographical sketches—"case histories"—of a great number, and variety, of "Tucsonenses," which are effectively

supplemented by tables, charts, and maps, based on census reports, city directories, and similar records. These lend support and objectivity to the author's conclusions and are hard, if not impossible, to refute.

A major conclusion of this book is that "Mexicans in Tucson did not enjoy the same political, economic, or educational opportunities as Anglos. And even though Mexicans remained a majority in Tucson's population until [1910], they rapidly lost political and economic control of their community." All of this was accomplished without "legally mandated discrimination or segregation....Tucson by no means operated under a system of *apartheid*...." However, the author adds, "laws do not necessarily reflect reality, and in Tucson, equality *de jure* did not insure equality *de facto.*"

*Los Tucsonenses* is a sound bit of scholarship and, since it is also well written, is bound to be of great interest to anyone concerned with its subject. Its forceful message to me is that in human relationships ignorance and greed, though less spectacular than malice, are just as deadly, and—further—they tend to foster malice.

RAY PAST
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